Green Hotel Certification and Guest Perceptions: Sustainability Practices in Nepal's Hospitality Sector

Mandira Gautam
Nesfield International College
mandira.gautam77@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2835-9060

Damodar Niraula
Nesfield International College
damodarniraula@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6858-3893

Abstract

Background: The global hospitality sector is increasingly emphasizing sustainable tourism, with green certifications influencing traveler preferences. However, in Nepal, the adoption of formal certification systems is limited, and sustainable practices are often informal and unstructured.

Objectives: This study examines the influence of green hotel practices and certifications on guest satisfaction in Nepal. It aims to synthesize global evidence on certification impacts and identify which sustainability practices are most visible and valued by guests in the Nepalese context.

Methods: A qualitative, narrative synthesis approach was employed, analyzing global literature and TripAdvisor reviews from 20 certified and non-certified Nepalese hotels. Guest reviews were coded for keywords related to observable sustainability practices.

Findings: Guest reviews in Nepal indicate that visible practices—such as organic and locally sourced food, energy efficiency, plastic reduction, and community support—are more strongly associated with satisfaction and positive perception than formal certifications alone. While certifications enhance credibility, tangible eco-friendly efforts are more directly appreciated and noticed by guests.

OPEN ACCESS

Conclusion: For hotels in Nepal to remain competitive, they should integrate both visible sustainability practices and credible certifications. Strengthening policy support, industry awareness, and strategic guest communication is critical for advancing sustainable hospitality in the country.

Novelty: This study provides the first integrated analysis of global certification literature and real guest feedback specific to Nepal's hospitality sector, highlighting the distinct primacy of tangible practices over certification labels in shaping guest satisfaction in a developing economy.

Keywords: green hotel certification, sustainable hospitality, guest perception, Nepal, eco-friendly practices

Introduction

In recent years, the tourism industry has witnessed a notable shift toward environmentally responsible practices, reflecting the growing consciousness of travelers regarding sustainability. Surveys indicate that a majority of travelers now prefer destinations and services that minimize environmental impact, with 76% of global travelers expressing a desire for sustainable options in their trips (World Economic Forum, 2023). This trend is further supported by industry analyses, which highlight the substantial economic growth of the sustainable tourism market, projected to increase from US$3.3 trillion in 2022 to US$11.4 trillion by 2032, reflecting an annual growth rate of 14% and underscoring the rising importance of sustainability in travel decisions (Travel Weekly Asia, 2025). The shift is largely driven by a rising awareness of environmental issues and a collective desire to contribute towards sustainability. Consequently, hotels and resorts that prioritize energy efficiency are increasingly favored by environmentally conscious guests (Llanso, 2024). The hospitality industry is responding to these expectations by focusing on sustainability through energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and biodiversity protection, while also addressing regulatory requirements and the growing demands of customers and employees (World Wide Technology, 2024).

The growing global focus on sustainable hospitality has led to a significant rise in the number and diversity of green hotel certifications across the world. According to Gitnux (2025), green hotel certifications, such as LEED and Green Key, have been adopted in over 30 countries, with the total number of eco-labels and certifications increasing by approximately 40% between 2015 and 2022. This reflects increasing consumer demand for eco-friendly accommodation, as approximately 83% of travelers now seek sustainable options, and nearly 75% of guest prefer hotels with recognized green certifications. Moreover, hotels that adopt such certifications have been found to experience higher occupancy and profitability, making sustainability a compelling priority for the global hospitality sector (Gitnux, 2025).

Despite the increasing global push toward sustainability, research on how these green practices are adopted and standardized in developing countries like Nepal remains limited. While international travelers are increasingly environmentally conscious, only a limited number of

hotels in Nepal have adopted internationally recognized green certifications or aligned their operations with global sustainability benchmarks. Notable examples include Barahi Jungle Lodge (ISO 14001:2015 certification), Hotel Barahi Kathmandu (certification for excellence in sustainable practices) etc. Furthermore, the first-ever GSTC-aligned sustainability training for hoteliers in Nepal was conducted in Kathmandu in May 2024, jointly organized by Agoda, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), signaling a growing institutional interest in standardizing green practices (Agoda, 2024). However, these efforts remain fragmented as many hotels in Nepal adopt sustainable practices informally through organic food, community support, or plastic reduction, yet these initiatives are rarely formalized through certification or effectively communicated to guests.

A critical gap exists between global green hotel certification standards and the sustainability practices currently observed in Nepal's hospitality sector. While hotels worldwide are adopting structured, measurable sustainability frameworks, many Nepalese hotels still rely on informal or locally driven initiatives that rarely meet internationally recognized criteria. This disparity is due to fragmented implementation, a lack of standardized certification, and limited policy support, which hinders the widespread adoption of formal sustainable practices (Khanal, n.d.; Lamichhane & Neupane, 2022). As a result, Nepal's visibility in global sustainable tourism remains limited raising concerns about whether current practices adequately address the environmental challenges faced by a country heavily dependent on its natural beauty and cultural heritage for tourism. Despite growing global attention to sustainable hospitality, research in Nepal remains limited, particularly on how these efforts influence guest perception, satisfaction, trust, and booking intentions. This study addresses this gap by examining TripAdvisor reviews from certified and non-certified hotels in Nepal, focusing on how these sustainability practices are experienced by guests and which initiatives are most visible and valued. The study focuses on the following research questions.

i. What does existing global empirical evidence reveal about the influence of green hotel certification on guest perception, trust, and booking intentions, and how are these effects reflected in Nepalese guest reviews?

ii. Which sustainability practices in hotels are most visible and valued by guests?

Literature Review

Concept of Green Hotels, Green Certification and Sustainability

Sustainability is currently a major pursuit in many industries, including tourism and hospitality (Shen et al., 2020). While definitions of sustainability vary, they consistently emphasize a balance among the three core pillars: environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The concept of sustainable development was first formalized by the Brundtland Commission, which defined it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, n.d.)

While conventional tourism is often associated with the availability of a clean natural environment, all sectors of this global industry create pressure on the environment. The hotel industry, due to its very specific function, operating characteristics and service provided, consumes substantial quantities of energy, water and non-durable products (Bohdanowicz, 2006). At present, the hotel industry is one of the key players in the development of the travel industry, and it has a certain degree of impact on the environment (Lin et al., 2023). In fact, the hospitality industry around the world accounts for approximately 1% of global carbon emissions (Gitnux, 2025). And, in recognition of environmental degradation, governments, along with the green movement within the hotel and tourism industry, and travelers, have become increasingly aware of the need for more effective measures to protect the environment (Bohdanowicz, 2006). Therefore, incorporating green energy and environmental protection into the management strategy has become one of the focuses of the hotel industry (Lin et al., 2023).

The term "green hotels" describes hotels that strive to be more environment friendly through the efficient use of energy, water, and materials while providing quality services (Ad, 2017). Yadegaridehkordi et al. (2021) defined green hotels as "a natural tourist lodging developed and managed in environmentally sensitive ways to maintain its business environment and provide guests with green products, green services, and healthy, refreshing, and comfortable accommodation that reflect the features of natural ecologies." Hotels worldwide implement sustainability by focusing on three primary areas: energy, water, and waste management. Energy initiatives typically involve solar power, energy-efficient lighting, motion sensors, and efficient air-conditioning systems. Water conservation measures include dual-flush toilets, towel and linen reuse programs, low-fixtures, and rainwater harvesting. Waste strategies emphasize segregation, recycling, composting, and applying the 3Rs principle—reduce, reuse, and recycle (Wickramasinghe, 2016). Together, these integrated practices aim to minimize environmental impact while maintaining operational efficiency.

Green certifications refer to the formal recognition of an entity's adherence to environmentally sustainable practices, such as energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, and use of eco-friendly materials. These certifications enhance a hotel's environmental credibility and appeal to eco-conscious travelers (Kaithlin, 2024).

Green Hotel Certification Programs

Green hotel certifications are increasingly important as eco-conscious travelers prefer hotels that demonstrate verified sustainability efforts. These certifications evaluate critical areas such as energy and water use, waste management, eco-friendly products, and community engagement, providing credible verification and preventing greenwashing (WuBook, 2025). Some widely recognized certification programs include:

- Green Key: Evaluates 13 key aspects, including resource management, staff involvement, carbon footprint reduction, and water efficiency. It is GSTC-recognized and emphasizes operational sustainability (Green Key, 2025; Lozanova, 2021; WuBook, 2025).

- Green Globe: Offers 44 mandatory core criteria with over 380 indicators, providing certification, training, and third-party audits across 83 countries. GSTC-recognized, it is considered one of the highest standards globally (Green Globe, n.d.; Lozanova, 2021).
- EarthCheck: A scientific benchmarking certification operating in 70 countries, providing advisory, software, and certification services. GSTC- recognized and focused on operational sustainability (EarthCheck, 2025; Lozanova, 2021).
- LEED: A global building-focused certification assessing design, construction, and operational efficiency, awarding Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels (Holowka, 2016; Proximity Hotel, n.d.).
- GSTC: A U.S. based non-profit organization that sets global standards for sustainable tourism, built around four pillars: management, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental impacts (Hocking, n.d.).
- BIO Hotels, Travelife, EU Ecolabel, ISO 14001/50001: These programs emphasize holistic environmental responsibility, organic products, resource conservation, biodiversity protection, and sustainable management practices (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, 2021; WuBook, 2025).

Green hotel certifications are more than just symbolic badges—they significantly influence guest trust, booking behavior, and sustainability outcomes. A study found that certification labels such as Green Key or LEED do influence travelers' online hotel booking decisions, although factors like cancellation policy, rating, price, and location often carry more weight; still, about 40% of travelers indicated willingness to pay more for certified hotels (Assaker & O'Connor, 2023). In a similar vein, Qubbaj et al. (2023) observed that while green certificates positively affect customer's booking decisions, price and location remain decisive, underscoring that certification operates as one component within a broader decision-making process. Complementing this, Chi et al. (2022) found that verified eco-labels can strengthen customers' intentions to visit, reinforcing the connection between certification and booking behavior.

Beyond influencing choice, certifications also build a positive hotel image and boost guest satisfaction and trust, especially when sustainability efforts are perceived as genuine and well-integrated into service delivery (Moise et al., 2021; Zareh et al., 2023). At the operational level, certified hotels often report benefits such as higher occupancy rates, increased brand loyalty, and cost savings from efficient energy and water use, thereby advancing both environmental and competitive performance (Kaithlin, 2024). Broader reviews confirm that green certification contributes to operational efficiency, economic resilience, and credible communication with eco-conscious markets (Velaoras et al., 2025). Similarly, Fatawu et al. (2024) emphasized that certification significantly elevates both perceived service quality and customer satisfaction, suggesting that guests associate eco-certified hotels with superior standard of operation. Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of how green hotel

certifications influence guest perceptions and behaviors, offering valuable insights for the hospitality industry.

Green Hotel Practices in Developed and Developing Nations

The global hospitality industry has increasingly embraced sustainability through the implementation of green certifications, energy-saving technologies, and eco-conscious operational strategies. Developed nations have demonstrated leadership in embedding green practices into hotel infrastructure and guest services.

In the developed world, several hotels exemplify leadership in sustainable hospitality. For instance, Hotel Marcel in the United States stands out as a benchmark, being the first hotel to operate entirely without fossil fuels. Located in New Haven, Connecticut, it is both LEED Platinum certified and meets Passive House standards, employing rooftop solar panels, triple-glazed windows, and all-electric kitchens to minimize its carbon footprint (Thomas, 2022).

Similarly, Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in Stockholm was the first building in Sweden to achieve the LEED certification. It implements innovative sustainability measures such as a double-glass energy wall generating 1MW of heat daily and lake water cooling to reduce its environmental impact. The hotel prioritizes locally sourced, seasonal food with minimal waste through compacting leftovers and packaging. Their "Blu Planet" initiative encourages towel reuse, supporting clean water projects for children via the 'Just a Drop' charity. The hotel's efforts have earned it eco-labels like the Nordic Swan and Green Key certifications (Sustainable Brands, 2018).

Another exemplary property is the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel in Chicago, a LEED Silver-certified and eco-awarded property which integrates sustainability into its architecture, recycling 92% of construction waste and using 17% locally sourced materials. According to Sustainable Brands (2018), the hotel has achieved significant energy and water savings through LED lighting, efficient equipment, and renewable energy sources. The hotel promotes green guest behavior by offering incentives for biking, carpooling, and electric vehicles, along with access to a large green roof. Meetings feature healthy, locally sourced Brain Food and filtered water to reduce plastic waste.

The Proximity Hotel in Greensboro, North Carolina, opened in 2007, was the first LEED Platinum-certified hotel in the U.S. It integrates over 70 sustainable strategies that demonstrate how eco-friendly design can coexist with luxury. Highlights include use of solar panels to heat hotel's water, regenerative-drive elevators, low-flow fixtures for water and energy savings, and 87% construction waste recycling. The building also sourced 46% of its materials regionally and installed lighting that floods 97% of guest spaces with daylight (HNN Newswire, 2008).

Developing countries are also making strides in green hospitality. In Sri Lanka, the Heritance Kandalama Hotel, designed by Geoffrey Bawa, was one of the first LEED-certified hotels globally, integrating into its natural cliffside environment and earning Green Globe accreditation (Heritance Kandalama, 2024). In India, Radisson Blu Nagpur is the LEED Gold-certified hotel that implements a comprehensive sustainability strategy, including energy-efficient design and EarthCheck certification. It runs entirely on wind energy, with solar water heating and energy-saving technologies (Sustainable Brands, 2018).

The Bintan Lagoon Resort in Indonesia achieved LEED Silver for its commercial interiors in 2011, the first golf resort in Southeast Asia to do so. Notable features include its private power plant and water treatment facilities aimed at reducing resource use (Bintan Lagoon Resort, 2024). Similarly, Raffles Hotel in Singapore has been Green Globe-certified for sustainability. The hotel has implemented green technologies, such as solar power, water-saving systems, and waste recycling, while preserving its heritage and luxury (IMPT Travel, 2025). In Bali, The Green Village is a completely off-grid and eco-certified resort made primarily from bamboo. The resort uses solar power, rainwater harvesting, and local materials to ensure a minimal environmental impact. (IMPT Travel, 2025).

India's ITC Grand Chola, the country's largest LEED Zero Carbon-certified hotel and recipient of a 5-star GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) rating, integrates extensive sustainable features including a 12.6 MW on-site wind farm that exports surplus power, a green roof and reflective materials to lower heat absorption, high-efficiency HVAC controls, and a full-scale wastewater treatment system (Kumar, 2013).

Beyond individual examples, broader patterns reveal significant differences between developed and developing nations in adopting green hotel certifications. Developed countries benefit from strong regulatory frameworks, abundant funding, and government incentives such as property tax rebates, expedited permitting, and grants, which make achieving certifications like LEED more feasible (City of Orlando, n.d.; Local Leaders in Sustainability, n.d.). In contrast, hotels in developing countries face structural challenges, including high renovation costs, limited awareness, low managerial interest, and scarce technical expertise, which hinder adoption of local or international certification systems (EHL Hospitality Business School, 2024; Moramudali & Manawadu, 2022; Velaoras et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2019). Overall, while developed countries advance rapidly through supportive policies, developing nations require targeted investments, policy reforms, and international collaboration to make sustainable practices more achievable across the hospitality sector.

Green Hotel Practices and Certification Status in Nepal

Sustainable hospitality in Nepal is currently in transition, with emerging adoption of green practices and a growing interest in formal certification systems. While green strategies have been implemented in selected eco-lodges and boutique properties, nationwide uptake of recognized certifications remains limited. One of the earliest examples is Barahi Jungle Lodge, which achieved ISO 14001:2015 certification for its structured environmental management system. The lodge has adopted various eco-friendly practices aimed at reducing its environmental footprint, reflecting a strong commitment to protecting natural resources and offering guests a more sustainable and authentic travel experience (Nepal Sanctuary Treks, 2023).

Similarly, The Pavilion Himalayas (The Farm) in Pokhara earned the Green Pearls International Sustainability certificate and built fully on-site systems, including biogas generation, rainwater harvesting, greywater treatment, and solar energy, to support sustainable operations and community engagement. They also support the community school and health post as well as managing their own charitable work under Right4Children and The Pavilions Foundation

(Nepal Sanctuary Treks, 2023). Likewise, The Hotel Barahi Kathmandu was awarded with a certification for excellence in sustainable practices by Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFTiger). The hotel received remarkable scores in four key criteria of TOFTiger's eco-footprint rating which acknowledged the hotel's moderate environmental impact while highlighting its effective integration of environmental and social considerations into its operations, along with well-executed decision-making processes and program management (Fiscal Nepal, 2025).

Furthermore, Hotel Shambala received the Travelife Gold Certification for sustainable accommodation, implementing water and energy-saving measures such as low-flow faucets, energy-efficient lighting, rainwater harvesting, and EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations, all while maintaining guest comfort (Hotel Shambala, 2024). Prakriti Resort and Organic Farm has similarly been awarded the Travelife Certification for Sustainable Accommodation, recognizing its commitment to responsible environmental, social, and ethical hospitality practices (Ecosphere News, 2025). Everest Summit Lodge is affiliated with Travelife and demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainable tourism, including solar-powered hot water, energy-efficient lighting, the elimination of plastic water bottles, and support for local communities through hiring and sourcing fresh produce locally (Nepal Sanctuary Treks, 2018). Moreover, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge was independently verified by Yardstick UK and earned Travelife Gold Standard certification in sustainability audits conducted in 2017 and 2019, reflecting its leadership in regenerative tourism and responsible conservation practices such as community support and eco-friendly operations (Nepal Sanctuary Treks, n.d.; Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, n.d.). Aloft Kathmandu Thamel has achieved the prestigious ISO 14001: 2015 certification for implementing various eco-friendly initiatives, including energy-efficient technologies, waste management strategies, and sustainable guest experiences (The Kathmandu Post, 2024).

Another significant milestone in Nepal's journey toward sustainable hospitality is marked by Soaltee Westend Premier in Nepalgunj, the first LEED Silver-certified hotel in Nepal, featuring eco-friendly infrastructure such as a Building Management System (BMS) software, radiant technology for cooling, energy-efficient boilers, and a sewage treatment plant supplying 100% of its irrigation, flushing, and cooling needs (Nepali Times, 2020). The hotel was awarded 'Best Debut Green Hotel' at the 14th Hospitality India & Explore the World Annual International Travel Awards and recognized for sustainable development by Nepal's Ministry of Tourism on World Tourism Day (Nepali Times, 2020; Republica, 2024).

Beyond individual properties, efforts to professionalize sustainability in Nepalese hotels are gaining momentum. In May 2024, the first GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council)-aligned hotel sustainability training was held at Kathmandu Marriott Hotel, introducing 60 stakeholders to global standards and reflecting growing institutional commitment (GSTC, 2024). Despite these developments, adoption of sustainability practices in Nepal's hospitality sector remains limited, as the country still lacks a comprehensive certification framework and many initiatives remain informal or fragmented. To address this gap, Nepalese hotels could adopt measures such as solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, rainwater harvesting, natural ventilation, energy-efficient insulation, and the use of locally sourced sustainable materials,

which would help reduce resource consumption and minimize environmental impacts (SkillSewa, n.d.).

Bhattarai et al. (2025) highlighted the potential of green building approaches in advancing sustainability in Nepal's built environment. Green buildings, using eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient technologies, and water-saving systems, are particularly relevant given rising environmental pressures and urban expansion. These practices offer benefits such as lower energy use, improved indoor air quality, and reduced carbon emissions. However, challenges remain, including limited financial capacity, low consumer awareness, and lack of enforceable government policies, underscoring the need for structured policies, awareness campaigns, and incentives to promote sustainable construction in Nepal's hospitality sector (Bhattarai et al., 2025).

Furthermore, technical studies highlight Nepal's potential for energy-efficient hotel design. Bodach et al. (2016) demonstrated that passive design strategies like insulation, optimized glazing, and shading can reduce hotel energy use by up to 42%. Complementing this, the EU-supported BEEN initiative has piloted sustainable design practices in 200 buildings, addressing the lack of formal energy codes in Nepal. These findings underscore the importance of climate-responsive design in expanding green hospitality practices beyond certification (Bodach et al., 2016).

Nepal's hospitality sector is beginning to adopt green practices through a few leading hotels, but formal certifications remain limited. While research on tourist demand for certified green hotels in Nepal is scarce, global trends show that travelers increasingly value sustainability. As awareness grows locally, demand for eco-friendly accommodations is likely to rise. Coordinating hotel development with both global sustainability standards and local priorities will be essential for expanding green practices throughout Nepal. In this context, the objective of this research is to examine how green hotel certifications and sustainability practices influence guest perceptions, satisfaction, and booking intentions in Nepalese hotels, while identifying the most valued eco-friendly practices from the perspective of hotel guests.

Methods

This study used a qualitative, narrative synthesis approach to explore how green hotel certifications and sustainability practices influence guest perceptions, trust, and booking intentions in Nepalese hotels. It also identifies which eco-friendly practices are most noticed and valued by guests. The analysis draws on secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, industry reports, policy documents, reputable hospitality publications, and publicly available TripAdvisor guest reviews for 20 Nepalese hotels. Guest reviews were collected during August 2025.

A structured search was conducted using academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and SpringerLink, using keywords like "green hotel certification," "guest perception," "eco-hotel," "sustainable hospitality," and "sustainability practices in hotels." Guest review data were collected using relevant terms related to

sustainability, including "eco-friendly," "organic food," "plastic reduction," "community support," "solar energy," and "waste management," to ensure that only comments reflecting observable sustainable practices were included.

The study included sources relevant to hospitality and focused on green certifications or sustainability practices. Studies unrelated to tourism and hospitality, or those lacking conceptual or empirical relevance, were excluded. This process ensured that the literature and guest review data were credible, relevant, and focused on measurable or observable sustainability efforts.

The selected literature and guest reviews were analyzed narratively to combine global evidence with the Nepalese context. This method integrates insights from published research with real guest experiences, highlighting tangible practices, guest behaviors, and sustainability-related experiences rather than relying solely on statistical data. Guest reviews were carefully selected to include only comments that specifically mentioned sustainable practices, so general opinions were not misinterpreted. This process helped identify patterns and practices that guests consistently valued.

By combining published research and real guest experiences, the study provides a holistic understanding of how certifications and visible sustainability initiatives shape guest perceptions, satisfaction, and booking intentions in Nepalese hotels, as well as which eco-friendly practices are most appreciated.

Findings

The detailed tables of coded reviews and keyword frequencies are presented in Appendix A, while this section narratively explains the key findings with support from guest comments.

Guest Awareness and Perception of Eco-Friendly Practices

Analysis of Nepalese hotels indicated that guests were highly aware of eco-friendly practices, particularly in hotels that displayed certifications or emphasized sustainability. In Nepal, guests explicitly acknowledged these practices, especially in certified hotels. For instance, a guest at Hotel Barahi Kathmandu (TOFTiger Rating) remarked:

"I liked the eco-friendly nature of the hotel which did not use plastics and promoted environmental-friendly practices."

Similarly, at Soaltee Westend Premier, Nepalgunj (LEED Silver certified), guests stated:

"Choosing your green hotel was a conscious and rewarding decision. The harmonious blend of comfort and sustainability impressed us at every turn."

"Its concept and eco friendly nature stole my heart right away when one of the guy introduced me to hotel in details."

Even non-certified hotels received recognition for sustainability awareness. For example, a guest at Dwarika's Hotel, Kathmandu, noted:

"Aside from being a literal oasis in the middle of crazy Kathmandu, the hotel is environmentally sustainable, zero-waste and chemical free."

Likewise, at Dwarika's Resort Dhulikhel, a guest commented:

"Once you are in the resort then its little difficult to walk down to main town square as its bit of walking but once you are in then just sit back and enjoy the views and their hospitality - best eco friendly resort."

Moreover, at Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, a guest highlighted:

"Peaceful Elephant-Friendly Eco Lodge - High animal welfare and environmental standards. We loved the fact that the ethos at Tiger Tops is eco-friendly and they do amazing work with elephants - no chains, no saddles and no tourist circus."

These observations reflect the importance of eco-certifications in shaping guest perception. Global research shows that certifications such as LEED and Travelife act as credible signals of sustainability, enhancing guest trust (Assaker & O'Connor, 2023; Yu et al., 2017; Chi et al., 2022). Notably, in the Nepalese context, guests also recognized and appreciated visible sustainable practices at non-certified hotels, demonstrating that practical eco-friendly initiatives can significantly influence perception even without formal certification.

Visibility and Value of Sustainability Practices

Guest reviews revealed clear patterns in the sustainability practices that visitors consistently noticed and valued. The most frequently mentioned practices were organic food (177 mentions), eco-friendly initiatives (156 mentions), and general sustainability efforts (83 mentions). Other appreciated practices included community support and local products (40 mentions), solar panels (22 mentions), and use of natural materials (18 mentions). These frequency counts indicate that food-related sustainability and visible environmental initiatives are the most salient factors influencing guest perceptions (Details of keyword frequencies are provided in Appendix, Table 1)

Organic food emerged as a major driver of guest satisfaction. Guests frequently highlighted meals prepared from locally grown and organic ingredients, often linking them directly to the uniqueness and quality of their stay. For instance, at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge (Travelife Certification), guests emphasized:

"Everything is local and home made, including cake, biscuits, jam, marmalade, chutney, canapés and after dinner sweets."

"The food is organic and out of this world."

At Pavilion Himalayas Pokhara, guests noted:

"The food concept - farm to table - meant almost everything from the menu is grown within the farm, and the food was diverse and exceptional."

"The food here is grown in their organic farms and they have their own cows too produce their dairy. You can actually taste the freshness of the vegetables in the food."

At Dwarika's Resort Dhulikhel, other guests noted:

"The food, which mostly comes from a local organic farm is some of the best we have ever had in our world travels."

"With the fresh organic food, it adds on to the whole reason for existence..."

One guest at Namobuddha Resort, noted:

"The food was AMAZING! Fresh, unique, flavorful, homegrown, organic- we were in foodie heaven!"

Guests' comments at Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge also made us feel that they were really impressed with their food:

"The best part of your company which I really impressed that was Local organic food."

"Most of the provisions are supplied from their own organic farm (which you can have a tour round) and, I have to say, I have never tasted such beautiful vegetables - as a vegetarian, I really appreciated the mouthwatering dishes I received."

Eco-friendly practices such as plastic reduction and energy-saving measures were also recognized. A guest at Hotel Barahi, Kathmandu stated:

"Liked how they paid attention to sustainability and have kept reusable water bottles, refillable toiletries."

"It's also a hotel committed to reduced plastic use."

Similarly, at Barahi Jungle Lodge, a guest noted:

"I appreciate that they use no plastic and have a proper waste management system as well coz these factors are game changer for me."

Likewise, at Traditional Comfort Boutique Hotel, a guest commented:

"The hotel has a great mission to conserve energy, taking advantage of solar power."

Moreover, a guest at Hotel Shambala stated:

"The Hotel is also Eco friendly, you will notice that they keep one elevator off at all times to reduce CO2 emissions, but turn it back on during busy hours."

Community engagement and local support were also valued both in certified and non-certified eco-lodges, reinforcing the social dimension of sustainability. Guests at Barahi Jungle Lodge (ISO 14001:2015 certified) appreciated philanthropic and community-based initiatives:

"Additionally, the resort also supports philanthropic efforts in the community. Whether through eco-friendly excursions, local sourcing of ingredients for meals, or employment opportunities for community members, the lodge prioritizes responsible tourism practices."

Not only were we treated like royalty, but it genuinely felt as if we were being welcomed into their family - a family who were striving to conserve a beautiful part of the world and share it in a sustainable way, both with visitors and locals alike. It was worth every penny to know we were supporting sustainable practices and the local community.

Similarly, at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge (Travelife Certified), one guest wrote:

"The lodge supports local schools and participates in "Pack for a Purpose" where guests bring school supplies to donate."

Another guest at Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge observed:

"The Tiger group supports the local school, provides a regular clinic for local people, and uses its excellent organic farm to collaborate with local people, helping them introduce new crops and sources of revenue."

These findings reflect patterns identified in global literature, which highlight that guest value sustainability practices that are tangible, visible and socially engaging (Assaker & O'Connor,

2023; Pacheco et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2017). While certifications serve as credibility signals, the actual guest experience is strongly shaped by observable eco-friendly practices and local engagement. The frequency of mentions (e.g., 177 for organic food) underscores which practices are most likely to enhance satisfaction, loyalty, and positive perceptions in the Nepalese hospitality context.

Guest Satisfaction and Booking Intention

The integration of sustainability practices strongly influenced guest satisfaction and intention to return or recommend the hotel. For certified hotels, the combination of luxury and green credentials was particularly persuasive. A guest and Soaltee Westend Premier (LEED Silver) reflected:

"Thank you for proving that luxury and environmental responsibility can go hand in hand And Thank you for exceeding our expectations – we look forward to returning!"

Similarly, guests at The Pavilion Himalayas, Pokhara (Green Pearls Certification) commented:

"For those seeking a peaceful escape that supports the environment and local community, this is the perfect choice. Highly recommend!"

"Their philosophy, hospitality, quality of food, standard of accommodation and access to stunning local scenery combined to make a very special experience of rural Nepal life. We couldn't recommend this property more and would love to return."

For non-certified hotels, guest satisfaction often stems from visible sustainability practices and the natural environment offered by the property. For example, guests at Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge highlighted:

"To echo previous reviews, I chose to stay at Tiger Tops due to their sustainable outlook and ethical elephant treatment."

"We will be returning to Tiger Tops and only Tiger Tops in the future and are assured that no other lodge can match its eco-sustainability and customer service."

This shows how the hotel's animal welfare practices and eco-friendly values directly influenced the visitor's choice and satisfaction.

Likewise, a guest at Gokarna Forest Resort, Kathmandu wrote:

"Mixing business with pleasure, me and my wife, we both chose to stay in this place for its seclusion and sprawling green environment."

These experiences suggest that both certified and non-certified hotels can achieve high guest satisfaction when sustainability is communicated clearly and integrated into the stay experience. This aligns with global evidence that eco-certifications and visible sustainable measures positively influence guest loyalty, booking intentions, and overall satisfaction (Chi et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2017; Zareh et al., 2023).

Emotional and Experiential Impact

Sustainable practices often contributed to positive emotional experiences. Guests appreciated not only environmental benefits but also cultural, aesthetic, and wellness experiences associated with eco-friendly hotels. At The Dwarika's Hotel, Kathmandu, one guest remarked:

"I booked Dwarika's based on the reviews from Tripadvisor, but also because of the photos of this amazing property, the architectural details, the feeling of history that has been recreated, the use of amazing wooden furniture and of art situated everywhere you look."

At The Old Inn, Bandipur, another guest expressed:

"We had intended to stay only one night in Bandipur but once we saw the village & the Old Inn decided to extend our stay. No, the Old Inn is not a luxury stay but it is peaceful and authentic as well as probably the best place in town."

Similarly, at Barahi Jungle Lodge, a guest reflected:

"Not only were we treated like royalty, but it genuinely felt as if we were being welcomed into their family—a family who were striving to conserve a beautiful part of the world and share it in a sustainable way, both with visitors and locals alike. It was worth every penny to know we were supporting sustainable practices and the local community."

These statements show that sustainability practices can enhance emotional satisfaction beyond the functional benefits of eco-friendly infrastructure, creating memorable and meaningful experiences.

Global studies support this observation, highlighting that guests highly value tangible and immersive sustainable experiences, which contribute to their emotional satisfaction and positive perception of the hotel (Yu et al., 2017; Zareh et al., 2023; Moise et al., 2021). These findings indicate that integrating environmental responsibility with cultural and aesthetic elements amplifies the overall guest experience and strengthens loyalty.

Minor Challenges

Some guests noted minor discomforts associated with eco-friendly systems, but these were generally accepted as part of the sustainable experience. One guest at Soaltee Westend Premier mentioned:

"The only downsides are ………. the Eco-friendly a/c system doesn't really cool the rooms down enough…………"

Another guest highlighted the challenges of maintaining comfort in a hot climate:

"Because of the eco certification of the hotel they use radiant heat and cooling. We applaud the effort to be green but Nepalgunj is a very hot place ......"

Likewise, at Dwarika's Resort Dhulikhel, a guest commented:

"Once you are in the resort then its little difficult to walk down to main town square as its bit of walking but once you are in then just sit back and enjoy the views and their hospitality - best eco friendly resort."

These observations suggest that while sustainable practices may sometimes bring slight inconveniences, guests generally accept them as part of the eco-friendly experience, reflecting an appreciation for environmentally responsible accommodations.

Discussion

The analysis of guest reviews from 20 hotels revealed several important patterns about guest perceptions of sustainability and eco-friendly practices. Certified hotels, such as Soaltee

Westend Premier (LEED Silver) and Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge (Travelife Certification), often showcased their eco-friendly initiatives, which contributed to enhance credibility and trust among guests. However, guest comments indicated that while certifications were recognized, guests tended to focus more on the tangible aspects of their stay, such as visible eco-friendly operations, locally sourced food, and engagement with the community. This suggests that while certifications help signal a hotel's sustainability, it is the observable, real-world practices that most strongly shape guest satisfaction and overall perceptions, aligning with global findings that tangible sustainability has a more significant influence on guest satisfaction than the certification alone (Assaker & O'Connor, 2023; Chi et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2017).

Interestingly, non-certified hotels, such as Dwarika's Resort Dhulikhel and Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, also received high recognition for their sustainability efforts. Despite lacking formal certifications, these hotels were praised for offering organic food, using natural materials, and supporting local communities. These visible practices created a strong sense of environmental responsibility, demonstrating that eco-friendly actions can be just as impactful in shaping guest perceptions and satisfaction, even without formal accreditation.

Across both certified and non-certified hotels, several common sustainability practices were frequently noticed and appreciated by guests. Organic food (177 mentions), eco-friendly operations (156 mentions), general sustainability ethos (83 mentions) and community support (40 mentions) were the most frequently highlighted. Other practices such as the use of solar panels, natural materials, recycling, and elimination of plastics, were acknowledged but less frequently highlighted. Measures like rainwater harvesting, energy-saving lights, EV charging, and refillable toiletries were rarely mentioned, indicating lower visibility or guest awareness of the measures (Refer to Appendix, Table 2 for the full breakdown of keyword frequencies).These patterns reflect global evidence showing that while certifications build credibility, guests are often more strongly influenced by visible and tangible sustainability practices such as local food sourcing and community engagement when evaluating their hotel experiences (Assaker & O'Connor, 2023; Pacheco et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2017; Zareh et al., 2023). This indicates that hotel can achieve meaningful guest recognition and satisfaction by prioritizing observable sustainability initiatives, whether or not they hold formal certifications. The findings suggested several practical strategies for Nepalese hotels seeking to strengthen guest satisfaction and enhance their sustainability profile:

Emphasize Visible Sustainable Practices

Analysis of guest reviews revealed that tangible eco-friendly actions, such as organic and locally sourced food, energy and water-saving measures, and support for local communities, were highly valued. Hotels should prioritize clearly showcasing these efforts through marketing, guest interactions, and on-site signage. Making sustainable practices highly visible reinforces the hotel's commitment to environmental responsibility and enhances the overall guest experience.

Leverage Certifications as Trust Signals

Although certifications were not the primary drivers of guest satisfaction, recognized eco-certifications such as Travelife, LEED, or ISO 14001 strengthened credibility and fostered trust, particularly among international travelers. Hotels should use certifications strategically to differentiate themselves, signal authentic sustainability efforts, and appeal to guests who actively seek environmentally responsible accommodations.

Enhance Experiential Value

Guest feedback indicated that properties combining sustainability with cultural, architectural, or wellness elements provided more immersive and emotionally engaging stays. Hotels such as The Dwarika's Hotel in Kathmandu and Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge demonstrated how linking eco-friendly practices with heritage preservation, local craftmanship, and ethical wildlife practices can create unique experiences. Hotels should integrate these elements to deepen guest satisfaction, encourage loyalty, and enhance the overall perception of the property.

Strengthen Guest Communication

Reviews showed that clear communication of sustainability initiatives enhanced guest awareness and reinforced perceived environmental responsibility. Hotels should consistently communicate eco-friendly practices across websites, social media, brochures, and direct guest interactions. Transparent messaging builds guest trust, encourages repeat visits, and promotes positive word-of-mouth, while positioning sustainability as a core component of the hotel's brand identity.

In this regard, hotels should focus on visible sustainability practices such as using local and organic food, conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and engaging with local communities. These efforts need to be communicated through guest interactions, signage, and marketing to build trust. While certifications like LEED or Travelife can add credibility, hotels should not rely on them alone. The real impact on guest satisfaction comes from combining eco-friendly practices with cultural, aesthetic, and wellness experiences that create memorable and meaningful stays. Policymakers should also create supportive frameworks that encourage hotels to adopt sustainable practices and pursue certifications. This can be done by offering incentives, training, and technical assistance. Public awareness campaigns can also help increase demand for eco-friendly hotels, while partnerships with international organizations such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) can strengthen the overall capacity of the sector.

In addition, future studies could examine how much guests are willing to pay for sustainable practices and compare their perceptions of certified and non-certified hotels. Primary research through guest interviews, surveys, or focus groups would help capture deeper insights into how visitors experience sustainability. Long-term studies could also track how eco-friendly initiatives affect guest satisfaction and hotel performance over time. Altogether, such research would provide a clearer understanding of how green practices contribute to both guest experiences and the growth of Nepal's hospitality industry.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it relies primarily on secondary data and publicly available TripAdvisor reviews, which may not capture the full range of guest experiences or motivations. The sample size of 20 hotels may limit the representativeness of findings for all Nepalese hotels. Additionally, the study does not include direct field observations or interviews with hotel managers and staff, which could provide deeper insights into operational challenges and sustainability practices. Finally, while the narrative synthesis approach allows integration of global and local evidence, it does not provide statistical measures of the impact of certifications or eco-friendly practices on guest satisfaction. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results and planning future research.

Transparency Statement: The authors confirm that this study has been conducted with honesty and in full adherence to ethical guidelines.
Data Availability Statement: Authors can provide data.
Conflict of Interest: The authors declare there is no conflicts of interest.
Authors' Contributions: The authors jointly conducted all research activities i.e., concept, data collecting, drafting and final review of manuscript and second author contributes for feedbacks ad correction in each steps of research and final review of manuscript.

References

Ad, A. (2017, February). *(PDF) Green Hotels and Sustainable Hotel Operations in India*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313857970_Green_Hotels_and_Sustainable_Hotel_Operations_in_India

Agoda. (2024, May 30). *Agoda, USAID, and GSTC conducted sustainability training for Nepal's hotel industry—Agoda Partner Hub*. https://partnerhub.agoda.com/agoda-usaid-and-gstc-conducted-sustainability-training-for-nepals-hotel-industry/

Assaker, G., & O'Connor, P. (2023). The Importance of Green Certification Labels/Badges in Online Hotel Booking Choice: A Conjoint Investigation of Consumers' Preferences Pre- and Post-COVID-19. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *64*(4), 401–414. https://doi.org/10.1177/19389655231184474

Bhattarai, B., Chimoriya, D., & Bhattarai, B. S. (2025). (PDF) Green Building Approach Towards Achieving Sustainability in Nepal. *ResearchGate*. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajme.20230902.11

Bintan Lagoon Resort. (2024). Bintan Lagoon Resort. In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bintan_Lagoon_Resort&oldid=1221998669

Bodach, S., Lang, W., & Auer, T. (2016). Design guidelines for energy-efficient hotels in Nepal. *International Journal of Sustainable Built Environment*, *5*(2), 411–434. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsbe.2016.05.008

Bohdanowicz, P. (2006). Environmental awareness and initiatives in the Swedish and Polish hotel industries—Survey results. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *25*(4), 662–682. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2005.06.006

Chi, C. G., Chi, O. H., Xu, X., & Kennedy, I. (2022). Narrowing the intention-behavior gap: The impact of hotel green certification. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *107*, 103305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103305

City of Orlando. (n.d.). *Apply for the Green Building Incentive Program*. Retrieved August 8, 2025, from https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/Executive-Offices/CAO/Sustainability-Resilience/Apply-for-the-Green-Building-Incentive-Program

EarthCheck. (2025, October 2). *EarthCheck | Tourism2030*. https://destinet.eu/resources/certificates/earthcheck

Ecosphere News. (2025, July 8). *Prakriti Resort and Organic Farm Becomes First Choice in Nepal to Achieve Travelife Certification for Sustainable Accommodation*. Prakriti Resort and Organic Farm Becomes First Choice in Nepal to Achieve Travelife Certification for Sustainable Accommodation. https://www.ecospherenews.com/detail/1114/

EHL Hospitality Business School. (2024, November 5). *Journey to Net Zero: Challenges and Solutions in Hotel Sustainability | Green Lodging News*. https://www.greenlodgingnews.com/journey-to-net-zero-challenges-and-solutions-in-hotel-sustainability/

ETHospitalityWorld. (2022, September 6). *WelcomHotel Bengaluru accredited Leed Zero Carbon Certification by USGBC - ET HospitalityWorld*. ETHospitalityWorld.Com.

https://hospitality.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/hotels/welcomhotel-bengaluru-accredited-leed-zero-carbon-certification-by-usgbc/94022268

Fatawu, A., Adama, L., & Cowther, S. (2024). Impact of Green Certification on Customer Satisfaction, Mediated by Perceived Hotel Quality. *Journal of Social Responsibility,Tourism and Hospitality*, *4*(06), 42–51. https://doi.org/10.55529/jsrth.46.42.51

Fiscal Nepal. (2025, January 19). *'Hotel Barahi Kathmandu' receives TOFTiger certification—Fiscal Nepal*. https://www.fiscalnepal.com/2025/01/19/19246/hotel-barahi-kathmandu-receives-toftiger-certification/

Gitnux. (2025). *Sustainability In The Hospitality Industry Statistics: Market Data Report 2025*. https://gitnux.org/sustainability-in-the-hospitality-industry-statistics

Green Globe. (n.d.). *Green Globe Standards for Sustainable Tourism*. Green Globe. Retrieved July 3, 2025, from https://www.greenglobe.com/green-globe-standard

Green Key. (2025, May 28). *Green Key*. Green Key. https://www.greenkey.global

GSTC. (2024, June 14). Successful GSTC Hotel Sustainability Training in partnership with Agoda & USAID Empowers Industry Professionals in Kathmandu, Nepal. *GSTC*. https://www.gstc.org/gstc-hotel-sustainability-training-nepal/

Heritance Kandalama. (2024). Heritance Kandalama. In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Heritance_Kandalama&oldid=1256294992

HNN Newswire. (2008, October 10). *Proximity First to Earn Platinum Status*. CoStar. https://www.costar.com/article/47002646/proximity-first-to-earn-platinum-status

Hocking, T. (n.d.). About GSTC. *GSTC*. Retrieved July 3, 2025, from https://www.gstc.org/about/

Holowka, T. (2016, May). *LEED Certified Buildings: A Growing Presence in Hospitality*. https://www.hotelexecutive.com/feature_focus/4745/leed-certified-buildings-a-growing-presence-in-hospitality

Hotel Shambala. (2024, March 7). *Embracing Sustainability: Hotel Shambala Achieves Travelife Gold Certification - Hotel Shambala*. https://shambalahotel.com/embracing-sustainability-hotel-shambala-achieves-travelife-gold-certification/

IMPT Travel. (2025, June 9). *Eco Certified Hotels ASEAN for Green Stays*. https://impt.io/eco-certified-hotels-in-asean-for-green-stays/

Kaithlin, J. (2024). (PDF) Green Certification and Its Impact on Hotel Marketability and Profitability. *ResearchGate*. https://doi.org/10.47941/jmh.1959

Khanal, R. (n.d.). *Sustainable Tourism Practices in Nepal and Its Challenges*. https://doi.org/10.3126/sjs.v2i2.74843

Kumar, S. C. (2013, March 31). Hospitable to green. *The Financial Express*. https://www.financialexpress.com/archive/hospitable-to-green/1095400/

Lamichhane, R., & Neupane, M. S. (2022). Case Study: Nepal. The Inclusion of Green Competences in the Recognition of Prior Learning. In M. Pavlova & M. Singh (Eds.), *Recognizing Green Skills Through Non-formal Learning: A Comparative Study in Asia* (pp. 189–210). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2072-1_10

Lin, C.-S., Shyu, C.-S., & Li, C.-P. (2023). The Greener the Hotel, the Better Operating Efficiency It Has? A Sustainable Tourism Perspective. *Sustainability*, *15*(14), Article 14. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151410927

Llanso, L. (2024, March 15). The Rise of Sustainability in Hospitality: The Pivotal Role of Energy Efficiency. *Spacewell Energy (Dexma)*. https://www.dexma.com/blog-en/the-rise-of-sustainability-in-hospitality-the-pivotal-role-of-energy-efficiency/

Local Leaders in Sustainability. (n.d.). *AIA Local Leaders in Sustainability—State and Local Green Building Incentives.pdf*. https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1965/Documents/Documents/AIA%20Local%20Leaders%20in%20Sustainability%20-%20State%20and%20Local%20Green%20Building%20Incentives.pdf?

Lozanova, S. (2021, September 6). Green Hotels: How Do I Identify Sustainable Travel Lodging? *Earth911*. https://earth911.com/travel-living/green-hotels-how-do-i-identify-sustainable-travel-lodging/

Moise, M. S., Gil-Saura, I., & Ruiz Molina, M. E. (2021). The importance of green practices for hotel guests: Does gender matter? *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, *34*(1), 3508–3529. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2021.1875863

Moramudali, W. K., & Manawadu, G. M. S. R. G. (2022, October). (PDF) Adoption of Green Practices in Hotel Industry in Sri Lanka: An Evaluation Based on the Green SL Rating System. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364340585_Adoption_of_Green_Practices_in_Hotel_Industry_in_Sri_Lanka_An_Evaluation_Based_on_the_Green_SL_Rating_System

Nepal Sanctuary Treks. (2018, October 15). *Partner Hotels Implementing Sustainable Practices—Nepal Sanctuary Treks*. https://www.nepalsanctuarytreks.com/about-us/partner-hotels-implementing-sustainable-practices/

Nepal Sanctuary Treks. (2023, August 25). *Sustainable Accommodation—Nepal Sanctuary Treks Sustainable Hotels*. https://www.nepalsanctuarytreks.com/sustainable-accommodation/

Nepal Sanctuary Treks. (n.d.). *Tiger Mountain Lodge, Pokhara—Nepal Sanctuary Treks*. Retrieved August 18, 2025, from https://www.nepalsanctuarytreks.com/hotel/tiger-mountain-lodge-pokhara/

Nepali Times. (2020, September 29). *Soaltee Westend Premier awarded*. https://nepalitimes.com/business/soaltee-westend-premier-awarded

Pacheco, L., Ramazanova, M., Carvalho, J. M. S., Nogueira, S., & Durão, M. (2024). How do guests evaluate eco-certified hotels? An analysis of guests' reviews of Portuguese hotels. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14673584241264776. https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584241264776

Proximity Hotel. (n.d.). *LEED Platinum Hotel—Proximity Hotel in Greensboro, NC*. Retrieved July 3, 2025, from https://www.proximityhotel.com/leed_platinum/, https://www.proximityhotel.com/leed_platinum/

Qubbaj, A. I., Peiró-Signes, A., & Najjar, M. (2023). The Effect of Green Certificates on the Purchasing Decisions of Online Customers in Green Hotels: A Case Study from Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, *15*(7), 5892. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15075892

Republica. (2024, August 8). *Hotel Soaltee Nepalgunj bags international award*. https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/hotel-soaltee-nepalgunj-bags-international-award

Shen, L., Qian, J., & Chen, S. C. (2020). Effective Communication Strategies of Sustainable Hospitality: A Qualitative Exploration. *Sustainability*, *12*(17), Article 17. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176920

SkillSewa. (n.d.). *Green Building in Nepal: Sustainable Construction Practices for a Greener Future*. Skill Sewa. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from https://www.skillsewa.com/blog-details/green-building-in-nepal

State of Green. (2014, February 24). Solar, Biogas and Groundwater-Based Heating & Cooling at Hotel Crowne Plaza. *State of Green*. https://stateofgreen.com/en/news/solar-biogas-and-groundwater-based-heating-cooling-at-hotel-crowne-plaza/

Sustainable Brands. (2018, December 6). *Case Study: Green Experience Meetings at Radisson Blu Hotels Around the World*. Sustainable Brands. https://sustainablebrands.com/read/case-study-green-experience-meetings-at-radisson-blu-hotels-around-the-world

Sustainable Hospitality Alliance. (2021). *Hotel sustainability certifications factsheet*. https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Certifications-factsheet.pdf

The Kathmandu Post. (2024, December 17). *Aloft Kathmandu Thamel achieves certification for environmental management*. https://kathmandupost.com/money/2024/12/17/aloft-kathmandu-thamel-achieves-certification-for-environmental-management

Thomas, A. (2022, July 26). *In New Haven, a Landmark Brutalist Building Becomes America's First Fossil Fuel-Free Hotel*. Vogue. https://www.vogue.com/article/hotel-marcel-new-haven

Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. (n.d.). *Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge | Best Lodge and Hotel In Pokhara*. Tiger Mountain. Retrieved August 18, 2025, from https://tigermountainpokhara.com/

Travel Weekly Asia. (2025, January 15). How the future of sustainable tourism is worth billions. https://www.travelweekly-asia.com/Travel-News/Responsible-Tourism/How-the-future-of-sustainable-tourism-is-worth-billions

Velaoras, K., Menegaki, A. N., Polyzos, S., & Gotzamani, K. (2025). The Role of Environmental Certification in the Hospitality Industry: Assessing Sustainability, Consumer Preferences, and the Economic Impact. *Sustainability*, *17*(2), 650. https://doi.org/10.3390/su17020650

Wickramasinghe, K. (2016, December). *(PDF) Adoption of Environmental Management Practices in the Hotel Industry in Sri Lanka*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312919657_Adoption_of_Environmental_Management_Practices_in_the_Hotel_Industry_in_Sri_Lanka

World Commission on Environment and Development. (n.d.). *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf

World Economic Forum. (2023, April 20). *Survey of travellers finds 76% want more sustainable options*. World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/04/survey-of-travelers-finds-76-want-more-sustainable-options/

World Wide Technology. (2024, December 9). *Key Sustainability Themes in the Hospitality Industry*. https://www.wwt.com/blog/key-sustainability-themes-in-the-hospitality-industry

Wu, Z., Jiang, M., Cai, Y., Wang, H., & Li, S. (2019). What Hinders the Development of Green Building? An Investigation of China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *16*(17), 3140. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16173140

WuBook. (2025, April 16). *Green certifications for hotels: What they are and how to get them -*. https://en.wubook.net/blog/green-certifications-for-hotels-what-they-are-and-how-to-get-them/

Yadegaridehkordi, E., Nilashi, M., Nizam Bin Md Nasir, M. H., Momtazi, S., Samad, S., Supriyanto, E., & Ghabban, F. (2021). Customers segmentation in eco-friendly hotels using multi-criteria and machine learning techniques. *Technology in Society*, *65*, 101528. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2021.101528

Yu, Y., Li, X., & Jai, T.-M. (Catherine). (2017). The impact of green experience on customer satisfaction: Evidence from TripAdvisor. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *29*(5), 1340–1361. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-07-2015-0371

Zareh, N., Nassar, M., Barakat, M., & Ramzy, Y. (2023). Impact of green practices on hotel guests' satisfaction: The role of perceived motives, attributes, and service outcomes. *Pharos International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, *1*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.21608/pijth.2023.287371

Appendix

Table 1: Certified and Non-Certified Hotels with Guest Reviews

Category	Hotel Name	Total Reviews
Certified	Barahi Jungle Lodge, Meghauli (WTTC Certification, TOFTigers Certification, ISO 14001:2015 Certification)	679
	The Pavilion Himalayas, Pokhara (Green Pearls Certification)	225
	Hotel Barahi Kathmandu (TOFTiger Rating)	1139
	Hotel Shambala, Kathmandu (Travelife Gold)	1196
	Aloft Kathmandu Thamel (ISO 14001: 2015 & Waste Smart Certification	881
	Prakriti Resort and Organic Farm, Haibung (Travelife Certification)	17
	Soaltee Westend Premier, Nepalgunj (LEED Silver)	408
	Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge (Travelife Certification)	306
	Traditional Comfort Boutique Hotel, Kathmandu (Travelife Certification)	373
Non-Certified	Dwarika's Resort Dhulikhel	335
	The Dwarika's Hotel, Kathmandu	1499
	Namobuddha Resort, Dhulikhel	194
	The Old Inn, Bandipur	479
	Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge, Amaltari	264
	The Club Himalaya, Nagarkot	1348
	Hotel Ambassador, Kathmandu	881
	Jungle Villa Resort	271
	The Nanee Hotel, Bhaktapur	105
	Kathmandu Eco Hotel	2106
	Gokarna Forest Resort, Kathmandu	1345

Table 2: Keywords Extracted from Guest Reviews

Keywords	Total Guest Reviews (All Hotels)
Eco-friendly	156
Sustainable/ Sustainability	83
Organic Food	177
Natural Materials	18
No Plastics/ Plastic free	9
Community Support/ Local products	40
Recycling	11
Rainwater harvesting	1
Solar Panels/ Solar	24
Green Hotel/ Green Building	22
Environmentally Conscious	7
Waste management	2
Energy saving sensor lights	1
EV charging	1
Refillable Toiletries	1
Water conservation	1