

Exploring Travelers' Attitudes and Willingness to Pay for Sustainable Hotel Practices in Kathmandu

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Original Article

Received: June 21, 2025

Revised & Accepted: August 30, 2025

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Abstract

Background: Growing environmental concerns are prompting travelers to reconsider the ecological impact of tourism. Hotels, as significant consumers of resources, are adopting eco-friendly practices, though these often necessitate higher operating costs. This creates a critical challenge: determining whether guests are genuinely willing to pay a premium for sustainable accommodations.

Objectives: This study aims to bridge the gap between hoteliers' investments in sustainability and their understanding of guest perceptions. It seeks to examine travelers' attitudes, awareness, and willingness to pay (WTP) for eco-certified hotels and the factors influencing their booking decisions.

Methods: A quantitative, descriptive research design was employed. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 200 participants in Kathmandu using convenience sampling. Data were collected both online and in-person from guests at various budget to mid-range hotels engaged in sustainable practices. Analysis was performed using frequency distributions and percentages.

Findings: The findings reveal a strong positive attitude towards eco-friendly hotels, with 76% of respondents actively seeking them and 72.5% believing they contribute to environmental protection. However, willingness to pay a 5-10% price premium was mixed: only 36.5% definitively agreed, while 47.5% were uncertain. Key motivators for paying more included support for local communities (59.5% agree/strongly agree) and zero-waste policies (58.5% agree/strongly agree). Major barriers identified were a lack of awareness (64% agree/strongly agree) and limited availability (57% agree/strongly agree) of certified options. Most

respondents (76%) plan to prioritize sustainable hotels in the future and support mandatory sustainability certifications (71%).

Conclusion: There is a significant disconnect between travelers' positive attitudes toward sustainable hotels and their readiness to pay extra. Awareness and availability are greater barriers than cost itself for many.

Implication: For hoteliers, success hinges on demonstrating the value of sustainable practices through education, transparency, and promotions. To overcome the awareness barrier, targeted marketing and leveraging peer recommendations are essential. Policymakers and institutions can foster adoption by promoting certifications and considering cost-sharing initiatives to incentivize sustainable choices.

Keywords: Accommodation, Awareness, Behavior, Certification, Environment, Hospitality, Motivation

Introduction

As the global population grows and environmental awareness rises, more people are becoming concerned about the consequences of their actions on the planet. Issues such as pollution, climate change, and the overexploitation of natural resources have led travelers to reconsider the environmental impact of their choices (Huo & Peng, 2023). In the context of tourism, hotel accommodations play a significant role in this equation. Hotels are known for consuming large amounts of energy and water while generating substantial waste (Juvan et al., 2023). In response, many businesses have adopted eco-friendly practices to reduce their environmental footprint. These sustainable efforts include supporting local communities through sourcing local products, conserving water, minimizing single-use plastics, and managing waste effectively (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Han et al., 2011).

However, implementing green practices often requires significant investment. Replacing outdated infrastructure with energy-efficient systems, for example, can be costly. Consequently, eco-friendly hotels may charge higher prices, potentially discouraging cost-conscious travelers. To better understand traveler attitudes, a survey was conducted among diverse guest profiles in various locations. The central question was whether travelers are genuinely willing to pay more for eco-certified accommodations (Kang & Nicholls, 2021). Some respondents expressed a strong commitment to environmental protection, stating they would pay extra for hotels that use solar power, reduce plastic usage, or contribute to local communities (Kim et al., 2019). Others were either unaware of what defines a "green" hotel or hesitant about the added cost. This highlights the need for increased awareness and education. Looking forward, sustainability is likely to become a standard expectation rather than a special feature, particularly among younger travelers who prioritize environmentally responsible choices (Rahman et al., 2017). Creating eco-friendly experiences is not only beneficial for the planet but also strategically advantageous for businesses (Ogunmola & Kumar, 2024). This study is important because it explores the real-world attitudes and behaviors of travelers toward green hotels. While many hotels are adopting energy-saving technologies, reducing waste, and

incorporating eco-conscious materials, they must also assess whether these efforts are recognized and valued by their guests.

Research by Jones et al. (2016) indicates that many travelers are willing to pay a premium for sustainable accommodations. Still, the cost implications of green investments leave many hoteliers uncertain about the actual willingness of guests to bear the extra expense. This study, therefore, aims to bridge that gap by examining consumer perceptions and motivations in the context of eco-friendly lodging. Ultimately, the findings support the idea that sustainability and profitability can coexist when hotels align their services with the values and expectations of their guests. Understanding guest behavior in this domain can contribute meaningfully to the advancement of responsible and sustainable tourism.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach, focusing on the collection and analysis of numerical data to explore travelers' attitudes toward eco-friendly hotel practices. A descriptive research design was employed to describe current patterns and behaviors among hotel guests, particularly in situations where surveying the entire population was not feasible due to time and resource constraints. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed primarily via Google Forms, enabling both online and face-to-face data collection. The questionnaire included close-ended questions developed based on prior research to ensure relevance and reliability. The study was conducted across various locations within Kathmandu, including popular tourist areas and urban centers, to capture diverse guest perspectives. It targeted a range of hotel types, from budget to mid-range, which had adopted some form of sustainable practice. A convenience sampling technique was used to select participants based on their availability and willingness to participate in the survey. In total, 200 responses were gathered. Data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel, focusing on frequency distributions and percentage calculations to interpret the responses. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were upheld. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their rights, privacy, and anonymity were fully respected.

Results

This section presents the background information of the respondents who participated in the survey. Understanding their demographics helps to see how different groups view sustainability and willingness to pay extra for eco-friendly hotel stays. The profile of the respondents includes their gender, age group, level of education, and nationality.

Table 1 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Male	126	63	63	63
Female	70	35	35	98
Prefer Not To Say	4	2	2	100
Total	200	100	100	

The above table shows the distribution of respondents based on the gender. Among the 200 individuals, 63% Male (i.e. 126 individuals), are 35% Female (i.e. 70 individuals), are 2% Prefer not to say (i.e. 4 individuals) .This data indicates that there are maximum number males who gave the data.

Table 2 Age

Age Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-25	95	47.5	47.5	47.5
25-40	81	40.5	40.5	88
40-60	24	12	12	100
Total	200	100%	100%	

Most of the respondents are found in the age category 18-25 years which constitute 47.5% of the total ,81 respondents (40.5 %) are age between 25-40 shows that probably the survey targeted or attracted and age group younger than 25 only 24 respondents (12%) fall within the 41-60 years. This shows that nearly 88% of respondents are below the age of 40 suggesting survey either targeted or attracted a younger demographic.

Table 3 Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Student	74	37	37	37
Employed	94	74	74	111
Unemployed	29	14.5	14.5	125.5
Business	1	0.5	0.5	126
Teacher	1	0.5	0.5	126.5
Forex Trading	1	0.5	0.5	127
Total	200	127	127	

The majority of respondents were either employed or students. Out of the Total, 94 respondents (46.27%) reported being employed, while 74 (36.47%) were students. Additionally, 29 respondents (14.29%) identified as unemployed. A Small number of including one teacher, one business person, and one engaged in forex trading, each representing 0.49% of the total. This shows a good mix of working and academic backgrounds in the survey responses.

Table 4 Education

Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
High School Or Above	73	36.5	36.5	36.5
Bachelor's Degree	98	49	49	85.5
Master's Degree	29	14.5	14.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

Most people who took part in the survey were bachelor's degree holder which is 98 (I.e 49%), this shows that the survey mainly reached individuals with strong educational backgrounds, with over 60% having higher education.

Table 5: I Actively Seek Eco-Friendly Hotels When Travelling.

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	53	26.5	26.5	26.5
Agree	99	49.5	49.5	76
Neutral	36	18	18	94
Strongly Disagree	8	4	4	98
Disagree	4	2	2	100
Total	200	100	100	

The table presents the distribution of responses regarding whether individuals actively seek Eco- friendly hotels while travelling. Among the 200 respondents: 53 Individuals (26.5%) strongly agree with the statement, 99 individuals (49.5%) agree with the statement, 36 Individuals (18%) feel neutral about the statement, 4 Individuals (2%) disagree with the statement, 8 Individuals (4%) strongly disagree with the statement. The data indicates that a significant majority- more than 76% positively support the idea of choosing eco-friendly accommodations, reflecting strong awareness and interest in sustainable travel.

Table 6: I Believe Staying at Eco-Friendly Hotels Contributes To Environmental Protection

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	55	27.5	27.5	27.5
Agree	90	45	45	72.5
Neutral	36	18	18	90.5
Strongly Disagree	8	4	4	94.5
Disagree	11	5.5	5.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

Most people (72.5%) believe that staying in eco-friendly hotels does help protect the environment. This shows that many travelers feel their choices can make a positive difference. On the other hand, about 25.5% were either unsure or didn't agree, which could mean they're not fully convinced or don't know enough about how these hotels help. Overall, the response shows a strong interest in supporting the environment, but also that some people still have questions.

Table 7: I Feel Guilty Staying at Non-Sustainable Hotels

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	22	11	11	11
Agree	82	41	41	52
Neutral	52	26	26	78
Strongly Disagree	21	10.5	10.5	88.5
Disagree	23	11.5	11.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

About 52% of respondents (104 people) said they feel guilty staying at hotels that are not eco-friendly, with 11% strongly agreeing and 41% agreeing. Meanwhile, 26% (52 people) were neutral and unsure how they felt about this. Around, 22% (44 people) disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing that not everyone feels guilty about staying in non-sustainable hotels. This mix of answers suggest that while many travelers care about sustainability, some either don't think about it too much or don't see it as a personal concern.

Table 8 I Would Book an Eco-Friendly Hotel even it's Less Conveniently Located

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	26	13	13	13
Agree	87	43.5	43.5	56.5
Neutral	48	24	24	80.5
Disagree	27	13.5	13.5	94
Strongly Disagree	12	6	6	100
Total	200	100	100	

The above chart shows that a lot of traveler care about doing the right thing in the environment, even if it means a bit of extra hassle. About one if four weren't sure how they felt, maybe still deciding or thinking it over. And around 20% said they'd rather choose convenience over being eco-friendly. So, while many are willing to make some sacrifices for the planet, other still prefer the easiest option.

Table 9 I Am Willing to Pay 5-10% More Per Night for an Eco-Certified Hotel

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Yes	73	36.5	36.5	36.5
No	32	16	16	52.5
Maybe	95	47.5	47.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

About 37% of people said yes they're okay with paying a little extra to stay at eco-friendly hotels. Almost half weren't sure and said maybe. Around 16% said no and don't want to pay more. This shows many travelers care about the environment but some are still thinking about the extra cost.

Table 10 I Would Pay Extra If Hotel Uses Renewable Energy (Solar- Hydro Power)

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	17	8.5	8.5	8.5
Agree	81	40.5	40.5	49
Neutral	62	31	31	80
Disagree	23	11.5	11.5	91.5
Strongly Disagree	17	8.5	8.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

Most people are open to paying extra if a hotel uses renewable energy like solar or hydro power. About 49% said they agree or strongly agree with this idea. Around 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing some are not willing to pay more just because of renewable energy use.

Overall, many travelers seem ready to support greener energy, but some are still unsure.

Table 11 Higher Prices Are Justified If the Hotel Supports Local Communities (E.g Hires, Locally, Sources Organic Food)

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	36	18	18	18
Agree	83	41.5	41.5	59.5
Neutral	43	21.5	21.5	81
Disagree	27	13.5	13.5	94.5
Strongly Disagree	11	5.5	5.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that a majority of people agree that higher hotel prices are acceptable if the hotel supports local communities for example, by hiring local staff and using organic food. Around 60% agree or strongly agree with this idea, showing a positive attitude towards socially responsible practices. Some people are neutral, while a smaller group disagrees, likely preferring affordability over community support. Overall, the response strongly in favour of ethical hotel practices, even at a higher cost.

Table 12 I'd Pay More for Hotels with Zero-Waste Policies (E.g. No Single Use Plastics)

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	31	15.5	15.5	15.5
Agree	86	43	43	58.5
Neutral	50	25	25	83.5
Disagree	19	9.5	9.5	93
Strongly Disagree	14	7	7	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that many people are willing to pay more for hotels that follow zero waste policies, like avoiding single use plastics. About 43% agree with this idea, and 15.5% strongly agree showing clear support for eco-friendly practices. Around 25% are neutral, meaning they're unsure or don't feel strong either way. A smaller number, about 16.5%, disagree or strongly disagree, possibly because of concerns about cost or convenience. Overall, most people have a positive attitude toward paying a little extra for sustainable, zero waste hotel.

Table 13 Lack of Awareness about Eco-Friendly Hotel Options Prevent Me from Booking Them

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	28	14	14	14
Agree	100	50	50	64
Neutral	45	22.5	22.5	86.5
Disagree	22	11	11	97.5
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that many people don't choose eco-friendly hotels simply because they aren't aware of them. Half of the respondents (50%) agree, and 14% strongly agree that a lack of awareness stops them from booking these kinds of hotels. About 22.5% are neutral they might know a little but not enough to influence their decision. A smaller group, around 13.55 disagrees, meaning they feel informed enough. Overall, the results suggest that better promotion and awareness of eco-friendly hotel options could encourage more people to choose them.

Table 14 Limited Availability of Certified Hotels in My Travel Destinations is A Barrier

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	22	11	11	11
Agree	92	46	46	57
Neutral	52	26	26	83
Disagree	24	12	12	95
Strongly Disagree	10	5	5	100
Total	200	100	100	

The survey results indicate that the limited availability of certified hotels in travel destinations is perceived as a significant barrier by a considerable portion of respondents. Out of the total 200 participants, 11% strongly agreed and 46% agreed with the statement, making a combined 57% who view this as an obstacle to their travel plans. Meanwhile, 26% remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or mixed opinions on whether this factor directly impacts their travel experience. On the other hand, 12% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed, indicating that for about 17% of respondents, the lack of certified hotels is not a major concern.

Table 15 I Don't Think the Extra Cost Translates to a Better Experience

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	24	12	12	12
Agree	96	48	48	60
Neutral	50	25	25	85

Disagree	17	8.5	8.5	93.5
Strongly Disagree	13	6.5	6.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that many people (about 60%) feel that paying extra at eco-friendly hotels doesn't always mean a better experience. Some are unsure, while a smaller group disagrees and believes the extra cost is worth it. Overall, most people question whether the higher price truly adds value. 50% people (25%) stayed neutral, meaning they are unsure or don't have a strong opinion. This indicates that a majority of guests may not find the value for the higher price in such hotels. Therefore, it is important for eco-friendly hotels to match their pricing with quality services to meet customer expectations.

Table 16 Discounts /Promotions Would Motivate Me to Choose Eco-Friendly Hotels

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	30	15	15	15
Agree	110	55	55	70
Neutral	36	18	18	88
Disagree	11	5.5	5.5	93.5
Strongly Disagree	13	6.5	6.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that most people (around 70%) would be more likely to choose eco-friendly hotels if discounts or promotions were offered. This indicates that financial incentives play a key role in influencing customer decisions. Only 12% disagreed with this idea. So this data shows that, People care about environment, but price is a still deciding factor. Offering deals can encourage budget conscious travelers to support sustainable practices. Some are neutral, and small number wouldn't be influenced by offers. Overall, good deals clearly help attract more guests to eco-friendly options.

Table 17 Peer Recommendations Strongly Influence My Choice of Sustainable Hotels

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	27	13.5	13.5	13.5
Agree	92	46	46	59.5
Neutral	55	27.5	27.5	87
Disagree	18	9	9	96
Strongly Disagree	8	4	4	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that many people (about 60%) are influenced by recommendations from friends when choosing sustainable hotels. So, this suggests that most people rely on the opinions of friends, family, or trusted individuals when deciding where to stay. Only 13% of people said they are not influenced by others, while 27.5% were neutral. Therefore, it is clear that word-

of-mouth and personnel recommendations are powerful tools. Sustainable hotels can benefit greatly by encouraging satisfied guests to share their experiences and leave positive reviews.

Table 18 I'd Choose Sustainable Hotels More If Employers/Universities Reimbursed Part of the Cost

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	23	11.5	11.5	11.5
Agree	102	51	51	62.5
Neutral	52	26	26	88.5
Disagree	15	7.5	7.5	96
Strongly Disagree	8	4	4	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data shows that more than half of the people would be encouraged to book sustainable hotels if part of the cost was reimbursed by their workplace or college. Many people are price sensitive, especially students or the working individuals. While some are unsure only a smaller group wouldn't be influenced by this. This could be because they don't trust the idea, or prioritize other things like luxury or convenience. This suggests that financial help could make eco-friendly travel more appealing, most of the people are willing to choose sustainable options if the cost is shared.

Overall, the data shows strong potential for policies that support sustainable choices through cost sharing models

Table 19 I Plan to Prioritize Eco-Friendly Hotels More In The Future

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	35	17.5	17.5	17.5
Agree	117	58.5	58.5	76
Neutral	37	18.5	18.5	94.5
Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	97
Strongly Disagree	6	3	3	100
Total	200	100	100	

The data clearly shows a growing shift in mindset of most people genuinely want to support eco-friendly hotels in the future. Nearly, 76% agreed that they plan to prioritize eco-friendly hotels in the future. It means the people are aware of environmental issues and are willing to change their habits in favor of greener choices. With over half agreeing and mainly strongly agreeing, it's clear that sustainability is becoming a bigger priority in travel choices. Only a smaller number are hesitant, showing that more travelers are ready to make greener decisions.

Table 20 I Support Mandatory Sustainability Certifications of All Hotels

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	39	19.5	19.5	19.5
Agree	103	51.5	51.5	71
Neutral	37	18.5	18.5	89.5
Disagree	12	6	6	95.5
Strongly Disagree	9	4.5	4.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

The finding reveals that a large majority about (71%) of respondents support the idea of making sustainability certifications mandatory for all hotels. Many people feel that all hotels should be required to have sustainability certificates. Many people accept the ideas of mandatory sustainability certificates for hotels: Strongly Agree: 39 people (19.5%), Agree: 103 people (51.5%). So, a total of 142 people (71%) support making sustainability certificates mandatory.

Conclusion

This study highlights a growing awareness and positive attitude among travelers toward eco-friendly hotel practices. A significant portion of respondents expressed willingness to support sustainable hotels, even at a higher cost, especially when green efforts are visible—such as using renewable energy, reducing plastic, and supporting local communities. However, challenges such as lack of awareness, limited availability of certified hotels, and concerns over value for money still hinder widespread adoption. The findings suggest that financial incentives, better promotion, and increased education can play a key role in encouraging sustainable choices. As environmental consciousness rises, especially among younger generations, eco-friendly accommodations are likely to become a standard expectation. Hotels must align pricing, quality, and sustainability to meet guest expectations and promote responsible tourism.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Transparency: The authors declare that the manuscript is honest, truthful and transparent, that no important aspects of the study have been omitted and that all deviations from the planned study have been made clear. This study followed all rules of writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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