

# Investigating Customer Perceptions on Sustainable Practices of Star Hotels in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

Dr. Arakhita Behera

*Faculty in Economics, School of Humanities, K.R. Mangalam University, Haryana  
122103. Email id: behearaakhita996@gmail.com, Mob: 6300689075*

## Abstract

This paper purposes to present the perception of customers on green practices of star hotels of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The hotels in India has been increasing rapidly. Due to an increasing consciousness on conservation of the environment, customers' ideas of product and behaviour are shifting towards more on eco-friendly. Because of this, firms are employing more and more strategies to adopt green practices to encourage customers. The notion of sustainable practices is still not widely accepted because of various factor such as lack of knowledge about eco-friendly products or services, ineffective advertising by corporates, and lack of uniformity in governmental norms and regulations. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to determine the perception of customers towards sustainable practices in star hotels through factor analysis approach. A sample of 147 customers from a variety of location including several star hotels of GHMC, airports, railway station, and difference events and educational fairs are collected. As a result, this study identifies six factors such as Desireness, trustworthy, favourites, morals, consciousness, initiatives, social welfare and freshness of food.

**Keywords:** Customer Perception, Sustainable Practices, Star Hotels, Factor Analysis Approach

## 1. Introduction

Sustainability is now a common concept and a part of everyday life (Diaconescu and Stănciulescu, 2015). This is because people have become aware of problems like the exhaustion of resources, the dilapidation of environment, and the risk of leaving nothing for future generations (Shue, 2014). Concerns about sustainable development are getting closer to what was discussed at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. After that, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) put together the famous Brundtland report. In this report, "sustainable development" was defined as "development that aims to meet the needs and goals of the present without sacrificing the

ability to meet the needs and goals of the future" (WCED, 1987). But it took another 20 years before the world signed the first serious statement about sustainability. It happened at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where it was decided that sustainable development is "a goal that all peoples of the world can reach" (United Nations, 2020). In 2015, most countries around the world agreed on 17 goals for sustainable development, which was a big step forward (193). The document called "The 2030 Agenda" is very ambitious and seen as universal, transformative, and civilized (Economic Commission for Latin America, 2022). The 2030 Agenda affects all economic areas. Tourism isn't an exception. As a form of recreation, a way to restore mental, moral, or physical abilities, or a way to do business, tourism must also become a cleaner, fairer, and more sustainable market for all parties involved. Here's an evaluation of the SDGs where tourism is important. SDG 12 is about responsible consumption and production. SDG 8 is about decent work and economic growth. SDG 14 is about life below water (Boluk and Rasoolimanesh, 2022).

Among the tourist industry's components, lodging is more adaptable and, as a result, more suited for adopting practices like changing energy systems, purchasing less polluting goods, and cutting down on energy, water, and food waste (Popescu, et al., 2021). These ecological activities are the ones that happen the most often (elik and evirgen, 2021). Other customs pertain to social and economic aspects (Legrand, Sloan and Chen, 2016). A few examples include using marketing efforts to inform visitors, training staff about environmental challenges, or selecting conservation strategies that are not immediately lucrative. There is no evidence that tourist activities contribute to sustainability (Agyeiwaah, 2019; Srensen and Baerenholdt, 2020), despite the fact that it is crucial for businesses to be concerned about adopting sustainable practices (Annunziata, et al., 2018). This fact can prompt managers to put off changing the method of operation until further information is presented. However, some scholars have shown a connection between tour operators' sustainable business practices and the outcomes, indicating that Malaysian tourist businesses adopt these strategies (Hamid, Isa and Kiumarsi, 2020).

Recent research on sustainable practices have shown that larger hotels are leading the way in adopting environmentally friendly methods (Behera, 2020; Behera, 2018a, b; Mensah, 2014, 2020; Erdogan, and Tosun, 2009; Bohdanowicz, 2005; Burgos- Alvarez-Gil, Jimenez, and Cespedes-Lorente, 2001; Kirk, 1995). Manakatola and Jauhari (2007) revealed that Indian customers are concerned about environmental issues but are not willing to alter their habits. As a result, people choose not to make environmentally friendly decision because they are not willing to give up comfort and luxury. Given that sustainable customers are growing rapidly,

it is clear that there is still a lot of room for business to serve them. A little bit more effort on the part of the business might give guests to alter the mind-set and shift their purchasing behaviour in favour of sustainable goods and services. India's hotel industry has seen a tremendous expansion since 1996 (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2015). Despite an increase in hotels, there is a lack of study on how customers feel about sustainable initiatives (Lee, Hsu, Han and Kim, 2010).

The number of studies in this field has been extremely low in India. They have concentrated on how customers perceive and behave while paying premium rates for hotels with green technology or for the properties that follow the eco-friendly methods. However not a single study has paid attention to GHMC. As the capital of Telangana, the city receives a lot of tourists and guests. In its twin city of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, there are numerous number of large big hotels. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate sustainable practices of hotel operations from the customer perspective. This investigation aims to bridge that gap.

According to the literature analysis, little research has been done on how customers in the GHMC region perceive environmentally friendly behaviours. Customer attitudes toward environmentally friendly methods are shifting as the Indian hotel business which expands quickly. They favour green hotels over conventional ones because they are concerned about the environment. Given the paucity of research on this subject in the GHMC area, it is a thorough study. The GHMC in the state of Telangana uses this innovative and cutting-edge idea. The article evaluates customer perception toward environmentally friendly initiatives in star hotels. In order to help the hotel industry, customer advocacy organisations, and the Indian government, this research will make available information on sustainable practises implemented by star hotels in Secunderabad and Hyderabad's GHMCs.

## **2. Methodology**

The study was done in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), an area of two cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad of Telangana State. The study used a structured questionnaire that was made to find out how people perceive about sustainable practises in GHMC star hotels. People who have stayed in GHMC star hotels were asked to take part in the survey. A sample of 15 people filled out the questionnaire first, and small changes were made to questions where the answers were not clear. The purposive sampling was used due to time and money constraint. A structured questionnaire was used in the study to measure the following: What customers think about how sustainable practices are in star hotels of GHMC. For the customer study, the people who had already stayed in GHMC star hotels were used as

the unit of analysis. After the questionnaire was changed, the last step was to start collecting data. In total, 450 customers were asked for their opinions, but only 147 were useful. These responses came from all over GHMC, including star hotels, conferences, events, educational fair, train stations, and airports. It was important to get the data from a diverse sample of people from different parts of GHMC because this would help make generalisations about a larger group of people. In the last section, the demographics of the customers are measured.

For this purpose, a five-point likert scale was used, with strong disagreement on one end and strong agreement on the other. Analysing correlations between variables is called "factor analysis," and it is used to find out what people think about how sustainable practices in star hotels are. It breaks them down into fewer factors that explain a lot of the original data more simply (Nargundkar, 2010). This will help to reduce the latent multicollinearity between the items and also make the type of data more reliable. For each dimension, the coefficient alpha is calculated to find out how consistent each one is on the inside. For factor analysis, 23 statements were used. After the data were put in, both the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the KMO test were run. Explanatory factor analysis is utilised to figure out what the underlying ideas are and how the key interval-scaled survey questions about how people feel about sustainable practises in star hotels relate to each other. A reliability test has been done to see how well the data fits, and the value of Cronbach's alpha is .708, which is significant. The following steps have been taken to analyse the data.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1: Profile of Customers**

This section gives a profile of sample customer of star hotels. Their gender, age, marital status, degree of education, current job, monthly salary, and country of origin are listed (Table 4.1). Out of our total sample respondents, males constitute 71.4 percent and females 28.6 percent. This is a big difference. However, Mardia (1971) asserts that even with uneven sampling and a limited number of dependent variables, "a sample size of 20 in the smallest cell would be enough to provide robustness in multivariate or other data analysis procedures."

**Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Customers (N = 147)**

Particulars	Variables	Frequency	Percent
1)Gender	Male	105	71.4
	Female	42	28.6
2)Age	<20	4	2.7
	21-30	54	36.7
	31-40	53	36.1
	41-50	30	20.4
	51-60	5	3.4
	>60	1	0.7
3)Marital Status	Single	55	37.4
	Married	90	61.2
	Divorced	2	1.4
4)Educational Background	High school or less	5	3.4
	College education	12	8.2
	Graduate	19	12.9
	Post graduate	45	30.6
	Professional qualification	66	44.9
5)Present Job	Studying or training	25	17.0
	Employed	83	56.5
	Self-employed	38	25.9
	Retired	1	0.7
6)Monthly Earning(INR)	<25000	23	15.7
	25001-50000	36	24.5
	50001-75000	37	25.2
	75001-100000	28	19.0
	>100000	21	14.3
7)Nationality	Indian	124	84.4
	Others	23	15.6

**Source:** Field survey (2015-16)

The majority of participants (36.7 percent) are between the ages of 21 and 30; next, (36.1 percent) are between the ages of 31 and 40. A little over 20 percent of the participants are between the ages of 41 and 50, while 4 percent are above 50. The sample also shows that 61.2 percent of the respondents are married, while 37.4 percent are unmarried. Only 1.4 percent of respondents reported being divorced. Regarding education, approximately 45 percent of respondents have a variety of professional qualifications, while 30.6 percent have earned a postgraduate degree. 13 percent of respondents reported having graduated, but 11.6 percent of those with less than a high school diploma and a college degree are referred to as undergraduates. The majority of responders are employed (56.5 percent). Self-employment makes up almost 26 percent, followed by training and education (17 percent) and retirement (0.7 percent). The respondents belong to various income groups. Their monthly earnings range from about INR 25,000 to above INR 1 lakh. The majority of responders (25.2 percent) fell into the 50001–75000 income range, while 24.5 percent did so within the 25001–50000 range. 14.3 percent were over 100000, and the remaining 19.0 percent were in the range of 75001–

100,000. Only 15.7 percent of those that responded are under 25000. Regarding nationality, the majority of respondents (84.4 percent) are Indian, while 15.6 percent are from other nations.

People are asked why and how they chose to stay in a five-star hotel (Table 4.2). According to them, the choice to stay in a hotel is decided by the individual themselves (36.7 percent), followed by family (24.5 percent), friends (23.8 percent), and business associates (23.8 percent). Most people go to a star hotel for a vacation or for fun (38 percent), then for business (30.6 percent), education (14.3 percent), and to see friends and family (9.5 percent). When asked how many times they have stayed in a star hotel in a year, the majority (40.8 percent) say they have stayed one to two times, 34.8 percent say they have stayed between 3 and 5 times, and 21.1 percent say they have stayed more than 6 times.

**Table 2: Decision, Purpose and Number of Times Staying of Respondents (N = 147)**

Particulars	Variables	Frequency	Percent
1) Who made the decision	Business associate	35	23.8
	Friend	22	15.0
	Family	36	24.5
	Self	54	36.7
2) The main reason for the trip	Vacation or free time	57	38.8
	Business	45	30.6
	Visiting friends or relatives	14	9.5
	Education	21	14.3
	Other purpose	10	6.8
3) The number of times the person stays in a hotel in a year	0	6	4.1
	1-2	60	40.8
	3-5	50	34.0
	>6	31	21.1

**Source:** Field survey (2015-16)

### **3.2: Factor Analysis Results on Customers' Perception**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is computed, and the value is .708. It says that the sample is good enough to use as a sample. Bartlett Test of Sphericity (approximately chi square = 1477.671 and significant at .000) is used to check the overall significance of correlation matrices. Support for the validity of the factor analysis of the data set is also given. So, all three criteria show that the data can be used for factor analysis. Principal components analysis is applied to figure out what the factors are.

### **3.2a. Rotation Method**

For the purpose of this study, an orthogonal rotation with varimax is used. Orthogonal rotation is used when a researcher wants to get factors or dimensions that don't have anything to do with each other. The latent root criterion is used to figure out what factors are important. According to the criteria, factors are only considered significant if they have latent roots or Eigen values that are greater than 1. In our study, only eight of the factors have eigen values that are greater than 1. These are 4.980, 2.837, 2.294, 1.719, 1.401, 1.375, 1.129, and 1.059. The percentage of total variance is used to assess how effectively the total factor solution accounts for everything. The present index solution explains 69.978 percent of all the differences in the data. The number we got from the analysis is pretty good, and we only lost 30 percent of the information in our study.

### **3.2b. Criteria for the Significance of Factor Loadings**

When interpreting the factors, a decision must be made on which factor loadings are important to take into account. An original variable's association with its factor is represented by a factor loading. The criterion by Hair (1995), which bases a factor loading's significance on sample size rather than factor loading itself was accepted. A factor loading of .5 or above has been deemed significant for our sample of 147 respondents. Based on the variables represented in each case, the appropriate names for each of the eight components have been assigned. From the rotated factor matrix that variables such as 10 (I wish to stay in a hotel while travelling that upholds environmentally friendly principles) 11 (I want to stay in a hotel that upholds environmentally friendly principles, 3 (Performing environmental practices), 23 (I engage in current practises indicated by a hotel in which I am dwelling, such as not changing towels and bed sheets on a daily basis, turning off the light when leaving the room, etc.), and 2 (To become socially more accountable) have high loadings of .817, .761, .756, .666, and .632 on factor. This implies that the first component is an amalgam of the original five variables. For factor 2, the variables are: 5 (My colleague believe I would choose a hotel that uses sustainable practises while I'm travelling), 6 (My co-workers believe that when I'm travelling, I should get a hotel with sustainable practises.), 4 (My friends and family believe that I ought to choose a lodging with eco - friendly practices when I'm travelling.), 10 (My school/company/others who pay for my travel and motivate me to halt at a hotel with sustainable practises) with factor loading such as .855, .896, .878, .520 respectively. This shows that factor 2 is a mix of four different variables.

Factor 3 may be seen as a conglomerate of variables such as 24 (Supporting the conservation of the environment is essential for hotels), 18 (To reduce prices of electricity and water bill and reuse of towels), and 25 (I believe hotels are generally assisting to the harmful influence on environment.) had loadings of .848, .794, and .635 respectively. This suggests that factor 3 is a three-variable combination. Factor 4 combines three different variables like 15 (I regularly recycle using the sustainable or blue bin (bag), 16 (I regularly look to see whether anything is coated with recyclable material before I purchase it.), and 17 (I regularly purchase throwaway items like styrofoam cups or plastic spoons, knives, and forks with factor loading of .715, .736, and .764. Factor 5 combines three different factors such as 7 (living in a hotel that upholds sustainable practises is highly expensive), 8 (looking for a hotel that upholds sustainable practises when travelling involves time and effort), and 9 (finding a hotel that upholds sustainable practises must be simple) with factor loading of .671, .736, and .715. Factor 6 combines four different variables like variable 13 (When I go, I'll strive to book a hotel that adheres to environmentally friendly principles), variable like 1 (one should consume fresh and healthy food), 22 (government rules) and 21 (to get a certificate) having factor loading values of .879, .860, .688 and .778 respectively.

**Table 4.8: Result of Factor Analysis and Reliability Test on Customers' Perception of Sustainable Practices**

Items	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1i. One should consume nutritious, fresh cuisine.								.860
1ii. Become more socially responsible	.632							
1iii. Applying environmental precautions	.756							
My family and relatives believe that when travelling, I must stay at a hotel that upholds sustainable principles.		.855						
2ii. According to my friends, I must stay at a hotel that upholds sustainable principles when travelling.		.896						
2iii. My co-workers believe that when travelling, I must stay at a hotel that adheres to sustainable principles.		.878						
3i. Staying in a hotel that upholds sustainable principles is highly expensive.					.671			
3ii. While travelling, it takes time and effort to look for a hotel that adheres to sustainable policies.					.736			
3iii. It must be simple to find a hotel that adheres to green standards.					.715			

3iv. My institution, my employer, or another party that pays for my trip expenditures and encourages me to stay in a hotel that upholds environmentally friendly standards.		.520						
4i. While travelling, I wish to stay in a hotel that adheres to environmental best practises.	.817							
4ii. While travelling, I want to stay in a hotel that upholds environmentally friendly principles.	.761							
4iii. While travelling, I'll try to stay in a hotel that adheres to environmentally friendly standards.							.879	
5i. For recycling, I often use the green or blue box (bag).				.715				
5ii. I regularly check to see whether anything is coated with recyclable material when I buy something covered.				.736				
5iii. I often purchase throwaway things like styrofoam cups, plastic spoons, knives, and forks				.764				
6i. To reduce the cost of electricity and water bills and encourage towel reuse			.635					
6iv. Obtaining a certificate						.688		
6v. Government rules						.778		
7i. I follow the established customs advised by the hotel where I am staying, such as not changing the towels and bed linens every day, turning out the light while leaving the room, etc.	.666							
7ii. It's crucial for hotels to promote environmental protection.			.848					
7iii. I believe that hotels are mostly contributing to the negative effects on the environment.			.794					
Eigen value	4.980	2.837	2.294	1.719	1.401	1.375	1.129	1.059
Percentage of variance ( Total=69.979)	20.749	11.823	9.559	7.163	5.839	5.728	4.705	4.412
Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	.824	.908	.681	.699	.645	.754		
KMO:	: .708							
Bartlett's test of sphericity								
Approx. chi-square	: 1477.671							
Df	: 276							
Sig.	: .000							

**Table 4.9: Factor Naming**

Statement	Factor Loading	Factor Names
1. I wish to stay in a hotel while travelling that upholds environmentally friendly principles 2. I want to stay in a hotel that upholds environmentally friendly principles, 3.Performing environmental practices) 4. I engage in current practises indicated by a hotel in which I am dwelling, such as not changing towels and bed sheets on a daily basis, turning off the light when leaving the room, etc. 5. To become socially more accountable) have high loadings	.817  .761  .756  .666  .632	Desireness
1. My colleague believe I would choose a hotel that uses sustainable practises while I'm travelling 2. My co-workers believe that when I'm travelling, I should get a hotel with sustainable practises. 3. My friends and family believe that I ought to choose a lodging with eco - friendly practices when I'm travelling. 4. My school/company/others who pay for my travel and motivate me to halt at a hotel with sustainable practises)	.855  .896  .878  .520	Trustworthiness
1.Supporting the conservation of the environment is essential for hotels 2.To reduce prices of electricity and water bill and reuse of towels 3. I believe hotels are generally assisting to the harmful influence on environment.	.848  794,  .635	Preference
1.I regularly recycle using the sustainable or blue bin (bag) 2. I regularly look to see whether anything is coated with recyclable material before I purchase it.	.715  .736  .764	Ethics

3. I regularly purchase throwaway items like styrofoam cups or plastic spoons, knives, and forks with factor loading of		
1.living in a hotel that upholds sustainable practises is highly expensive),	.671	Awareness
2. looking for a hotel that upholds sustainable practises when travelling involves time and effort),	.736,	
3. finding a hotel that upholds sustainable practises must be simple to find	.715.	
1.Government rules	.688	Initiative for social welfare and freshness of food
2.To get a certificate	.778	
3. When I go, I'll strive to book a hotel that adheres to environmentally friendly principles.	.879	
4.One should consume fresh and healthy food	.860	

#### 4. Conclusion

In order to analyse how customers perceive environmentally friendly behaviours, the current research has taken into consideration a number of variables, including Desireness, trustworthiness, preference, ethics, awareness, initiative, social welfare and freshness of food. According to the study's findings, there is a lack of public awareness since the idea is new. The associated environmental threats must be explained to people and made clear to them. It will take a lot of time and effort for the new sustainable movement to spread to the public. Marketers must consider the long-term advantages of this new sustainable movement, and investors and corporations must see the environment as one of the most important long-term investment prospects. It will take time for people to embrace the idea since it is new concept. The first guideline of marketing for environmentally friendly practices is to put a strong emphasis on the advantages that customers will get from using certain services and goods. Star hotels should encourage customers to switch brands or even pay more for eco-friendly options. If any particular services are created that are completely eco-friendly in many ways but do not meet the requirements for customer happiness, it will not be of any use. The idea of "sustainable myopia" will also result from this, in which hotels profit by offering less expensive services instead of pricey but environmentally sound ones. The commercial acceptability of sustainable

activities will also decline if they are expensive. The long-term sustainability of the environment should thus be a priority for star hotels.

## **5. Policy Implications**

Environmental concerns are becoming increasingly important. In India, there are grave problems with access to clean water and sanitary facilities. The resources used by the tourism sector, especially hotels, are placed under stress by excessive consumption. Future growth and the resulting resource requirements should be modelled by the businesses. In the foreseeable future, there will be great worry as majority of India's water tables declining. In order to prepare for resource constraints, hotels would need to take those into consideration. An accommodation group should consider the long-term advantages of resource efficiency. For the first two to three years after spending money on energy-saving equipment and initiatives, the government may pass part of the gains to the hotels. To genuinely put these measures into action, a higher charge for business water usage and water recycling should be required by law. The importance of resource conservation to customers might be greatly increased with the help of the star hotels. An emotional response from customers would be generated by a public campaign, as it was for the "Incredible India Campaign" promoting tourism to India. The adoption of this as a national plan is required to guarantee future generations will have greater access to resources.

## **6. Future Scope**

The customer expectations for sustainable services and service quality at star hotels might provide hotel management fresh information about this unexplored sector. A fascinating topic of research that might be included into the thorough survey is the survey on various customers' demographic factors. Such an effort would provide greater clarity on customer perceptions of eco-friendly products. Additional research on the impact of young people's and women's shifting roles on environmentally friendly behaviour may also be included. The hotels should research the most effective methods for influencing customers' environmental awareness into a more pro-environment mind-set so that they can translate their concern into purchasing actions.

## **7. Limitation**

Although, this study benefited from a large sample size and was selected from a range of equivalent star hotels, there are a number of drawbacks that may be addressed in further research. First and foremost, as far as the main data is concerned, the respondents' bias may

have an impact on the study's findings. The study's findings may not apply to all cities and locations in other states of the nation, such as India, due to the respondents' prejudices. Second, just the GHMC area has been the subject of the survey. It may not be a true reflection of the people at large. Thirdly, the sample size is small (only 147) and may not accurately represent the situation as a whole. The last limitation was a budget and schedule restriction.

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