INFLUENCE OF ONLINE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON PURCHASE INTENTION: A STUDY ON TRAVEL PORTALS

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By

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, hereby certify that the thesis titled **"Influence of Online Customer Experience on Purchase Intention: A Study on Travel Portals",** submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy' is an authentic record of my research work carried out under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Rajan Yadav. Any material borrowed or referred to is duly acknowledged.

The matter presented in this thesis has not been submitted elsewhere in part or entirely to any other university or Institute for award of any degree.

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled**, "Influence of Online Customer Experience on Purchase Intention: A Study on Travel Portals,"** submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is an original research work carried out by Ms. Vaishali Kaushal, under my supervision. The matter presented in this thesis has not been submitted elsewhere in part or fully to any University or Institute for the award of any degree, to the best of my knowledge.

Prof. (Dr.) Rajan Yadav

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New Delhi, October 2023 **Vaishali Kaushal**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the pursuit of enhancing customer satisfaction, organizations have identified a plethora of advantages that yield substantial financial and operational consequences, thereby amplifying the rationale for achieving an impeccable customer experience. Companies failing to adapt to this paradigm run the risk of forfeiting their customer base, significant financial gains, and strategic advantages inherent in a flawless customer experience. The amplification of positive word-of-mouth, the elevation of brand reputation, and the promotion of recurring purchases collectively contribute to augmenting the organization's financial performance. In a landscape characterized by the proliferation of 5G technology, smartphones, and multiple touchpoints within an organization, the primary objective is to deliver an exceptional customer experience. The distinction between digital and physical experiences is diminishing, as customers increasingly fail to differentiate between online and offline brand interactions.

Further, the complexity of customer journeys intensifies as consumers employ multiple channels to progress from awareness to making a purchase. A wealth of literature exists pertaining to online customer experience and omnichannel management. Personalization emerges as the pivotal element for enhancing the customer experience in a data-rich world. Moreover, organizations are considered to adopt an omnichannel approach when their experiences resonate consistently across all digital channels. Customers often switch between channels to seek information, make purchases, and access superior service, necessitating a breaking down of internal silos within brands to ensure a seamless customer experience. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic wrought substantial changes in consumer behavior, particularly within the realm of travel planning and purchasing. Consequently, post-pandemic policies demand adaptation, and technological innovations have infused this space with unprecedented dynamism and depth. Amidst global travel disruptions, contact centers of travel companies contend with soaring volumes, complicated by ever-evolving health regulations, concealed fees, extended response times, shifting plans, canceled flights, modified pandemic protocols, and mislaid travel documents. Frustration is a prevalent sentiment, especially when travel protocols are subject to continual modification due to the temporal and geographical variations.

Online travel platforms possess the capacity to optimize and elevate travel experiences, thus forming the focal point of our study, which seeks to scrutinize the influence of the online customer experience on purchase intentions and customer satisfaction. Our study encompasses a dataset comprising 447 individuals who have executed multiple travel

purchases over the past six months. Data collection transpired between June 2021 and March 2022. Demographic analysis and structural equation modeling, utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 and Smart PLS 3.3.3, respectively, were employed to decipher the structural and measurement models. Our research revealed that the precursors of the online customer experience encompass portal functionality, customization, pricing and promotional strategies, omnichannel management, security and privacy measures, interactivity, and the perceived flexibility of cancellation policies. Furthermore, our investigation delves into the moderating effects of demographic variables (age, gender, and income), travel frequency, and prior experiences with these precursors on the online customer experience.

I Dedicate this Ph.D. thesis. to my mother

for her constant support and

unconditional love.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	:	Average Variance Extracted
MSV	:	Maximum Shared Variance
CX	:	Customer Experience
CFA	:	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
OCE	:	Online customer experience
OCS	:	Online customer satisfaction
WOM	:	Word-of-mouth
OPI	:	Online purchase intention
RS	:	Repurchase intention.
OTP	:	Online travel portal
OTA	:	Online travel agent
MMT	:	MakeMyTrip
PLS	:	Partial Least Square
RMSE	:	Root Mean Square of Errors
RMSEA	:	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SD	:	Standard Deviation
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for social Sciences Smart
PLS	:	Smart Partial Least Squares
SEM	:	Structural Equation Model
SRMR	:	Standardize Root Mean Square Residual
T-value	:	T- Statistics
VIF	:	Variance Inflation Factor
ICT	:	Information and communication technology
LVS	:	Latent variable score
NFI	:	Normed Fit Index
CEM	:	Customer Experience Management
MGA	:	Multi Group analysis
CR	:	Composite Reliability
DV	:	Discriminant validity
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SM	:	Social Media
ABDM	:	Advanced Booking Decision Model

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a preparatory section that establishes the primary goals of this thesis, which is to identify and analyze the customer experience variables within the context of the most recent advancements in channel management as well as technological interventions in the online travel industry. It lays an overview of the Indian online travel sector and highlights the major players vis a vis their practices to enhance customer experience versus other countries. The chapter ends with the specification of how the thesis is organized and structured.

1.1. Online travel sector in India

Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially in the recent times, has changed the online travel industry's entire business model, and the tourism sector is no exception, especially in terms of the overall experience of tourists (Yuan et al., 2019; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). In India, the tours and travel sector contribute significantly to the nation's GDP. Notably, just within the last decade, India's economy has leapfrogged to place the country as among the fastest growing global economies. A predicted market volume of US$ 909,235 million is expected by 2025 because of predictions that 72% of all tourism product sales will be made online and that revenue will likely increase at a rate of 13.9% annually (CAGR 2021-2025) (Statista, 2020). The Indian government's support for the industry should also contribute to its expansion. In 2016, the Government of India introduced UDAAN, a regional connectivity plan (UDAN-RCS); this for instance, made air travel more accessible to a wider customer base, cutting across all economic classes, owing to which, domestic passenger traffic has significantly increased. Additionally, the steady rise in consumer disposable income has been a major factor in the expansion of the online travel industry followed by innovative travel and holiday package deals being offered by market players to help customers choose wisely based on their budgets, including cashback on foreign flights, savings on vehicle rentals, and cost-effective packages for international destinations. Interestingly, even the

number of foreign departures has continuously been on the rise, and the long-term trends indicate a significant possibility for volume expansion in international tourism. Moreover, owing to the rising disposable income, the cost that an average Indian tourist is able to bear today has also risen considerably. Besides, the surge in the number of repeated short trips, together with the popularity of staycations and workcations, has contributed to the industry's changing picture. The other salient change in Indian tourists' travel behavior observed today, include the mini getaways, which are almost becoming a permanent habit. Young people are embracing the gig economy, because it offers them the possibility to be digital nomads. In fact, the travel panorama in India is also expected to diversify and become more complex as a result of how differently the young populous view holidays, along with their overall lifestyle choices. The future of online travel aggregators (OTAs) would only be more interesting, as they are poised to play a bigger role in the expansion of India's overall and online travel prospects. OTA refers to a middleman or agency that works on behalf of suppliers to offer travel-related goods and services via the internet, including airline tickets, vehicle rentals, cruises, hotels and accommodations, trains, and holiday packages. They create an online marketplace and profit from the discounts that the suppliers provide, commonly referred to as 'commission'.

This study examines some of the important international companies that conduct their business within the ambits of India's 'digital' travel industry. Interestingly herein, only some major players control stakes of the larger market share. Nevertheless, small to medium-sized companies are also fast catching up with their bigger rivals by pocketing new deals and markets, thanks to the rapid promulgation, product innovation, and technological advancements.

1.2. Customer Experience with online travel companies

With a promise of unforgettable experiences and activities, the travel sector previously established the benchmark for Customer Experience. By initially shifting their focus from being mostly human centered to also including

technology, travel companies may work to reclaim the romance of travel. Travel agencies may also create an emotional bond with customers, going above and beyond their expectations. In fact, travel companies need to market how they make their customers feel, whether it's refreshed before a crucial meeting, amazed at a stunning location, rejuvenated after a vacation, or valued after a heartfelt, intimate farewell, as they step off a plane on the way home. Businesses can foster these emotional bonds by utilizing the phenomenon of 'customer delight'. While delight is an emotional state brought on by joy and surprise, satisfaction is a reasoned evaluation of reality minus expectations. It is possible for travel agencies to aim further than mere satisfaction. This reaction may in turn spur repeat business, favorable word-of-mouth promotion, or the exact opposite reaction.

A travel company's health and success are probably greatly impacted by the customer experience; businesses that prioritize improving customer experience reported higher sales 84% of the time. Every area of an organization is impacted by the customer experience. The connection of travellers is both a risk and a great potential for businesses in the travel sector. Businesses may inspire their customers through social media, rapidly address queries and complaints, and enhance their reputation. It's a two-way exchange; businesses can gain from hearing what passengers have to say. While monitoring talks during peak and post-travel periods enables proactive and predictive strategies on brand-owned social channels, listening to social conversations during the anticipation phase enables marketers to identify where, when, and how customers intend to travel. Therefore, the social media, along with the customer support teams must be equipped with a lot of knowledge regarding the customers' interests or current travel trends. Brands can aim to comprehend the traveler, must invest in a positive reputation, must keep an eye on bad remarks, and must respond appropriately to stand out from the competition. Messages sent to travelers reminding them of where to find their travel policy can help travel managers boost adherence to the organization's travel policy. In addition to providing travelers with information on where to locate their travel policy's specifics, these

communications are also a wonderful method to communicate crucial on-the-go information. Additionally, travel managers can guarantee that passengers only work with authorized partners and services. Finally, by staying in touch with business travelers, and assuring their safety throughout their journey, mobile technologies can assist travel managers in upholding their organization's duty of care commitments to employees. Customers still expect customer care even while they want to be able to perform some tasks themselves, such altering an itinerary's details or rebooking during a disruption. Travelers still respect the ways in which travel advisors may make things easier or help with challenging itineraries despite the fact that technology exists to make their lives easier and give them a greater sense of control. Travel firms are under pressure from the digitalization of the sector to deliver memorable and hassle-free customer journeys. Moments of truth and customer profiles are essential components required to gather and enrich user input. Improving the digital customer experience for travel customers involves collaboration among digital teams. User feedback is the vital ingredient in achieving your goals online.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in a global economic catastrophe. Although the pandemic and its repercussions have slowed, the owners and business people had to undergo major re-planning, re-segmentation in terms of their product planning and placements. Although it is impossible to avoid the pandemic’s negative economic effects, independent travel agencies, smaller airlines, coupled with small-to medium-sized hotels did face several financial difficulties, even to the extent of bankruptcy. Recovery won't be easy and consistent, as various countries are still facing severe challenges in controlling the virus spread. Therefore, international travel is likely to recover slower than domestic travel.

1.3. Recent Developments in Online travel sector of India

There have been multiple developments with respect to travel bookings. Post COVID, major national and international players are trying to revive the online travel sector by injecting funds into the sector and making changes proficiently.

Various collaborations and technological upgrades are taking place at a faster pace and various efforts are going into making the sector an organized one. For example- MakeMyTrip, an India-based online tours and travel aggregator in August 2020 announced 'MyPartner' platform to assist travel agents so that they in turn, could help customers with better trip booking experiences. In the following year (i.e., 2021), other Indian tours and travel aggregators, like Oyo, Yatra, EaseMyTrip formed an association to analyze and understand the challenges faced by small hoteliers, and thereby publicize fresh models for tourism in a nation that was still attempting to recover from the negative effects of the pandemic. It may be noted herein that e-commerce in India started with travel and has remained symbiotic with the country's aspirational customers.

OTAs have been at the forefront of internet travel for the past 15 to 18 years and are poised to lead the next surge in growth. Rail, motels, and other forms of lodging are still developing markets for OTAs. A complete picture of the Indian OTA environment requires an understanding of each of the five major full-service OTAs that make up the Indian travel ecosystem. In August 2022, there were 141 airports in the nation, up from 74 in 2014. OTAs can generate virtual card numbers for a given purchase, merchant, and trip. As a result, they can ensure that the tourists have the resources necessary to pay for each trip's charges. With custom data fields, they can also automatically match bookings to payments, simplifying payment reconciliation because all the necessary information is kept in one location. And tracking cash payments is much simpler with this method. Based on information from a customer's profile, such as their chosen airline, seat, times to fly, frequent flyer number, preferred hotels, and loyalty numbers, agents can provide travel recommendations. The Indian aviation industry at large has been quite dynamic; for instance, even while Go First considers an IPO, Indigo has still been holding on to the top position within the domestic market. Air India (erstwhile the national flagship carrier), along with new carriers (Akasa Air and Vistara) could revitalize the Indian aviation industry. The TATA group is now truly aligned with the future prospects of the Indian aviation industry thanks to brands in all three categories—Air India as an international full-service carrier

(FSC), Vistara as another FSC serving domestic and regional demand, and Air Asia India and Air India Express taking advantage of the LCC opportunity**.** According to a recent India Travel Market Report by Phocuswright, the total Indian travel market stood at US$19.1 billion in 2021, and is expected to reach $40.4 billion in 2025, with an online penetration reaching 58% in 2025.

1.4. Research Purpose

Experience is a highly complex, nonlinear process. Since the focus for competitive differentiation between firms has shifted over time, consultants and academics have given the phrase 'customer experience' (CX) greater consideration. Literature has addressed the practical difficulties associated with developing and implementing a reliable customer experience assessment scale (Palmer, 2010). In addition to the contextual factors, a measurement tool must consider how events are sequenced, and how they are retained in the memory as attitudes sometime after they have occurred. Re-examining CX in terms of various channels and cutting-edge technologies is also necessary. Therefore, this study primarily looks to determine the main aspects that go on to enhance online customer experience.

1.5. Research Gaps

There are significant gaps in literature, within the Customer Experience domain, especially with respect to the travel and tourism industry. Many studies in the past have been conducted with respect to physical environment (Bagdare & Jain, 2013), e- commerce (Bilghain et al., 2014; Petre et al., 2006), banking (Chahal & Datta, 2015) and other areas. However, there is still ambiguity around online travel portals' perspective on online customer experience, and how they give a personalized and superior Customer experience that impacts firms' reputation and bottom line. Another major gap observed in literature points to the fact that multiple channels have not been studied as a platform for delivering customer experience i.e., how online travel portals are handling online/offline channels i.e., omnichannel management to deliver customized customer experience. There have been lately various white papers (Cincom,2006; Cognizant, 2019) and

various press articles besieged on customer experience (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Rahimian et al., 2020; Bolton et al, 2018). In addition, with travel industry booming it would be interesting to identify the factors which lead to elevate the customer experience in case of online travel purchase.

1.6. Research Objectives of the study

The research objectives developed after an extensive literature review and discussion with academic and industry experts were:

1. To identify the factors influencing online customer experience in case of online travel portals.
2. To assess the influence of online customer experience on customer satisfaction, purchase intention word-of-mouth intention towards the portal
3. To understand the mediating effect of online customer satisfaction on the linkage between online customer experience and online repurchase intention.
4. To study the moderating effects of demographics, travel frequency, past experience in analyzing the linkage in between digital customer experience and customer satisfaction.

1.7. Scope of the research study

Particularly since the pandemic, the online travel industry has been expanding. Travel habits have changed in recent times, and more people are choosing weekend getaways and vengeance tourism because of shifting travel standards. As a result, policies must be reviewed, and frameworks or matrices that were previously utilized to calculate customer experience scores must be updated. The perspective of the both the industry as well as the end user was examined to make this research comprehensive. To study the responses of the market and the customer, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed. The study is current, because it touches upon multiple channels and cutting-edge technologies, and its findings could be very helpful to online travel players in India and around the world.

1.8. Overview of research design and method

The study combines exploratory and descriptive research. It was felt that to address the research gaps, the study must be conducted in a dyadic manner. A qualitative study was conducted with industry experts, subject matter experts, academicians initially to swallow down the essential constructs and for the item generation of one of the significant constructs called omnichannel management. This review helped to develop the research framework and the research tool (structured questionnaire) for the study. Further, quantitative research was carried out with end consumers for which convenience sampling was used. The sample consisted of 447 respondents. The survey was floated online and offline as few demographics were not comfortable filling the survey online, for them an offline survey was printed and made them fill the survey offline followed by punching the data. Notably, data was collected from June 2021 and March 2022.

Additionally, a case study on MakeMyTrip, India's famous online travel portal was carried out where MMT employees were interviewed. Thereafter, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis, while the hypothesized correlations were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The gathered information was inputted into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 and Smart - PLS 3.3.3.

1.9. Research Contribution

The study's conclusions have multiple ramifications, not simply from a theoretical perspective, but also from a managerial standpoint. To better understand how customization and user experience contribute to better customer experience, an effort to deep-dive into the phenomenon of online customer experience was carried out. The research tried to incorporate the viewpoints of all major stakeholders to make the study holistic. As a result, a review of the literature was carried out followed by statistical analysis, a survey, a case study, and a thematic analysis. Findings of the study showed that elements influencing the online customer experience include portal functionality, customization, price

and promotions, Omnichannel management, Security and privacy, interactivity and perceived leniency in cancellation policy. The study employed structural equation modelling to provide illuminating insights for channel relationship studies in the future.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERTURE

2.1. Overview of Customer Experience

Customer experience (CX) as a phenomenon has been ignored for a long time by industry as well as academia. This new area of study among practitioners and academics for creating a great service brand in a service-based economy is customer experience. Delivering a captivating customer experience is something that service companies should do to differentiate their brands. One of the main factors influencing customer loyalty, positive word of mouth, customer retention is customer experience. According to Abbott (1955), who provided the earliest understanding of the relevance of CX, customers demand not things but delightful experiences. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) went on to underline the significance of experiential elements in customer decision-making. Furthermore, Pine and Gilmore's fundamental article published in 1998, increased interest in Customer Experience Manager as a key driver of both customer loyalty and competitive advantage. Since then, the construct has advanced attributed to the growing body of study. Customer experience (CX) is seen as the next business battleground (Ching, 2011). As companies like Disney demonstrate, designing a customer experience is the blueprint for successful growth. Customer Experience (CX) not only differentiates a business from their competition, but also leads to increases in customer loyalty and positive brand perception. Disneyland possesses expertise in differentiating the family's experience from their experiences at the local amusement park (Williams, 2021; Villani, 2018). Another example is Sephora- where they have perfectioned the experience game with personalization, try before you buy options. Hamleys elevates the experience of its customers by engaging the kids in their stores by allowing them to play and by experiential learning with their display toys. The employee's interaction and active display adds a lot of zeal into the atmosphere. Regarding of digital platforms, the augmented reality game Pokémon Go keeps players exploring actual locations in order to catch randomly spawning imaginary monsters (Barrett 2018). The dating

market has been completely taken over by Tinder, a geosocial dating app that promotes a dating journey "packed with adventure, unknowns, and unlimited possibilities" (Tinder 2018).

Therefore, Customer Experience is the total of a customer's thinking, emotions, and actions during the whole purchase process, including product research and decision- making, as well as when posting reviews and promoting a product or service to others. Major elements of an organisation and ecosystem must be connected and in tune with the optimization of customer experiences as the drivers of revenue and enablers of value for the people you interact with, whether they are acting in their capacities as customers, citizens, hotel guests, or employees. It was first unclear how customer experience differed from customer service. Customer experience is the sum of a customer's interactions with a firm, whereas customer service is only one component of the customer journey. Otherwise stated, customer service is an element of the customer experience. There are several reasons why customer experience is gaining popularity. When there are more avenues for people to communicate their thoughts, all channels must be connected and audible. The mismatch in expectations is an additional key element. Owing to the vast disparity between expectations and delivery, businesses and customers frequently switch suppliers and firms.

2.2. Customer Experience

Experience is gained by individual instances of response to a stimulus, such as marketing activities before and after a purchase (Schmitt, 1999). Bezos (1999) argues that having an engaging customer experience online is more important than offline. According to Gentile et al. (2007), customer experience "emerges from a series of contacts between a customer and a product, a business, or a portion of its organization that elicits a response." This intimate experience indicates the customer's participation on multiple levels. (Intellectual, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual). A significant strategic objective for many firms is to enhance the customer experience (Johnston & Kong, 2011). Customer experiences are linked to utilitarian value as well as hedonistic consumption

(Vargo & Lusch, 2006). The customer experience is regarded to have an impact on customers' perceptions of what to expect from online firms. Because of this, the customer experience is totally unique and involves the customer on many different levels. The customer experience rating is determined by comparing consumer expectations with stimuli from their multiple touchpoints or points of interaction with the firm and its goods. Many academic and corporate definitions of customer experience have been given (Frow and Payne 2007). According to Meyer and Schwager, customer experience is "the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect encounter with a company" (2007). It's common to theorize customer experience as a psychological construct. It may be anticipated that each customer's experience is unique and multifaceted (Gentile et al. 2007). Customers' experiences have long piqued the curiosity of academics, marketing professionals, and consultants who recognise their significance in fostering happiness and re-examining intention, trust, and loyalty (Shobeiri et al. 2014; Edvarsson 2005). According to Suchánek and Králová (2018), When comparing what customers receive to what they expect receiving, customer experience and satisfaction may be viewed as merely emotional variables. The phrase "customer experience" is widely used to refer to all psychological aspects of a person's contacts with a business (Gentile et al, 2007). Numerous facets of the customer experience have been found to involve the psychological concepts of cognition and affect (Edvardsson, 2005).

According to Verhoef et al. (2009), organisations must place a greater emphasis on the customer experience than only service quality to gain a competitive edge. Based on this finding, OCE, according to Rose et al. (2012), is a "psychological state shown as a subjective response to the website." Due to the qualities of the website and the stimulus material, the user may be processing information cognitively and emotionally. This ultimately leaves a lasting effect on the user's memory. According to Voss, Roth, and Chase's (2008) analysis, the customer journey—the series of interactions a consumer has with an organization—is the cornerstone of the customer experience. Each time a customer interacts with a company, there is an experience. This experience might be positive, negative, or

neutral and can be neutral. Early research on customer experience emphasised hedonic value-adding behaviours (Schmitt, 1999). In accordance with Berry et al. (2002), Vargo and Lusch (2006) assert that an experience is a necessary component of a utilitarian action, necessitating research in both settings. The concept that the customer experience is the convergence of all signals and interactions with an organisation to form an overall experience serves as the customer experience's theoretical foundation. (Mossberg, 2007; Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008).

2.3. Differences Between Online and offline experience

The term "online customer experience" describes how customers connect with a company while doing so via digital channels such websites, social media, and email. A customer's online experience may involve looking at things, buying them, getting customer service, and submitting reviews whereas the term "offline customer experience" describes customer interactions with a business that take place offline, such as when a client visits a physical location, calls customer care, or shows up at an event or seminar. The offline customer experience may involve putting on merchandise, engaging with a salesperson in person, or taking part in a product presentation. For businesses and customers to have a successful connection, both real and online customer experience are crucial. To increase customer happiness and loyalty, successful firms frequently work to offer a seamless experience across both channels.

2.4. Online Customer experience (OCE)

Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) study OCE from a cognitive standpoint of digital interaction. Literature hints about OCE traits. Mathwick et al. (2001) proposed evaluating the retail buying experience based on intrinsic and extrinsic criteria that go considerably beyond the typical combination of price and quality. Bevan et al. (1991) state that the implementation of accessibility to computer-mediated settings focuses primarily on users' ease of use, navigability efficiency, and efficacy in the computer- mediated environment. In the digital context, the intrinsic values of customer experience include feelings of achievement,

autonomy, trust, novelty, and enjoyment. Extrinsic values of online customer experience include the recognised practical outcomes of employing a technology, such as convenience, time savings, and efficiency (Kokkinou and Cranage, 2013). The online retailer may be completely oblivious of various external factors that may be present while a customer shops online (for example, at home or at work). Thus, it may be deduced that each customer's experience is multidimensional and distinct (Gentile et al. 2007). For an OCE conceptual model to be helpful, the components or states that comprise an experience must be recognised. According to writers such as Frow and Payne (2007), the formation of experiences requires both cognitive and emotive processing. Frow and Payne (2007), while discussing the cognitive component, emphasize the significance of an individual's own processing of incoming stimulus. They propose including the client in assessing incoming data in light of past, present, and maybe future experiences.

The online customer experience can be improved by combining social, informative, and entertaining elements. Informational experiences are dominated by content that focuses on outcomes and are most effective for search items and companies that are widely regarded as trustworthy. Entertaining interactions are pleasurable regardless of any expected performance benefits. The study discovered that these interactions are especially important for less reputable brands. Although the majority of design elements have some impact on this dimension, no single element seems uniquely or optimally suited to shape it. Consequently, aesthetics plays a crucial role in providing a positive experience.

Social encounters reveal a degree of human presence. Compared to search offerings, these encounters are notably more beneficial for experience. (Bleier et al., 2019). Online travel portals: Using service-oriented architecture and Web services to plan, design, implement, and integrate a travel portal, and to make the site flexible and adaptable to dynamic service structure and modifications (Li et al., 2008). The findings of the content analysis indicate that online travel companies fall short in providing web service quality elements that boost client satisfaction (Nusair and Kandampully, 2008). In contrast, Chu (2001) carried out

focus group interviews to ascertain what visitors anticipate from travel websites. Customers demand travel websites which are interesting, dynamic, and offer appealing features. Travelers' decisions to make online purchases are influenced by nine criteria, according to research by Wong and Law from 2005. The time required to fill out allocation-related information, the website's visual appeal, the links to other web pages, the price knowledge, the useful information, the number of hotel websites' features, the length of time required to search through a site, sensitive data, and the competitive price were all considered. The tools produced as a consequence of the study's findings may be utilised by online travel firms to evaluate the strengths and shortcomings of their service quality. To achieve customer pleasure, it should be made clear that improving the six aspects of navigation, fun, information quality, trust, personalization, and responsiveness is essential. Additionally, travel companies ought to think about incorporating functions that will improve the pleasure of online shopping. A better online shopping experience may encourage users to make more purchases and return to the site more frequently, lengthening their stay and improving their opinion of it. In other words, customer- focused websites will actually increase the company's ability to boost sales.

2.5. Key Theories of customer experience

Stimulus organism response: Since Mehrabian and Russell (1974) hypothesised that environmental stimuli (S) produce an emotional response (O) that elicits behavioural reactions (R), the model has been utilised in different retail settings to understand how customers make decisions (Richard et al., 2009). While these studies provide a framework for identifying factors that contribute to the success of online merchants, they fail to recognise that the decision-making process of customers is influenced by more than simply internal website attributes (e.g., navigation, colour, and graphics). According to Yang (2015), the concept of stimulus (S) in Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) S-O-R paradigm incorporates environmental display and is defined as "units of the everyday physical environment" (Craik, 1968).

Consumption experience: Consumption experiences (CX) are embodied, subjective events that result from interactions between customers and their surroundings (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). They are highly sensory stimulating and can vary greatly in terms of intensity, valence, and duration. This research sought to characterise a consumption experience as a quest for enjoyment, fantasy, sensory stimulation, and pleasure, all of which produce a wonderful, extraordinary, and memorable encounter. An "experiential approach," which is "descriptive in nature in spirit and characterises consuming as a predominantly subjective consciousness, with a range of symbols, hedonic reactions, and aesthetic standards," is said to be relevant to this understanding.

Experience economy: By concentrating on the many business opportunities offered when sensations and emotions are promoted, they sought to find new methods to provide value to businesses. Instead of being concerned with the accessibility, price, or quality of items as they were in the agricultural, industrial, and service economies, consumers are now more focused on the experience of authenticity as a component and outcome of the experience economy (Gilmore & Pine 2007). Experiencing things is become a commodity in and of itself. Pine and Gillmore (1998) predict that the staging of experiences will become the new competitive battlefield for forward- thinking companies, and their forecast has more than fully come true in the twenty years following 1999. The experience economy has filtered down to enterprises' margins and the lowest levels of government, NGOs, and institutional structure. The idea of "staging the experience"—which entails associating an encounter with a certain location, product, service, or event—makes itself felt.

Service-dominant logic: Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008, 2017) contrast a commodities-centered logic with a service-dominant logic, in which the former refers to a practise involving the exchange of actual objects while the latter refers to the exchange of a concept of service (s). This line of thinking recognises the significance of the exchange that allows customers to bring their own set of immaterial resources to the shopping experience (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). In S-D logic, collaboration between the firm and the client permits a strategic perspective, while the "Four P's" are more tactical in character. There is a shift from viewing "products" to viewing "service flows," where the service is

delivered either directly or indirectly through an object; from viewing "price" to viewing a value proposition co-created by the buyer and seller; from viewing "location" to viewing value networks and processes; and from viewing "promotion" to viewing "dialogue" with the customer (Lusch and Vargo, 2006).

Co-creation experiences: According to Prahalad & Ramaswamy(2004a), Prebensen, Vitters, and Dahl (2013), the word "co-creation" denotes a shared growth of values in interactions between people, services, the environment, and products. Because of this resource exchange between the company and the client during the customer experience, value is created. (Thompson et al., 2018), and it may involve actions like relationship-building, knowledge development, and communication (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006).

Customer experience dimensions by Schmitt (1999): Schmitt (1999) introduced five components of the customer experience, which are as follows: "sensory experiences (SENSE: concerns positive sensorial experiences like sight, touch, smell, affective experiences, cognitive experiences, physical experiences, behaviour patterns, and lifestyles, and social experiences."

Customer experience dimensions by Gentile et al. (2007): Gentile et al. (2007) identified six dimensions of customer experience: sensory, emotive, cognitive, lifestyle, pragmatic, and relational components. The realistic aspects of the customers' experiences were also incorporated in these classes. They elaborated on the benefits of designing experiences that are consistent with those values. These factors have also been expanded and altered in another research (Tynan and McKechnie, 2008; Bagdare and Jain, 2013).

Consumer Culture theory (CCT): Consumer conversations about brands allow customers to interpret brand interactions using their own meanings and ideas, according to a group of theoretical perspectives known as CCT (Gensler et al. 2013; Singh and Sonnenburg 2012). "Consumer culture" is the system of shared meanings that a certain social group has developed via its shared images, signals, discourses, experiences, and goods (Kozinets 2001). According to CCT, meaning is co-created between customers in a way that benefits both parties (Geertz 2008).

Table 2.1 represents the review of literature in the tabular form below:

Table 2.1: Summary of customer experience Literature

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
1	Mbama et al. (2018)	Banking	Survey, SEM	The study revealed Customer Experience in digital banking is primarily determined by service quality, functional quality, perceived value (PV), employee-customer engagement, perceived usability, and perceived risk.
2	Bhattacharya, et al. (2018)	E- shopping	Survey, SEM	The model extended the fundamental framework of Rose et al. (2012) by incorporating the effects of new factors of OCE (retailer credibility and electronic word of mouth) on OCE elements and results.
3	Bilgihan et al. (2013)	Travel	Questionnaire	The study revealed flow experience in e-commerce influences trust, brand equity, satisfaction, addictive behaviors, intent to buy, intent to utilize, and intent to return. These characteristics included virtual interactivity, rich media content, and attractive website designs.
4	Bilgihan et al. (2016)	Online shopping	LR based	The findings confirmed the antecedents of the unified online customer experience are ease of locating the website/app, ease of use, perceived usefulness, hedonic and utilitarian features, perceived enjoyment, personalization, social interactions, and multi-device compatibility. A great online consumer experience resulted in brand engagement, positive WOM, and repeat purchases.
5	Elsharnouby & Mahrous (2015)	Telecommunication	Quantitiave SEM	The study discussed despite the fact that five online service quality attributes (effectiveness, system availability, privacy, ability to respond, and compensation) influence the attitude towards the webpage, a separate set of dimensions (efficiency, contentment, compensation, and contact) influence the consumer's readiness to participate in the co-creation experience.
6	Bleier et al. (2018)	FMCG, electronics, and consumables	Experimental and quantitative	The research concluded- to generate effective consumer experiences that not only transmit information but also entertain, the research suggested simulating offline sensory experiences and implying human interactions.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
7	Fatma (2014)	Online shopping	LR based	Through an exhaustive review of current literature, the author synthesized the existing research on CEM in order to identify the antecedents of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer equity, namely brand performance, multichannel engagement, service interface, physical setting, social setting, as well as pricing and promotions.
8	Kawaf & Tagg (2017)	online shopping experiences.	27 individual repertory grid interviews	This study identified five distinct groups of online purchasing factors: (1) environmental perception, (2) affective structures, (3) risk and trust constructs, (4) behavioural variables, and (5) context-specific constructions.
9	Kumar & Anjaly (2017)	e-retailing	Structural equation modelling	The research indicated that the OPPCE measurement scale is multidimensional. It includes delivery, goods in hand, return and exchange, customer service, benefits, and feel-good factors. The research found the appropriate focus on goods of these dimensions helped aid e-retailers in enhancing customer experience and boosting repeat purchases.
10	Martin et al. (2015)	e-retailing	Survey	The study demonstrated two models of OCE for frequent and infrequent online purchasers, demonstrating power and polarity of relationships for precursor and outcome factors in OCE can vary across categories, indicating that purchasing experience is a significant characteristic.
11	McLean et al. (2016)	Online	Questionnaire	This study investigated that the perceived duration of a webpage visit spent on a website has both direct and indirect effects on consumer satisfaction. So, if clients believe they are compelled to spend more time than necessary, they will have a negative experience and terminate their internet search.
12	McLean et al. (2018)	Retailer study	Questionnaire	According to a comprehensive literature analysis, the following elements might influence the customer experience in an online web environment: usability, personalization, accessibility, web aesthetics, pleasure, telepresence, temporal distortion, and flow.
13	Novak et al.	Online shopping	Questionnaire	The findings of the study implied that online shopping and task-oriented

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
	(2018)			activities including product search do not currently provide the essential degrees of difficulty and arousal, nor do they elicit the sense of telepresence and time distortion required to provide a really compelling online customer experience.
14	Pandey & Chawla (2017)	Online Clothing	Survey, SEM	The study revealed OCE attributes have strong implications on customer loyalty through satisfaction. Gender moderates the relationship between three OCE features (e-distrust, e-negative beliefs and website interactivity) and pleasure.
15	Rose et al. (2012)	Online shopping	Questionnaire	The findings revealed that perceived control influences the affective state of customers and that three characteristics (Connectedness, Customization, and Ease of Use) have direct effects on perceived control. Further, we proposed that connectedness and personalization (provided by Web 2.0) impact sentiments of control by empowering customers and instilling confidence in their online purchase decisions.
16	Rose et al. (2011)	Review	LR based	The study argued a positive OCE results from the layout of an engaging and gratifying experience, and one that gives the consumer a sense of control and, consequently, freedom. Secondly, the twin criteria of perceived ease-of-use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) constantly occur in the online consumer literature and must be considered within the framework of OCE.
17	Sheng & Teom (2012)	Travel- digital destinations	Questionnaire	The findings of the study indicated that utilitarian and hedonic product features influence mobile brand equity via consumer experience. In other words, perceived usability, perceived utility, entertainment, and beauty may not have intrinsic value; their impact on mobile brand equity is realised through customer experience.
18	Stein & Ramaseshan (2016)	Online and offline shopping	In depth interviews	Based on the thematic evaluation of the semi-structured interviews, it was found seven primary elements of customer experience contact points: atmospheric, technological, interaction, procedure, employee–customer communication, customer–customer interaction, and product engagement elements.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
19	Zhang et al. (2017)	Travel	Structural equation modeling	By providing a cognition–emotion–behavior paradigm, this work fills this need. The examination of structural equation modelling revealed that the online platform experience considerably influences the emotional experience at the destination. This has important implications for the five elements of destination engagement intention. Support was shown for the mediating effect of destination emotional experience on the connection between online platform experience and destination engagement intention.
20	Zhang (2017)	smartphone communities	Questionnaire SEM	The empirical findings demonstrated that customer experience encourages community engagement and increases the likelihood of spreading the word. In addition, the effect of community participation as a mediator in the relationship between customer experience (social support and flow) and intention to spread the word has been confirmed.
21	Wu et al. (2014)	Online travel	Survey	Despite the fact that flow experience has no direct effect on purchase intent, it might have indirect consequences via utilitarian value and website attitude. Thus, flow experience continued to play a vital role in influencing consumer responses in an online context. Thirdly, the data indicated that website design aspects indirectly influence consumer responses through utilitarian value and flow experience.
22	Keiningham et al. (2019)	Case based	LR based	The study provided a variety of CX definitions; these dimensions are: - Cognitive: What individuals believe Physical: human interactions. Sensory: what individuals experience; affective: how they feel Social: how people interact
23	Mascarenhas et al. (2006)	Online	LR based	The results of the study discussed total customer experience comprised of three interacting elements: physical moments, affection involving moments, and value chain moments.
24	Blázquez (2014)	Online fashion	Survey	The study asserted multichannel shopping experience is broken down into different component parts and analyzed it with respect to gender in detail.
25	Hwang & Seo (2016)	Hospitality & tourism	Review	This article highlighted prospective techniques and measurement scales applicable to CEM research, as well as some hurdles that must be solved in order to establish future measurement scales of customer experience.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
26	McLean et al. (2015)	Small and Medium Enterprises	Qualitative	The study contended that the credibility of the website is an essential factor, and they evaluate the website's superficial qualities, such as the look of the site, the brand name, the URL, navigation, and the respondents' ability to get in touch with the organization.
27	McLean (2017)	Business advisory websites	Experiment	According to the findings, the OCE in a business-to-business setting is significantly impacted by both the legitimacy of the website and the quality of the content that is published on the website. According to the findings of the research, a B2B website should provide online customer help in the form of a service agent during the search process. The necessity of providing online customer assistance is driven, in large part, by the legitimacy of the website as well as the success of the search.
28	Silva et al. (2016)	Online Travel	Survey	The findings of the study depicted trust is necessary for customer loyalty solely in the context of offline buying. In the context of online buying, travel firms need to combine trust with a sense of perceived value or with a sense of perceived quality to obtain high levels of customer loyalty. Furthermore, the combination of perceived value and perceived quality led to increased loyalty in the situation of offline purchasing, however in the context of online shopping, agencies need to add customer pleasure to this configuration in order to achieve the same level of loyalty.
29	Liu et al. (2015)	Online Travel	Survey	The results indicated that flow experience has a meaningful impact on the attention paid to repurchases. In addition, there is a positive correlation between flow experience and factors such as interactive speed, competence, challenge, perceived control, telepresence, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use.
30	Rajaobelina (2018)	Travel agencies	Survey	In both the in-store and online environments, the THINK and FEEL dimensions were found to have the greatest positive effect on relationship quality. In addition, it was found that the ACT and SENSE characteristics positively affected relationship quality.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
31	Nusair & Kandampully (2006)	Online travel	content analysis	The study revealed that online travel providers do not provide web service quality attributes that boost client happiness to the extent that they should be. To be more specific, it is essential to recognize that enhancements to the six dimensions (navigability, playfulness, information quality, trust, personalization, and responsiveness) are of utmost significance in order to achieve customer satisfaction.
32	Wen (2012)	Online travel purchase	Survey	The study summarized - quality of the information, the quality of the service, and the quality of the system are all relevant measurements Convenience, cost, and the variety of products available to choose from are three factors that effectively evaluate a traveler's attitude about the practise of buying travel goods online. The level of satisfaction that customers feel with a travel website's design, the attitudes of travellers, and the quality of the website all have a substantial influence on the travellers' intents to make a purchase.
33	Nasermoadeli (2013)	Online shopping		The study's findings led the researchers to conclude that sensory experience positively influences affective experience, and that affective experience is positively related to social experience.
34	Constantinides (2004)	LR based	Review	This study identified the following as the primary components of the online experience, often known as the Web experience: the Informational components, such as the visual aspects of an online presentation and the marketing mix; and the content elements, which include the marketing mix.
35	Grønholdt et al. (2015)	Retailing, financial Services, information technology, telecommunications	Survey	Throughout the process of defining each contact point and imagining the type of experience consumers desire, consumers should be consulted. This is true for both direct and indirect touchpoints, such as word-of-mouth, advertising, and other forms of communication. The total experience a customer has with a company and its products is the sum of all direct and indirect interactions with the company and its products.
36	Johnston (2011)	Grounded multiple case study	Longitudinal study- Grounded multiple case study	The study proposes having defined objectives in three areas: customers, staff, and cost-efficiency and using these to gauge the advantages of enhancing the customer experience. It also underlines the crucial role of attitude shift in the design of customer experience improvement programmes.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
37	Esmaeilpour & Mohseni (2019)	Restaurants	Survey; SEM	The findings of this study are reflective of psychological processes and the ways in which consumers are stimulated, both of which are derived from the act of receiving information that is communicated from the environment to the consumer. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the behavioural reaction and the intention to make a purchase are both attributable to the stimulus that they received from the environment as well as the cognitive experience that was generated by the stimulation.
38	Keiningham et al. (2017)	Restaurants	Qualitative	The research made a contribution not only to the sensory and physical aspects of the consumer experience but also to the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of that experience. It is possible that it would be more efficient, from the standpoint of measurement, to measure at the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social level, and to apply specific sensory measures only in the event that a detailed diagnostic is necessary.
39	Kim et al. (2016)	Retailers and movie theatres	retrospective experience sampling	According to the data, the quality of customer interactions in adjacent departments does not have a substantial impact on the quality of customer experiences in those departments. The quality of interactions with nearby regular customers is correlated with the degree to which they are judged to be superior to those with nearby random customers (e.g., informational helping, misbehaviour such as a loud voice). The findings of the analysis of the moderating impact demonstrate that the quality of communication does, in fact, have a moderating role in the connection between the quality of surrounding client interactions and the quality of the overall customer experience.
40	Klaus & Maklan (2013)	Mortgage customers, Fuel and service station customers Retail banking Luxury goods customers:	Survey	The research indicated that investigating the influence of each individual dimension on the outcomes. The peace-of-mind factor has a considerable impact on customer loyalty and advocacy. The association between customer experience and loyalty intentions is significantly stronger than the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty intentions.
41	Mascarenhas,	Overall	Qualitative	The research stated Customer Experience by concentrating on its three key

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
	(2006)			interactive components: physical consumer participation, emotional customer involvement, and value chain moments. In light of this, a typology of customer loyalty is presented as a function of high vs low levels of TCE's three components.
42	Mohd-Ramly (2017)	Department store	Survey; PLS-SEM	Findings of the study argued that merchandise, shop ambience, and loyalty programme all play a role in determining customer experience, whereas merchandise, interaction, interpersonal interactions, and loyalty all play a role in determining consumer engagement. The effect of post-transaction services on either customer experience or customer engagement was determined to be insignificant. The analysis also found a robust connection between consumer satisfaction and loyalty.
43	Nunes (2011)	Multimedia service	In depth interviews	The current study made the systematisation of the complicated information possible by the study's integration of inputs from a variety of disciplines to reflect customer experience factors.
44	Xu (2017)	Online travel agencies	Survey	This study encompassed the causal links between the information search and purchase stages using a model that included both phases. Theoretically, the results demonstrated search-buy trends in the travel business, indicating that accessing a website to conduct an information search and deciding to make a purchase via this website are dependent activities.
45	Sai (2017)	E-commerce	Survey; Regression and ANOVA	Several predictor factors were shown to be important drivers of e-satisfaction, except for hedonic shopping values, according to the results. Moreover, this ensuing e-satisfaction was discovered to be a strong predictor of repurchase intent. The research has added to our understanding of online satisfaction and online repurchase intent. The research has added to our understanding of online satisfaction and online repurchase intent particularly as it pertains to a developing country seeing exponential development in e-commerce.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
46	Wong & Wei (2018)	online travel agency	Survey	The findings of the study reported there exists a substantial correlation between flight duration and purchase lead time. The next travel locations of segmented, high-value clients were projected based on their travel habits and the relevance of destination pair associations.
47	Yoon (2010)	Online banking	Survey; PLS-SEM	Design, security, speed, and information content were shown to have a greater impact on customer satisfaction among consumers with high experience, but customer support services had a greater impact on those with low experience.
48	Mathwick et al. (2001)	Internet and catalog shopping	Predictive modeling	This study's objective was to establish an experiential value scale (EVS) that can be used to evaluate the retail shopping experience by characterizing the perceived components of a retail value package and forecasting variations in in multichannel retail systems, shopping habits and customer intent.
49	Wasan (2018)	Banking	Quantitative	The research classifies CE components are divided into functional clues (convenience and believability), humanic clues (employee competence and compassion), and mechanical clues (worker competence and compassion) (service context). The study revealed that functional cues are the most accurate predictors of consumers' discretionary actions, followed by humanic cues, whereas mechanical cues are only hygiene variables for customer behaviours.
50	Luturlean & Anggadwita (2015)	Hotel industry	Qualitative	This article proposed a conceptual model that explores the role of management tactics in determining CX. In this article, the proposed model is presented. In furthermore, this article discussed the components of CEM, including how the customer's attitude and community factors play a key role in determining the customer's overall image.
51	Hwang & Seo (2016)	General businesses and H & T industry	Qualitative	The study highlighted holistic customer experience, transcendent experiences, transformative experiences, authentic experiences, and the co-creation of experiences.

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
52	Nobar & Rostamzadeh (2018)	Hotel industry	Quantitative	According to the findings of the study, the factor with the greatest influence on customer satisfaction is customer expectation. This study contributed to a better understanding of how customer loyalty can be positively influenced by factors such as customer satisfaction and customer expectations. In the hospitality and tourism industries, customer loyalty erupted as an important factor in determining the strength of a brand.
53	Liu & Liu (2008)	Hotel industry	Quantitative	The results portrayed that there are three main factors that make up a hotel guest's service encounter: the hotel's physical setting, the friendliness of the service staff, and the ease with which they may handle routine tasks on their own (using self-service techniques).
54	Zhang et al. (2008)	Economy hotels	Qualitative	The results suggested that experiences must be created around thematic enterprises, the physical setting, active involvement, and human communication between staff and consumers.
55	Klaus & Maklan (2011)	General businesses	Quantitative	The paper presented the customer experience quality (EXQ) scale, a novel metric well-suited to the current understanding of customer service.
56	Pine & Gillmore (1998)	Overall	Qualitative	The study classified experience can be divided into four categories: entertaining, educational, aesthetically pleasing, and escapist.
57	Ren et al. (2018)	Budget hotels	Quantitative	The findings indicated that customer satisfaction acts as a mediator between customer experience and their desire to make a purchase, as well as between their perception of the value of the purchase and their behavior. This is shown by the fact that customer satisfaction also mediates the relationship between customer experience and behavioral intentions.
58	Prebensen (2013)	Travel	Quantitative	The study attested the perceived value of a holiday is significantly increased by tourist resources. These include personal service, the environment, and the company of other travelers. These results were explored in the context of the service-dominant logic, identity, and self-worth theories, as well as the necessity of incorporating client resources into the comprehension of experience value.
59	Knutson et al.	Internet channels	Quantitative	The study involved creating procedures for developing the Customer

S.no.	Author/Year	Industry	Method/ Technique Applied	Major Findings
	(2007)			Experience Scale which resulted in a seven-factor model that includes environment, benefit, accessibility, convenience, utility, incentive, and trust as its components respectively.
60	Stein & Ramaseshan (2020)	service and product industries – banks, cafes, supermarkets and department stores	Quantitative	The study found the impact of Customer experience is significantly different depending on whether the customer is motivated by hedonic or utilitarian pursuits. When compared to the effects they have on customers with a utilitarian orientation, the effects of technology, atmospherics, employee–customer interaction, and service/product interaction touch points are significantly stronger when applied to customers with a hedonic orientation.
61	Hua (2009)	Budget hotel	Mixed Methodology	The findings indicated that despite the fact that all five dimensions of CSFs (i.e., physical product, service quality, price, promotion, and location) were considered important by industry professionals, government authorities, and hotel investors, the order in which these groups ranked the]]5 importance of these factors was significantly different.
62	Jui et al. (2009)	Restaurants	Quantitative	The study suggested consumer experiential value is positively influenced by environmental factors, such as those found in restaurants, as well as interactions with both service staff and other customers. Additionally, the only relationships that have a direct and positive impact on customer satisfaction are those that are interactive with service employees. The factors of the restaurant environment and interactions with other customers both directly and indirectly had a positive impact on customer satisfaction through the medium of experiential value.

2.6. Research Gap

After an exhaustive review of literature, the following research gaps were identified:

i. There is a paucity of research that has investigated online customer experience specially in reference to online travel sector.

ii. Lack of studies in the domain of online customer experience particularly, in context of an emerging economy that have different terrains and design.

iii. Online customer experience has not been analysed by integrating the key constructs from numerous theories. Most of the constructs studied so far are borrowed from one or two standalone theories only.

iv. Need for an integrated model encompassing novel variables like omnichannel management, perceived cancellation policy leniency and studied variable with respect to CX like portal functionality, customization from the major theories of customer experience.

2.7. Proposed Framework of the Study

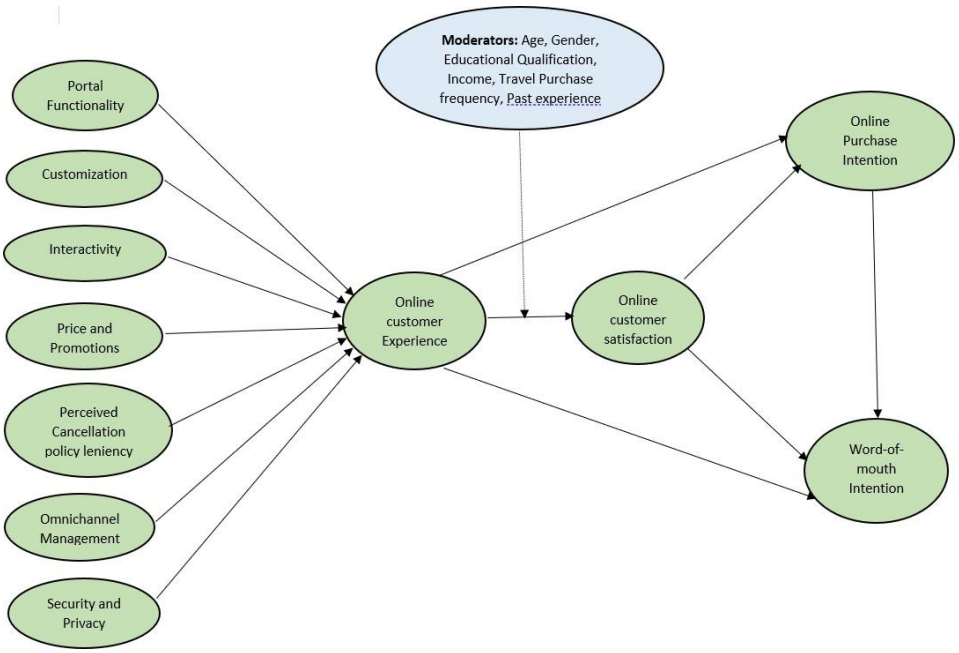


Figure 2.1: Proposed framework of the study

2.8. Proposed Hypotheses with literature support

Independent variables

Portal Functionality: The technical website characteristics, which assist users in meeting their needs, take the form of easy navigation and search, engaging visual content, and interactive elements in the Indian market (Tandon et al., 2016). It can increase e-satisfaction and e-loyalty by making the shopping process feel more like a real-life experience (Ha and Stoel, 2012). In addition, Lu, Lu, and Zhang (2002) analysed Chinese travellers' perceptions of China tourist websites' usefulness, usability, and informational depth. Five criteria were created by Chung and Law (2003) to assess the quality of Hong Kong hotel websites in terms of their usability and performance. Furthermore, Leung et al. (2016) created a modified model comprising 29 functioning features across five dimensions and determined that website users' demands and expectations continue to evolve fast. Due to our usage of the term portal in our study, the study refers to web/website functionality as portal functionality.

H1a: Portal Functionality significantly influences online customer experience.

Customization: Data gathering, profiling, and matching are the three recurrent operations that make up personalization. User profiles can be constructed from collected data as the foundation for tailoring user interfaces to specific people or groups of people. Customization is "any behaviors occurring in the interaction intended to contribute to the individuation of the customer" (Suprenant & Solomon, 1987). Customization in e-commerce refers to the capacity of an online shop to tailor merchandise, services, and the transactional environment to particular customers (Srinivasan et al., 2002). The private information of clients is maintained for this reason, and suggestions are made based on each customer's profile. For usage by the consumers on their subsequent visit, a range of customer-related data is collected and maintained. Customers feel that they are receiving individualised attention and care during the customising process, which, according to Moynagh and Worsley (2002), increases customer satisfaction. Although earlier studies (Lee & Lin, 2005; Ribbink et al., 2004) suggested

customisation as a key strategic tool of online retailing, very few researchers focused on customization in online contexts. Personalization has a huge impact on customers' experiences and their perception of the service in face-to-face service interactions (Mittal & Lassar, 1996). Considering the literature assessment, this study concludes that customization is essential to online purchasing, but there is a paucity of research on how customization affects customer happiness. The study therefore tries to develop the following hypothesis for the study. Building customer connections requires the customisation of services (Bock et al., 2016). Rose et al. (2012) investigated customization (individualising website functionality and aesthetic) as an antecedent to experience. In the context of personalization, Pallant et al. (2022) look at how non-brand drivers—those that are inherent to the consumer— and brand drivers—those that are external to the consumer—interact.

H1b: Customization significantly influences online customer experience.

Interactivity: The association between the brand and the CX should be considered in an effort to comprehend how the customer experience is formed. Often cited example of Hamleys and Starbucks have clear differentiation in the way these brands interact amongst employees and with their customers. Customers converse with one another, which spreads word of mouth more widely. To put it another way, the modern web has evolved into a highly human space where people connect and interact emotionally both with one another and with businesses. Although social networking sites are getting increasingly popular and e-commerce is expanding, it's crucial to keep in mind that computers cannot make other people feel appreciated. Therefore, it is essential for businesses to leverage social media to give their users a good experience. Huang and Benyoucef (2013) advise businesses to assess their current social networking and e- commerce apps. The following stage is to create a social commerce strategy. To be successful, e-retailers must either integrate social components into their e-commerce platforms or commerce features into their social network platforms. This unique channel offers various advantages that enhance the online user experience. Social media platforms have made it possible for businesses to track perceptions and trends that

could improve online experiences by introducing tools and customer feedback data streams (Barreda & Bilgihan, 2014). Businesses must use Social Media to listen to their customers. For instance, a website for booking hotels should have links to various social media sites (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube). By fusing social connections with business in a cohesive online client experience, brand advocates are fostered. Social interactions can help businesses connect emotionally with their customers. Lately mobile devices have become more widely used and popular, from browsing, researching, and comparing products and services. This allows for the creation of personalised offers, which promotes consumer happiness and loyalty (Reddy and Chalam, 2013; Khare et al., 2012). Also, having a social network and the ability to interact with other customers gives the customer a sense of control, which influences their choice of channel in many nations, including India (Dash and Saji, 2008).

H1c: Interactivity significantly influences online customer experience.

Price and Promotions: Price is a crucial consideration that has always had an impact on customers' decisions to make purchases online (Phan & Mai, 2016). Price was defined by Kotler and Armstrong (2010) as the amount of money exchanged for goods or services. Lee & Tsai (2014) concentrated on analysing how price promotions impact the satisfaction with a product utilised at a specific moment. Price reductions may also lessen the "pain of payment" associated with the transaction, allowing customers to appreciate consuming a product more (Knutson et al. 2007).

There is evidence that the price has a substantial association with the desire to make an online purchase, in line with many other published studies (Zolkopli et al., 2016). Chen et al. (1998) and Lin et al. (2009) found the association between price promotion and purchase intent to be weak in their respective research. The basis of this relationship is the low purchase intent resulting from customers' needing to pay extra for the supplied products. As a result of the availability of price comparison services on a variety of travel websites, customers are now able to easily compare costs offered by various service providers. It is said that

customers are more inclined to choose a product or service if they feel they will receive a return on their investment of time and money (Evans and Lindsay, 1999). Analysis of the relationship between price and trust in Brazilian consumers' s-commerce buying intentions is more recent. The hospitality sector faces difficulties such as diminished customer loyalty, price competitiveness, and cost transparency.

In other words, as per Kim et al. (2006), Price continues to have a significant impact on a broader number of potential online hotel customers' intents to make a reservation. There will be more online shoppers from this potential customer segment as a result of improved online experience and less search expenses. Price is a significant factor that positively influences customers' intentions to buy goods, therefore a reasonable price will increase those intentions. Most OTA websites only show prices before tax, which initially draws users but may let them down during the payment process when they are required to pay for additional tax and service fees. Due to the advantages of mobility, travellers' intentions to make online purchases will not rise but rather fall, showing that despite the convenience of the internet, these intentions still depend on things like price discounts (Hardesty & Bearden, 2003).

H1d: Price and Promotions significantly influences online customer experience.

Omnichannel Management: As customers have access to multiple platforms today to interact and maintain relationships with an increasing number of connected clients online, this creates special prospects for the service sectors. The market for smartphones and tablets is gaining attention as businesses devote more time and money to comprehending the multichannel customer experience. Therefore, it is crucial for service businesses to create a consistent customer experience across devices. In order to create a seamless experience, design cues like colour and images should also be consistent across social media outlets. The omnichannel customer experience has been emphasised in several studies as a subdimension of their research (Fisher et al., 2019). According to Kang et al. (2019), omnichannel customer behaviour has become a key factor in a seamless

customer experience and purchase intention. The phrase "omnichannel customer experience" refers to a multichannel strategy that integrates all customer interactions into a single experience. (Alnawas et al.,2018). Nowadays, customer experience has assumed a central role in the success of fashion enterprises. According to Yrjola et al. (2018), omnichannel customer experience is a multichannel approach that allows merchants to provide a uniform, integrated, and seamless experience regardless of the channel used. An integrated customer experience is made possible by integrating this experience across all media (Steinfield and Harry Bouwman 2002). According to Hickman et al. (2020) and Savastano et al. (2019), omnichannel is a crucial component of the customer experience since it considers all of the customer's interactions with a retailer from a comprehensive standpoint. A shop can connect the customer experience both online and offline through all of their customer touchpoints when they take an omnichannel approach. The author has conceptualised omnichannel customer experience using the five customer experience features that include connectivity, flexibility, integration, consistency, and personalization. Customers, therefore, have more control about which channel they wish to use when pursuing their goals. In other words, a seamless omnichannel environment lowers the barriers to channel transition and makes it easier for customers to accomplish their primary aim. Considering this, even if an omnichannel company fails to give customers a consistent experience, a seamless channel can lessen the negative effects of inconsistent customer experiences. Additionally, Shi et al. (2020) developed the categories that represented our vision of the omnichannel experience and found that they were effective predictors of perceived risk and compatibility, both of which had an impact on the purchase intentions of customers.

H1e: Omnichannel management significantly influences online customer experience.

Perceived cancellation policy leniency: Although perceived cancellation policy leniency has been examined in the literature, it hasn't yet been brought up regarding the customer experience of online travel agencies. Activities, like looking for a hotel with a better deal, might also result in cancellations (Chen et

al., 2011). Finally, tougher cancellation rules can be utilised to maximise revenues in the event of no- shows or cancellations, whereas flexible cancellation policies are employed to reduce customer confusion and increase booking intentions. For the majority of hotels and OTAs, one of these cancellation alternatives or a mix of them is standard procedure; however, not every website is as forgiving when it comes to deadlines and fees (Liu & Zhang, 2014). It seemed that OTAs utilise "free cancellation" signals to advertise their lax cancellation policies in an effort to reduce the perceived risks that customers experience while making purchases (Chen, Schwartz, & Vargas, 2011). For the majority of hotels and OTAs, one of these cancellation alternatives or a mix of them is standard procedure; however, not every website is as forgiving when it comes to deadlines and fees (Liu & Zhang, 2014). It seemed that OTAs utilise "free cancellation" signals to advertise their lax cancellation policies in an effort to reduce the perceived risks that customers experience while making purchases (Chen, Schwartz, & Vargas, 2011). In conclusion, although lenient cancellation policies are employed to reduce customer anxiety and encourage booking intentions, tighter cancellation rules may be employed to boost revenues in the event of no-shows or cancellations. Most hotels and OTAs often offer one of these cancellation alternatives or a combination of them; however, not every website is as kind with deadlines and fees (Liu & Zhang, 2014). It seemed that OTAs utilise "free cancellation" signals to advertise their lax cancellation policies in an effort to lower customers' perceived risks when making a purchase (Chen, Schwartz, & Vargas, 2011). These bargain hunters cancel their current reservation and rebook the inferior deal if a better deal is discovered after they booked their initial reservation. A theoretical framework for making decisions is offered by the Advanced Booking Decision Model (ABDM; described by Schwartz in 2000, 2006, and 2008), which can be used to investigate some of these problems with deal-seekers' search and booking behaviour. In a meta- analysis, Janakiraman et al. (2016) discovered that return leniency directly influences both purchase and return behaviour. Customers perceive more reliability when a company is willing to accept vulnerability through more liberal return policies (Chang et al., 2013; Janakiraman et al., 2016). Consumers are more likely to trust an online shop that is willing to take risks by

offering more accommodating return policies. A lenient returns policy is a service recovery procedure that is required to decrease customer churn and boost revenue. A lenient returns policy guarantees quicker processing of returns, lowers consumer discontent due to incorrect product selection, and permits replacement with a more desirable product. According to Wang et al. (2016), a lenient return policy indicates that an online retailer is reliable. The costs associated with returning a goods and the time frame are two aspects of a lenient return policy.

H1f: Perceived cancellation policy leniency significantly influences online customer experience.

Security & Privacy: Whether a buyer has shopped online or not, security is always a top issue (Rohm & Milne, 2000). Many website visitors are concerned about the privacy of their information, as well as the collection and sharing of their data. Despite their importance for e-commerce, customer security problems related to online shopping have gotten little attention. This notion refers to the protection of personal information submitted on any website during an online transaction and the defence against any infractions (Vafaeva, 2013). One of the most critical considerations for OCE is the confidentiality of client information. Consumers' impressions of security may encompass credit card and personal information protection, as well as safety throughout transaction operations (Khanra, 2021). The professional design of the retailer's website bolsters the client's sense of safety (Azevedo, 2015). Absence of security and privacy may increase customers' anxiety and sensitivity to danger (Talwar et al., 2020b; Meuter et al., 2000). According to Sahoo and Pillai (2017), a mobile banking servicescape's aesthetics, layout, functionality, and security have a dynamic impact on user engagement. For online banking, Jayawardhena and Foley (2000) divided website characteristics into content, interactivity, download, design, navigation, and security elements. Petre et al. (2006) included factors like security, information content, visual appearance, navigation and credibility to study customer experience. Security improves both performance-related metrics and customer-related aspects (CE, customer happiness, and customer loyalty), according to Chauhan et al. (2022).'s research (financial performance).

H1g: Security and Privacy significantly influences online customer experience.

Dependent variables:

Online customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction management is the only strategy that can adjust to the frequent market shifts. Corporate marketing initiatives emphasize customer satisfaction due to its potential to increase customer loyalty, repurchase intention, positive WOM, and profitability. (Anderson, 1994). According to Anderson and Srinivasan (2003), "the perceived level of enjoyment with relation to a customer's prior purchasing experience with a certain electronic commerce firm" is what online customer satisfaction is. According to Meyer and Schwager (2007), customer satisfaction is "the culmination of a series of customer experiences, or the net result of the positive ones minus the negative ones." Those who shop online are also looking for ways to reduce cognitive dissonance, which can occur when a person buys something from an online merchant but is not completely satisfied with it and questions whether a different product would have brought better e-satisfaction (MirBernal, 2017). Customer experience can assist merchants increase customer satisfaction, which has a beneficial impact on customers' propensity to make repeat purchases Xiao et al. (2019). Consumers who consume or utilise the product are the only ones who can gauge how satisfied they are with it (Benoit, Kienzler, & Kowalkowski, 2020). Experience, convenience, and trust were found to be factors impacting customer satisfaction in a previous study (To et al., 2020).

Online purchase intention: Purchase intent refers to a consumer's inclination to make a purchase. Rather, purchasing intent is the consumer's decision to purchase a thing following investigation. The deciding element is the consumer's purpose when selecting a product, which is impacted by a number of factors and major external influences (Keller, 2001). The group has an effect on the decision-making process when selecting a brand for well-known items. evaluating a brand based on its overall consistency (Witt & Bruce, 1972). Given that consumers are both rational and emotional, it is also crucial to take into account their affective attitude while forming their cognitive-affective purchasing intentions (Kumar,

Lee, and Kim, 2009). According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), intentions are formed through the subjective evaluation of a particular item, followed by the adoption of a specific behaviour. According to the general definition of intention, a purchase intention is a construct that precisely predicts a consumer's behavioural response. (Li et al., 2002). Purchase intention quantifies the likelihood of a future purchase action resulting from a customer's interest in products or services and their evaluation of purchasing them. (Hung et al., 2011). The primary results of the customer experience appear to be behavioural intents such as visit intention or buy intention (Baek et al., 2020). Affective and cognitive experience characteristics both influence purchase intention, according to Hamouda (2021). Hermes (2021) discovered that the CX of online shopping was not associated with intention to buy. According to Bleier et al. (2019), social CX had a considerable impact on consumers' propensity to buy. A holistic CX can affect marketing results like (e-)satisfaction and buy intention, according to Hermes (2021).

Word of mouth intention: Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is gaining importance as a result of the expansion of the internet as customers are starting to believe WOM shared online. To reduce dangers, conventional word-of-mouth (WOM) from friends has been used (Cheung et al., 2012; Park et al., 2020). Rosario et al. (2020) mentions customers can now research products or services online before making a purchase decision, traditional, face-to-face WOM has been reimagined as e- WOM. Traditional and digital word-of-mouth are impacted by the customer experience (Siqueira et al., 2019). Customer experience impacts word-of-mouth marketing, customer loyalty, and customer happiness (Fornell et al., 2006). In traditional offline media, the effect of customer experience on word-of-mouth (recommendation) is frequently the subject of controversy (Babin et al., 2005; Klaus & Maklan, 2013).

H2: Online customer experience significantly influences online customer satisfaction.

H3: Online customer experience significantly influences online purchase intention. **H4**: Online customer experience significantly influences word of

mouth intention. **H5**: Online customer satisfaction significantly influences online purchase intention. **H6**: Online customer satisfaction significantly influences word of mouth intention. **H7**: Online purchase intention significantly influences word of mouth intention.

H8: Online customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between online customer experience and online purchase intention.

H9: Online customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between online customer experience and word of mouth intention.

H10: Online purchase intention mediates the relationship between online customer satisfaction and word of mouth intention.

H11: Online purchase intention mediates the relationship between online customer experience and word of mouth intention.

2.9. Moderators

Demographics: There is evidence from numerous research that there is a relationship between consumer demographics like age and gender and their online purchasing behaviour (Zhou et al., 2007; Liebermann and Stashevsky, 2009). Numerous research has looked at how social-demographic factors and personal traits affect how customers perceive products (Kim et al., 2009). Ryan (2002) observed in his book that tourists' unique qualities, such as goals, background knowledge, and personalities, impact their experiences in tourist places. Therefore, demographics are as interested subject o dive deep into. Given the growing attention being paid to generation Y customers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). There is a claim that there are differences between how men and women interact, process information, and perceive user interfaces when making online purchases (Ramakrishnan et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be stated that women's levels of loyalty and contentment are less likely to be negatively impacted by negative ideas than those of men. Therefore, delivery effectiveness and return concerns may have a more negative effect on females' happiness and loyalty than on males (Chou et al., 2015). Men tend to favour online channels because of

practical considerations like how useful they think technology is. In contrast, females prefer touch channels due to the effect of social variables such as subjective standards and usability (Workman and Cho, 2013). In addition, Hasan (2010) concludes that males place a higher value on perceived enjoyment than females do, as well as online shopping's utility and convenience (Rodgers and Harris, 2003; Hasan, 2010).

Past experience (First time versus repeat customer): Past experience has also been highlighted as an important indicator of customer satisfaction (Kwun & Oh, 2006; Ryu & Jang, 2006). Studies like those by Wijaya et al. (2013) indicate that knowledge, prior eating experiences, demographic demographics, and the specific goal or characteristics of the trip are all factors that affect visitors' dining experiences. According to Verhoef et al. (2009), past dining experiences have an impact on present-day dining. Given the various customer care interactions in the H&T sector, the sum of individual experiences can have a big impact on a customer's attitude and pleasure. While first-time visitors set their expectations based on information from outside sources like tourism suppliers, travel agents, or friends and family, repeat visitors base their expectations on prior experiences. They came to the conclusion that the key factor in boosting repeat business was the consistency between external messaging of the benefits or expectations from visiting and the capacity of the destination to fulfil these through the experiences offered (Mckercher and Wong, 2004). Satisfaction and previous behaviour are reliable indicators of travellers' inclinations to return to a place (Petrick, Morais, and Norman, 2001). Tourist satisfaction can be measured using past experiences as a standard (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Huang & Hsu 2009).

Purchase frequency: After deciding that frequent customers form a judging sample that could provide insights into OCE, Klaus (2013) researched them in the setting of an online bookstore. The numerous OCE elements should be considered by online buyers depending on where they are in the purchasing process, which logically includes making infrequent purchases, according to Klaus (2013). On the other hand, Rose et al. (2012) deeply investigated into how relationships in OCE may change depending on purchase frequency. Based on how frequently

customers make purchases of goods or services, customer groupings can be evaluated (Chiou & Pan, 2009). This is in accordance with the management of online merchants that routinely categorise their customers in this manner (Chiou & Pan, 2009). Understanding market segmentation in this way is crucial from a broad managerial perspective since frequent clients generate substantially more sales than rare ones (Chiou & Pan, 2009). Conversely, infrequent users can experience too much cognitive strain and feel discouraged, which could have a negative impact and reduce their likelihood of making a purchase (Chen & Dubinsky, 2003). Therefore, it follows that frequent online customers have a larger relationship between their challenge levels and their degrees of cognitive experiencing state than less frequent ones. Furthermore, it is not obvious if stronger buy intentions and better satisfaction levels are truly linked to higher purchase frequencies in the setting of OCE. The current study aims to determine whether customers' levels of satisfaction impact their purchasing decisions, as this should occur when consumers are more satisfied than dissatisfied (e.g., Mittal and Kamakura, 2001). The affective state, on the other hand, will be shifting more in favour of affective satisfaction as a result of frequent shoppers, making it a more useful predictor of contentment.

H12a: Demographic variables (age, gender, income) moderate the relationship between Online Customer Experience and Online customer satisfaction.

Martin (2015) highlighted the significance of trust and satisfaction with online purchasing particularly among infrequent consumers with respect to purchase intention. Further, Rose et al. (2012) goes deeper into how connections in OCE may alter based on purchase frequency, which would, in our perspective, disclose whether antecedent is more significant to frequent or infrequent customers. Further, in the studies Chiou & Pan (2009) and Min, Overby & Im (2012), consumer groups were be examined based on how frequently they purchase goods or services Therefore, with an aim to check whether travel purchase frequency is a moderator in the relationship between online customer experience and online customer satisfaction, the study proposes the hypothesis:

H12b: Travel purchase frequency moderate the relationship between Online customer experience and Online customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology is a set of models, processes, and methods used to solve a research problem (Panneerselvam, 2014). Both the approach and research methods/techniques must be understood by the researcher. When addressing research methodology, its is usually discussed why the study took place, how the research questions were established, how and why the hypothesis developed, which information was gathered and what method was used, why a specific method of data analysis was chosen, and a host of other similar issues (Kothari, 2004).The choice of technique is crucial since it can influence the study's direction and the value of its findings (Creswell, 2003). This chapter presents a thorough methodology for examining the proposed hypotheses.

3.1 Research Philosophy

To build a philosophical perspective, the researcher must make a number of fundamental assumptions regarding two dimensions, the nature of society and the nature of science (Burrell and Morgan 1979). Inadequately matching the technique to the research problem may result in erroneous findings, which is ultimately harmful to the researcher's expertise and the credibility of research science (Holden et al., 2004). Positivism has long dominated how people see the social world; this is known as the "accepted view," according to Guba and Lincoln (2005). According to this perspective, social science methods should be as like those of the natural sciences as possible (Blaxter et al., 2010). The hypotheticodeductive structure of science and positivism are compatible. So, studying positivism's foundation and structure via the prism of hypotheses and deductions is a good place to begin (Hoyle et al., 2009). One of the primary objectives of positivist enquiry is to generate explanatory links or causal relationships that would eventually permit prediction and control of the phenomena under examination (gilPark et al., 2020). There are numerous alternative epistemological options than positivism, which is a distinctive blend of

empirical and rationalistic inclinations (Chia et al., 2002). Positivist researchers are likely to utilise a highly organised technique to facilitate replication (Gill and Johnson 2010). Emphasis is placed on quantitative data accessible to statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 2015).

3.2. Nature of Research

Advancing the theory development technique, the foundation of our study is a framework that is frequently created through reading academic literature. One of the foremost and prominent concerns for any researcher is how should the data be collected? According to Saunders et.al., (2009), The research onion depicted in figure

3.1 gives a very effective depiction for the choice of data collection techniques and analysis to be applied for a research problem. Before the researcher arrives at this central core, it is important to discuss the choices and the reason for those choices made so that the research methodology applied is closer to scientific research enquiry. Consequently, both inductive and deductive techniques were employed to analyze the phenomenon of customer experience (Saunders et al., 2015). In order to evaluate respondents' behaviour, qualitative characteristics are operationalized and defined so that respondents may respond to them. After employing many statistical techniques to evaluate the stated hypotheses, data is collected and analysed.

The research was conducted in two stages: phase I involved quantitative research, and phase II involved qualitative research A case study where the empirical findings were validated and mapped them to the customer experience practices of the industry players. The qualitative method and the quantitative method are both congruent with the inductive and deductive approaches, respectively. The case study, survey, and thematic analysis were all used in this study. The time horizon of the study, or when it is anticipated to be completed, is the second to final layer of the "research onion" (Saunders et al., 2009). It can have both a longitudinal and cross-sectional structure (Bryman, 2011). For the analysis in this study, a cross-sectional time horizon was adopted. The gathering and processing of data

represents the "research onion's" last layer. Primary data from end users and managers were used in the study, and several analytical techniques were employed. The basic ontological assumption for this study is that online travel portals are facing real time challenges to deliver superior customer experience. The issues seem to be even more post the recent corona virus pandemic. To analyze this reality, the epistemological assumption was that a combination of qualitative and quantitative study would be helpful in developing knowledge about this reality. Finally, axiological approach for this study was that a completely neutral stand was maintained on the opinions and data obtained from the respondents and attempt was made to collect completely honest opinions from all the participants for this study, free from any personal biasness.

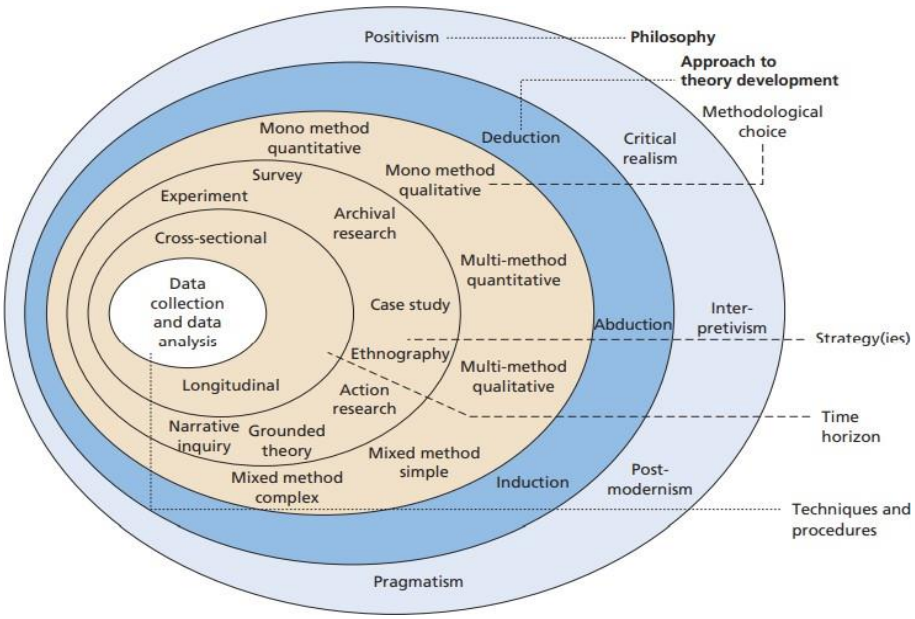


Figure 3.1: Research onion

Source: Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, 2015

3.3. Research Purpose

Research is the systematic, scientific pursuit of pertinent, domain-specific knowledge. The processes taken to "identify and redefine" the research topic, formulate hypotheses, collect, organise, and analyse data, come to conclusions, and validate the conclusions to see if the hypotheses were correct are all included

in the research process (Kothari, 2004). Following a description of our research question, pertinent literature was studied and analysed it in light of themes related to online customer experience. The evaluation prompted us to do in-depth study to learn more about the causes and effects of the online customer experience in the context of travel portals.

3.4. Research Questions: The research questions of the study are as follows**:**

- RQ1: What are the factors affecting online customer experience in case of online travel portals?
- RQ2: Is there any effect of online Customer Experience on online customer satisfaction towards the portal, purchase intention and word-of-mouth intention towards the portal?
- RQ3: Does online customer satisfaction mediate the relationship between online customer experience and online purchase intention?
- RQ4: Does demographic variables like age, gender, income and travel frequency, past experience moderate the relationship between Online customer experience and Online customer satisfaction?

3.5 Research Design

A research design is the process of establishing the settings for data collection and analysis in a way that attempts to balance study purpose relevance with procedure efficiency. (Saunders et al., 2016). Research must be as efficient as possible in order to provide the most amount of information with the least amount of effort, time, and money invested. So, research design is essential (Kothari, 2004). There are four types of research objectives: (i) exploration, (ii) description, (iii) diagnosis, and (iv) experimentation. If the objective of the research study is exploration, a flexible research design that allows for the consideration of numerous facets of a subject is deemed suitable (Kothari, 2004). A study design must, at a minimum, include a clear definition of the research topic, processes and techniques to be employed for acquiring information, the population to be

investigated, and data processing and analysis methodologies. In this study, mixed-methods research is conducted, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a stronger overall study than either qualitative or quantitative research alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This study seeks to determine the numerous antecedents of customer experience for online travel portals.

To meet the study objectives outlined in Chapter 1, a combination of exploratory and descriptive research was employed. The first phase started with exploratory research with the purpose of developing a conceptual understanding of the online customer experience construct and its antecedents. An intensive review of literature was done to conducted to come up with dimensions of online customer experience. Special attention was given to investigate the nature of channel studies done in the Indian context. The authors felt the need to study online travel portals in order to study online customer experience. The need for an in-depth interview was felt for the validating the relevant constructs as well as developing our body of knowledge on the new construct proposed in our study "perceived cancellation policy leniency" and "omnichannel management". The interviews helped fulfill all the research objectives and helped in getting a practical view of customer experience management. The third phase utilised a descriptive study approach to examine the causes and effects of online customer experience. For the aim of data gathering, distinct scales were established and designed to assess the dimensions of CX. In order to achieve the study aims, techniques of multivariate analysis were utilised to evaluate hypotheses regarding postulated correlations. In the last part of the investigation, the principal outcomes and conclusions of the quantitative analysis completed in the preceding phase were described. Further, the case of MakeMyTrip Ltd., a key player of the online travel industry, was developed to inspect and validate our results. The case was organized around the customer experience management practice the organization follows to deliver superior CX. The research design followed for this study is depicted in Figure 3.2 below:

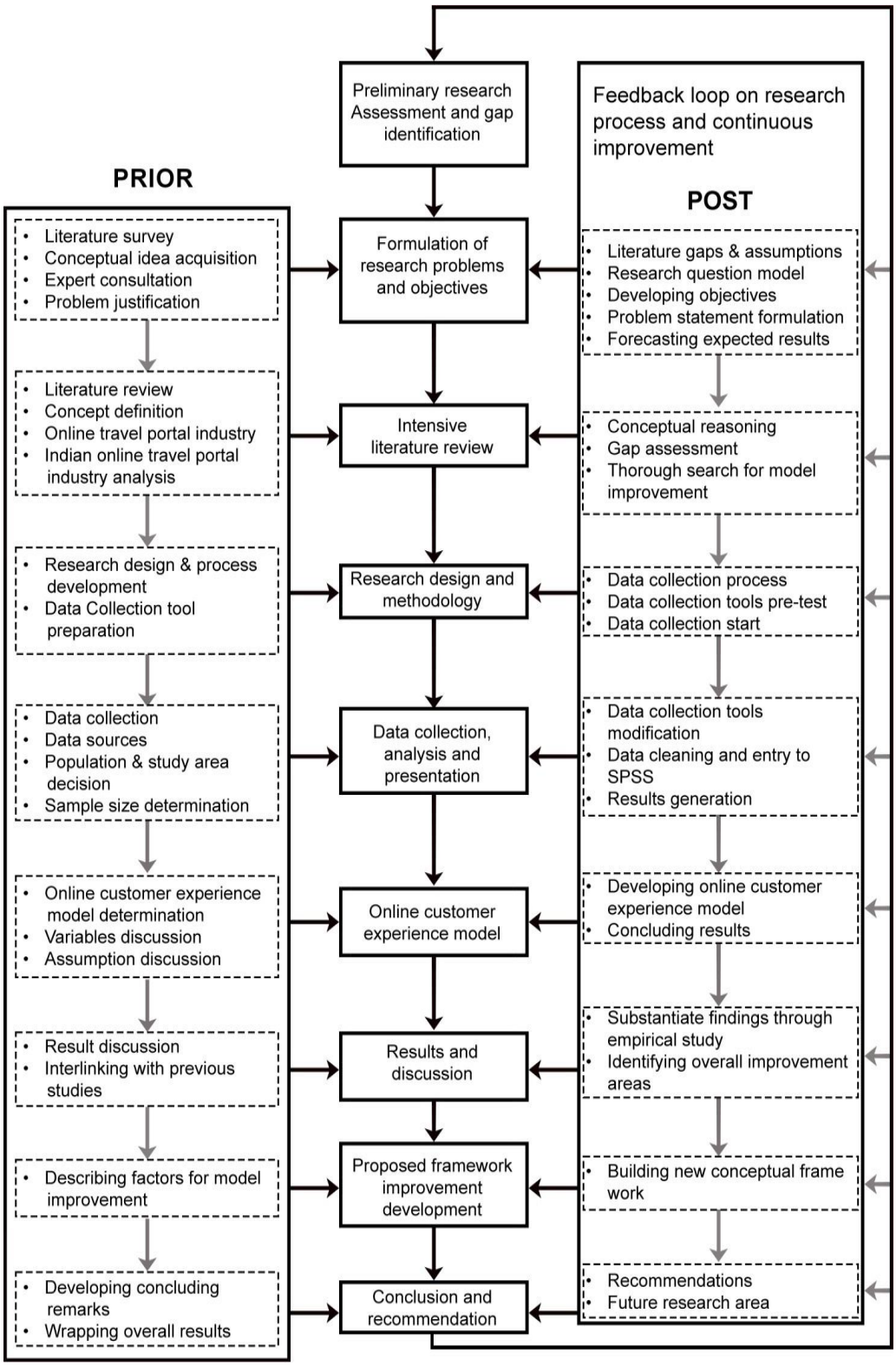


Figure 3.2: Research Design of the study

3.6. Sampling

3.6.1 Sampling Frame

All respondents who have made a purchase from online travel products were the target population. In the first stage of our research, the study noted the respondents' demographics, their online travel purchase habits, which online travel agencies people use most frequently and further, the study tries to find what drives them to buy products online.

3.6.2 Sampling Technique

The study makes use of convenience sampling technique for the data collection.

3.6.3 Data Collection

The data collection has been done via both modes-online and offline. A total of 512 questionnaires were floated online and 157 were floated offline. 29 responses were disregarded after scrutiny (based on data cleansing) because they weren't correctly filled out. There were 640 questionnaires used in total. Google forms were used to assist in data collection. Contact with the respondents took place in person, over the phone, through Google Meet, email, and LinkedIn. Upon giving them few reminders, we gathered a total of 640 surveys. Out of 640, 504 affirmed they have purchased recently from online travel portals while 136 said they have not ever used online travel portals. Out of the 504 responses further data cleaning left us with 447 responses.

3.6.4 Sample Size

The sample size is determined by the model's complexity and number of variables. It should essentially be adequate to represent the population under investigation. Generally, studies on quantitative analysis require a sample size of 200 to 400 elements (Netemeyer *et al.,* 2004; Hair *et al.,* 2010). As a general thumb rule, a ratio of 5 responses for each variable is considered suitable for sample size (Bentler and Chou 1987, Hair *et al.,*2010). The number of variables and the complexity of the model determines the sample size. The sample size of

the study was calculated by making use of an online sample size calculator recommended by Soper (2022). depicted in figure 3.3 which is both cost-free and very useful to estimate the minimal sample size. The impact size was determined to be 0.30, which is moderate and at the 5% threshold of significance. Our actual sample size was 447, which is fewer than the minimum suggested sample size of 277.

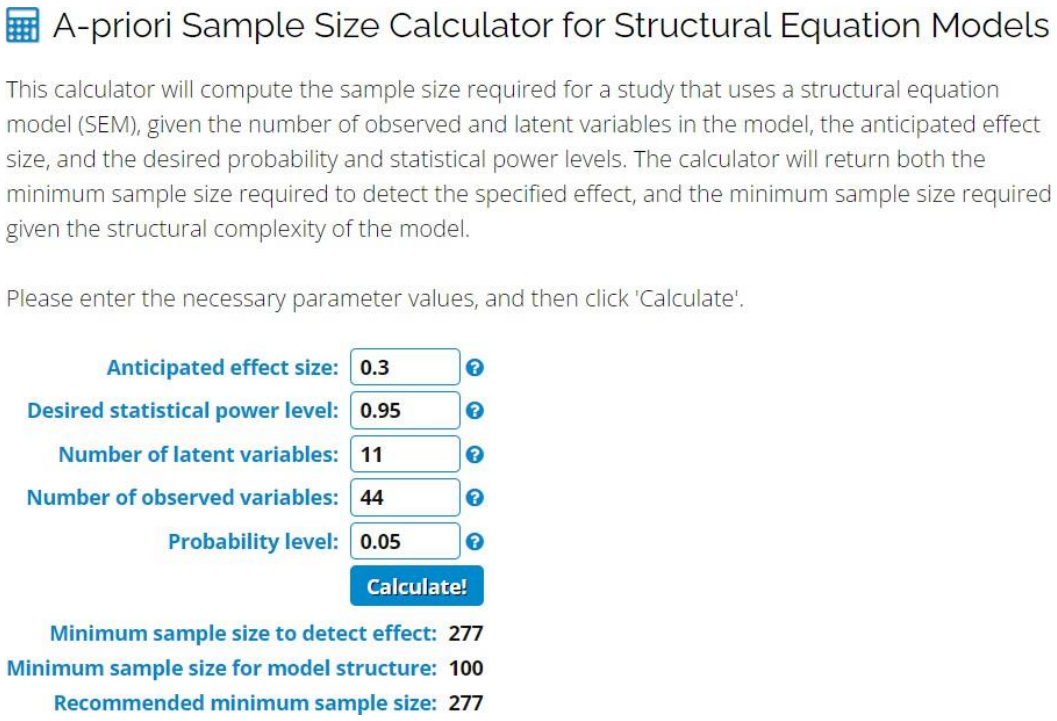


Figure 3.3: Output of sample size calculator

3.7. Nature of Questionnaire

Between June 2021 and March 2022, the primary data was collected for quantitative analysis during an 8-month period using a survey method. One of the qualifying questions asked was- Have you ever made a purchase from an online travel agency? If the answer was yes, then, the question was asked in previous 6 months, how many times did you purchased travel online. We considered only the responses which answered -two and above. The survey was purposefully created in this way so that the study could delve deeply into the customer segment who had purchased travel online, understand their holistic experience and test our

numerous hypotheses with them. The first section of the survey gathered demographic data like gender, occupation, computer skills, popularity of travel portals etc. In the second phase, there were seven independent factors (antecedents of online customer experience), and in the last segment, there are three dependent variables (online customer satisfaction, online purchase intention, word of mouth intention). Further, the study aims to study demographics, travel frequency, and other variables to explore their moderating capacities on current relationships. In the survey, all questions were made compulsory. Data was gathered in two stages, first for the pilot study and subsequently for the comprehensive analysis. To develop a structured questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out. This made it easier to understand the study's background and provided information on how well the survey's respondents could understand and respond to it. It was also used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. Moreover, offline data were collected for the pilot study via in-person visits. This gave us the opportunity to modify the questionnaire and properly order it where necessary. The respondents scored the questions using a seven-point Likert scale.

3.8 Scale/Measurement Design

Surveys were conducted to gather quantitative primary data for the descriptive studies. This primary data was standardized to facilitate uniform and coherent analysis. A questionnaire is a defined set of questions that is used as a structured tool to collect information from respondents either in writing or verbally. The positivist ideology that underpins this study emphasizes the value of examining links between variables through the formation of hypotheses. To evaluate the stated hypotheses, questionnaires including items for each construct of the conceptual model were used to collect data. To assess the influence of independent variables on dependent variables, a seven-point Likert scale was applied to each variable, with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 indicating disagree, 3 indicating somewhat disagree, 4 indicating neutral, 5 indicating somewhat agree, 6 indicating agree, and 7 indicating strongly agree. Sixty respondents' pilot-tested the generated questionnaire. Thereafter, validity and reliability tests were conducted. In the following chapter, the process for verifying

the questionnaire is covered. Participants were given access to a final questionnaire with 44 items on a seven-point Likert scale, and they were instructed to map their prior customer experiences with online travel agencies and critically complete it. We prepared the final questionnaire in numerous ways:

Firstly, the study recognised appropriate items and constructs by thorough review of literature review. Following which, different industry experts were contacted to authenticate the items and constructs chosen. Finally, a pilot survey was conducted to examine the questionnaire. After the pilot test, few changes were made to the final version that was used to gather the data.

Portal Functionality (PF): It represents the functional characteristics of the website including e functions, accessibility, search capability, and effective navigation, responsiveness, and ease of use (Tsang et al., 2010). To define the construct portal functionality, we make use of below mentioned statements are presented below:

Table 3.1: Items of portal functionality construct

Portal Functionality	
This online travel portal has well-arranged categories.	PF1
It is easy to make or cancel reservations.	PF2
It is easy to navigate on this Online travel portal.	PF3
The page loads quickly on this portal.	PF4
It is easy and quick to complete a transaction on this travel portal.	PF5

Customization: Our functional definition of customization is Personal tailoring of website appearance and functionality. Items for CZ were adapted from Srinivasan et al. (2002); Rose et al. (2012); Thirumalai and Sinha (2011). To define the construct customization, the current study makes use of below mentioned statements are presented below:

Table 3.2: Items of customization construct

Customization	
The Online travel portal (OTP) enables me to book services that are tailor-made for me.	CZ1
The Online travel portal (OTP) sends me information customized to my personal preference.	CZ2

Interactivity: The ability of two or more communicating parties to synchronise and influence one another over a communication medium is known as interactivity (Liu and Shrum, 2002). There are two basic forms of interaction, Person-person interactivity refers to a user's ability to connect with people online. The second word, "machine-interactivity," characterises a person's access to hypermedia content. (2009). Ballantine & Fortin the scale comprised a total of five items, which were derived from Ballantine & Fortin's (2009) items for IA. The Interactivity items are listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Items of Interactivity construct

Interactivity	
I think the OTP was able to respond to my specific requests for information so I could access it quickly and efficiently.	IA1
The OTP allowed me to easily communicate with the company if I ever had a specific question or wanted to purchase a product	IA2
The OTP lets me access other customers' opinions about the products featured.	IA3
I think the OTP really gave me some control (i.e., flexibility) over the content that I wanted to see	IA4
Overall, I think the OTP was highly interactive.	IA5

Price and promotions: Price promotions are "reduce the price for a given quantity or increase the quantity available at the same price, thereby enhancing value and create an economic incentive to purchase" (Raghubir and Corfman, 1999). Items for PP were adapted from Huang, Ching, Liao (2014) To define the construct price and promotions, the study used the below mentioned statements

are presented below:

Table 3.4: Items of Price and promotions construct

Price and promotions	
The online travel portal makes me save money compared to offline purchasing.	PP1
Travel purchase from OTP is an economical transaction as it has special offers and discounts.	PP2
This online travel portal usually offers special promotion.	PP3

Omnichannel management: Omnichannel retailing is defined as "a set of integrated processes and decisions that support a unified view of a brand from product purchase, return, and exchange standpoint irrespective of the channel (in-store, online, mobile, call center, or social). Items for OM were adapted from Shi et al. (2020); however, the study adapted this scale as per online travel context with the help of managers working in the industry and academicians. The items of Omnichannel management are given in Table 3.5:

Table 3.5: Items of Omnichannel management construct

Omnichannel management	
I can choose alternative channels in order to make a travel purchase.	OM1
My member accounts across different channels are connected	OM2
My interactions across different channels are integrated and taken into account for each purchase.	OM3
wThe quality of travel products is consistent across different channels.	OM4
The service performance is consistent across different channels.	OM5

Perceived cancellation policy leniency: A cancellation is described as a booking that is cancelled prior to the time of service by the customer (Phillips, 2004; Talluri and van Ryzin, 2005). Cancellation policies can be described by the degree of difficulty for cancelling the bookings: lenient or strict. Items for PC were adapted from Bonifield et al. (2010), Jeng et al. (2014), Hseih et al. (2013) and the below mentioned statements were used:

Table 3.6: Items of Perceived cancellation policy leniency construct

Perceived cancellation policy leniency	
Compared with the cancellation policies of other OTPs, the cancellation policy of this OTP is very lenient.	PC1
The cancellation policy of this OTP is less restrictive.	PC2
The cancellation policy of this OTP makes me feel very convenient.	PC3
This OTP provides free cancellation policy.	PC4

Security & Privacy: Security and privacy relate to the technical measures that assure compliance with legal requirements and best practises while handling personal information. (Casalo et al., 2007). Items for SP were adapted from San-Martin and Camarero (2008) and are mentioned below:

Table 3.7: Items of Security and Privacy construct

Security and Privacy	
The Online Travel Portal (OTP) was safe and had a privacy policy regarding customer and privacy information.	SP1
The OTP informed the customer about security and privacy policies.	SP2
I felt safe when sending personal information through the OTP.	SP3
I think my rights regarding my personal details were respected by the OTP.	SP4
I think the OTP had mechanisms that ensure the safe transmission of its users' information.	SP5
I felt safe sending confidential information (credit card number, bank account information) when I paid to the OTP.	SP6

Online customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is the result of their experiences throughout the purchasing process, including need arousal, information search, appraisal of alternatives, purchase choice, and post purchase behaviour (Kotler, 1997; Lin et al., 2011). Items for OCS were adapted from Khalifa & Liu (2007) and are mentioned below:

Table 3.8: Items of Online customer satisfaction construct

Online customer satisfaction	
I am satisfied with my overall experience with this travel portal.	OCS1
I am satisfied with the pre-purchase experience of online travel portal (e.g., product search, quality of information about products, product comparison).	OCS2
I am satisfied with the purchase experience of the online travel portal (e.g., ordering, payment procedure).	OCS3
I am satisfied with the post-purchase experience of the online travel portal (e.g., customer support and after sales support, handling of returns/refunds, delivery care).	OCS4

Online purchase intention: Purchase intention is a characteristic that indicates customers anticipated or planned purchase activity and that their views and/or attitudes can be represented in their purchasing behaviour (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995). Purchase intention (PIOS) three items adapted from Ramayah and Ignatius (2005).

Table 3.9: Items of Online purchase intention construct

I intend to use online travel portals (e.g., purchasing online travel or seek travel information).	PI1
Using online travel portals for purchasing my travel is something I would do.	PI2
I could see myself using the online travel portals to buy online travel	PI3

Word of mouth intention: WOM shows the client's propensity to promote the product or service to others (Dabholkar et al., 1995). Statements for WOM intention were from Kishan (2020), Zeithmal et al. (1996), Prado- Gasco et al. (2017) and are listed below:

Table 3.10: Items of Word-of-mouth intention construct

I am willing to share my online travel portal booking experience on social media.	WOM1
I will speak well about this online travel portal if other people ask me.	WOM2
I share comments, photos, or videos on social media about my travel purchase with this portal.	WOM3
I will recommend other people to purchase through this online travel portal.	WOM4

The scale variables, dimensions, number of items and their sources are as follows:

Table 3.11: Sources of the items adapted of various constructs of the study

Variable	Dimension	No. of items	Source
Online customer experience	Portal Functionality	5	Tsang et al. (2010)
	Price and Promotions	3	Huang, Ching, Liao (2014)
	Interactivity	5	Ballantine & Fortin (2009)
	Customization	5	Srinivasan et al. (2002); Rose et al. (2012); Thirumalai and Sinha (2011)
	Perceived cancellation policy leniency	4	Bonifield et al. (2010), Jeng et al. (2014), Hseih et al. (2013
	Security and Privacy	6	San-Martin and Camarero (2008),
	Omnichannel Management	5	Shi et al. (2020)
Online customer satisfaction		4	Khalifa & Liu (2007)
Online purchase intention		3	Ramayah and Ignatius (2005)
Word-of-mouth intention		4	Kishan (2020), Zeithmal et al. (1996), Prado- Gasco et al. (2017)

Moderators: A moderator variable is a variable that modifies the shape of a relationship, indicating a strong interaction between the moderator and predictor factors. A moderator is a third variable whose function is to increase comprehension of the causal link between an independent variable and a dependant variable (Wu, 2008). In the current study, demographic variables (age, gender, income) and travel purchase frequency were tested if they moderate various relationships.

3.9 Pre-Test of Questionnaire

Online travel agency specialists, researchers, and professors made comprised the expert groups in the current study. The participants were asked to comment on the questionnaire's layout and the study methods. The scope, content, and purpose of the items were examined by experts. The preliminary tests were conducted to validate the questionnaire's content. Following discussions with experts, a number of

things were dropped, and new ones that made more sense in the context of the internet travel industry were added.

3.10 Pilot Study

The instrument's reliability was determined by computing the Cronbach alpha. Table 3.12 shows that all results are more than the cutoff of 0.7, indicating the validity of the resulting questionnaire (Hair et al., 2006). The questionnaire was then distributed to the respondents after the results of the pilot test were analysed and adjusted in light of them.

Table 3.12: Construct Reliability of the study (Pilot Testing)

S.no.	Construct	Cronback's alpha
1	Portal Functionality	0.948
2	Omnichannel management	0.897
3	Customization	0.943
4	Interactivity	0.947
5	Price and Promotions	0.914
6	Perceived cancellation policy leniency	0.909
7	Security and Privacy	0.961
8	Online customer satisfaction	0.956
9	Online purchase intention	0.960
10	Word of mouth intention	0.873

All constructs' Cronbach's alpha was higher than 0.7 (Portal Functionality: 0.948, Omnichannel management:0.897, Customization:0.943, Interactivity:0.947, Price and Promotions:0.914, Perceived cancellation policy leniency:0.909, Security and Privacy:0.961 Online customer satisfaction:0.956 Online purchase intention:0.960 Word of mouth intention:0.873). As a result, the study's findings support the existence of internal consistency and reliability in the responses.

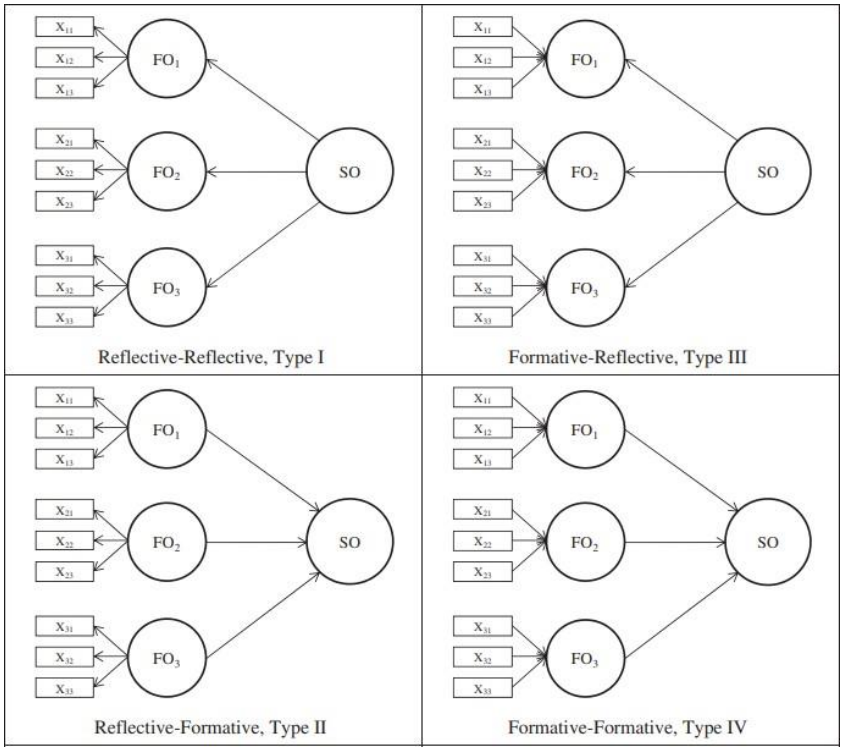
3.11. Data Analysis technique

PLS-SEM was utilised for data analysis. With SEM, researchers can graphically analyze the links between relevant variables in order to allocate resources more

effectively and provide better customer service (Wong et al., 2013). SEM utilises two strategies, CB-SEM and variance-based SEM. Researchers use PLS because it has superior statistical power and can be used to regulate complex models with fewer restrictions. The PLS approach is used by the structural equation modelling (SEM) program called Smart PLS-SEM is a second-generation multivariate data analysis method most commonly used in social science research since it can assess additive and linear causal models that are theoretically justified (Haenlin and Kaplan, 2004). Another benefit of smart PLS is its capacity to simultaneously portray relationships between all latent constructs while addressing measurement errors in the structural model (Farooq and Markovic, 2016). PLS was thus determined to match the goal of the research because this study is explanatory in character. This is consistent with the recommendation made by Hair et al. (2017) that the measurement models be examined independently before the structural model's evaluation.

3.12. Reflective and Formative Measurement Models

The way that CB-SEM and VB-SEM approach data in a supposedly pedagogic manner is the key difference between them. Measuring models calculate the correlations between the constructions and their measured or observed variables or items, and structural models build linear regressions across constructs, however in the first case several linear regressions are realised simultaneously (Ringle & Bido, 2015).



Source: Becker et al. (2012)

Figure 3.4: The four types of hierarchical latent variable models

For this investigation, by following the assumptions of Rolda'n & Sa'nchez-Franco (2012), PLS-SEM is appropriate for the reasons listed below:

1. Prediction of dependent variables is the main emphasis of this work.
2. The constructs used in this study are both formative as well as reflective.
3. Higher order constructs are being studied in this research.
4. Scores from latent variables are used in this investigation.
5. This model stands out for its intricacy in terms of the types of hypotheses' connections.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The current study made use of Smart PLS 3.3.3 to conduct data analysis. Lately, most studies in customer experience area have used Smart PLS in their studies such as Hasfar et al. (2020), Wibowo et al. (2020), Chen et al. (2021). Additionally, to study online travel domain also, a lot of studies used Smart PLS in the past (Ukpabi et al.,2020; Duarte & Amaro, 2018; Gharaibeh & Gharaibeh,2022).

The PLS-SEM incorporates a multistage analysis, which consists of the following stages: A PLS Path model includes two phases: assessing the structural model (also known as the inner model) and developing the measurement model (called outer model). Using measurement model guarantees only constructs with enough indicator loading, convergent validity, composite reliability (CR), and discriminant validity are incorporated (Ringle et al., 2018). Further, SEM is utilized to evaluate the route coefficients and test it using bootstrapping. Lastly, the moderation test is used to measure the strength between endogenous and exogenous factors (Hayes, 2013).

The chapter focuses on an extensive data analysis and quantitative data acquisition outcomes for this study, as well as an attempt to address the previously presented research hypotheses. Using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0, the gathered data were screened for missing values before to the chapter's introduction. SPSS was then used to conduct demographic analysis to obtain the frequencies and percentages of the study's demographic variables. This is followed by an assessment of the reliability and validity of the data using Smart PLS version 3.3.3 to evaluate the measurement model. Using the structural model, the supplied hypotheses are then examined. This evaluation provided the path coefficients. Finally, several moderating and mediating effects were examined.

4.1. Preliminary Tests for Multi variate analysis

4.1.1. Missing data: In order to avoid the issues that arise later while analysis, missing values in the data were searched for. The web survey was used to check for

incomplete responses automatically. This mechanism accepts only complete responses. Hence, the downloaded responses were comprehensive and lacked no data. In Appendix I, boxplots for all variables utilised in the study have been included.

4.1.2 Normality: In order to apply structural equation modelling, the dataset should be normal. Normality of the data set is determined by the presence of kurtosis and skewness in the normal distribution curve. The skewness of the curve is an indicator of the distribution's degree of symmetry around its mean, while the kurtosis represents the peak or flattening of the distribution curve. (Hair et al., 2010). Table 4.1 shows that these values were within the acceptable range with skewness < ±3 and kurtosis < ±10 (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 4.1: Skewness and Kurtosis of Constructs

	Skewness	**Std. error of skewness**	**Kurtosis**	**Std. Error of Kurtosis**
PF	-0.585	0.115	-0.832	0.230
OM	-0.146	0.115	-0.773	0.230
PP	-0.310	0.115	-1.002	0.230
CZ	-0.554	0.115	-0.798	0.230
IA	-0.389	0.115	-0.797	0.230
PC	-0.191	0.115	-0.903	0.230
OCS	-0.747	0.115	-0.554	0.230
OPI	-0.586	0.115	-0.755	0.230
WOM	-0.280	0.115	-0.765	0.230
SP	-0.419	0.115	-0.870	0.230

4.1.2 **Linearity:** Another important assumption that needs to be tested for the dataset for multivariate analysis is linearity. This was checked with the help of a scatter plot. The scatter plot diagram shows the distribution of the data points. Figure 4.1 depicts the scatter plot. The R-square, F score, and p values all show a linear relationship between

the factors in question. The results are dispersed along the line of best fit, which demonstrates the linearity of the data.

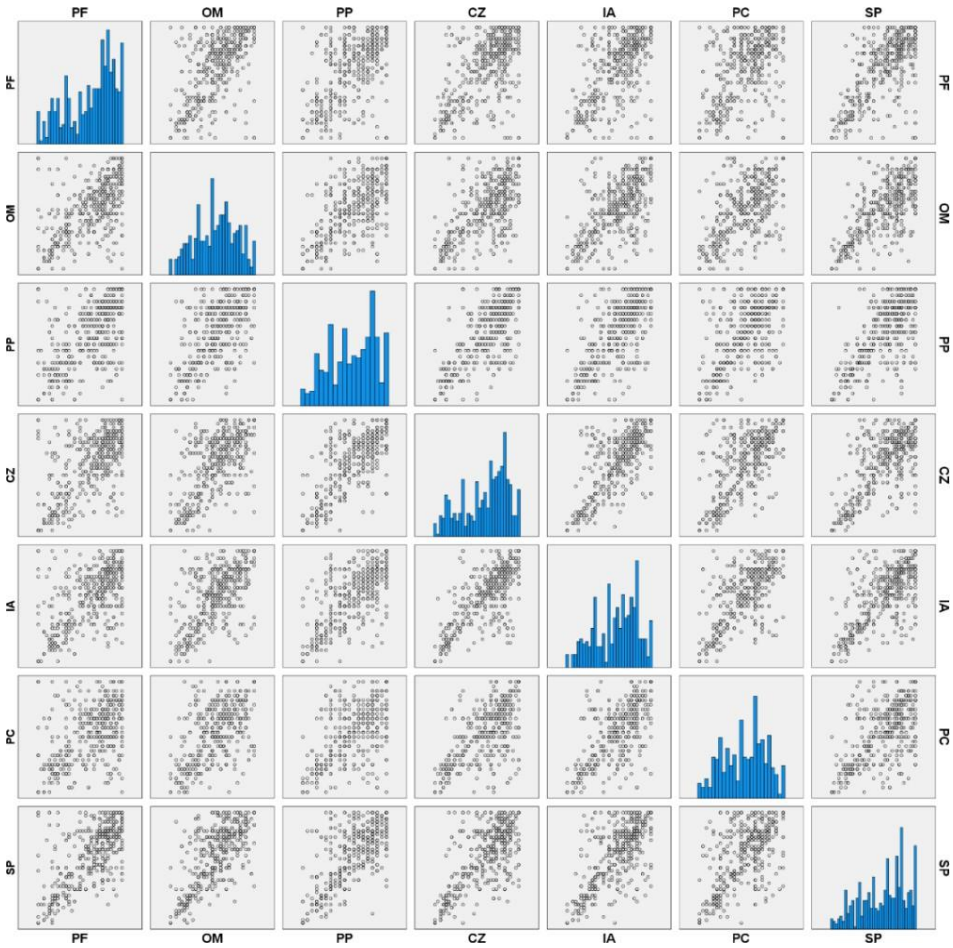


Figure 4.1: Scatter plot of constructs

4.1.3 Multi-Collinearity: In case the statements of one variable are significantly related to those of another, multivariate analysis cannot be performed. On the assumption that there is no or very little link between the two, the study proceeded to compute the inter-construct relationships. When variables occurring at the same level, the multicollinearity test is conducted. By defining one variable as independent and the rest variables as dependent, the VIF values were generated. This was conducted separately for each variable. All these values for the Portal Functionality (PF), Omnichannel management (OM), Price and Promotions (PP), Customization (CZ), Interactivity (IA), Perceived cancellation policy leniency (PC), Security and Privacy (SP) are acceptable value as these are less than 3.

Table 4.2: VIF values of constructs

	Collinearity Statistics	
Constructs	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
Portal Functionality	0.496	2.016
Omnichannel management	0.445	2.246
Price and Promotions	0.353	2.832
Customization	0.331	3.020
Interactivity	0.342	2.924
Perceived cancellation policy leniency	0.479	2.089
Security and Privacy	0.346	2.889

4.1.4 Homoscedasticity: Homoscedasticity also needs to be checked before conducting partial least square analysis. A data set is homoscedastic if the dependent variable has equal level of variance with the predictor variable (Hair et al., 2010). To inspect the homoscedasticity, standardized predicted and residual values for the scatter plot were used. The scatter plots confirmed homoscedasticity in the data making it suitable for regression analysis. Figure 4.2 to figure 4.8 depicts the scatter plot and homoscedasticity in the dataset. For these plots the study has taken the dependent variable to be online customer satisfaction.

1. **Independent variable:** Portal Functionality

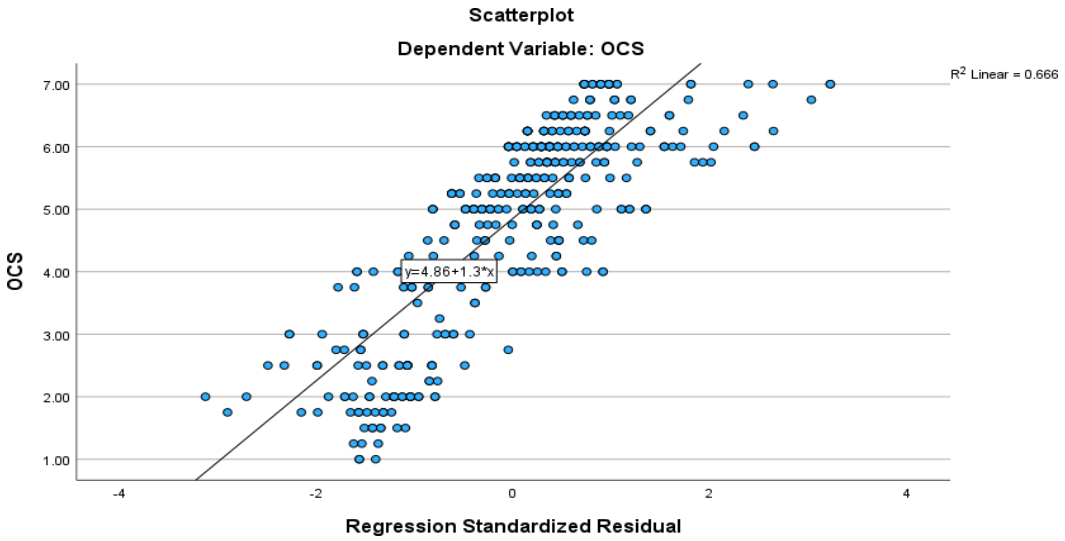


Figure 4.2: Scatter Plot of Portal Functionality and Online customer satisfaction

2. **Independent variable:** Omnichannel management

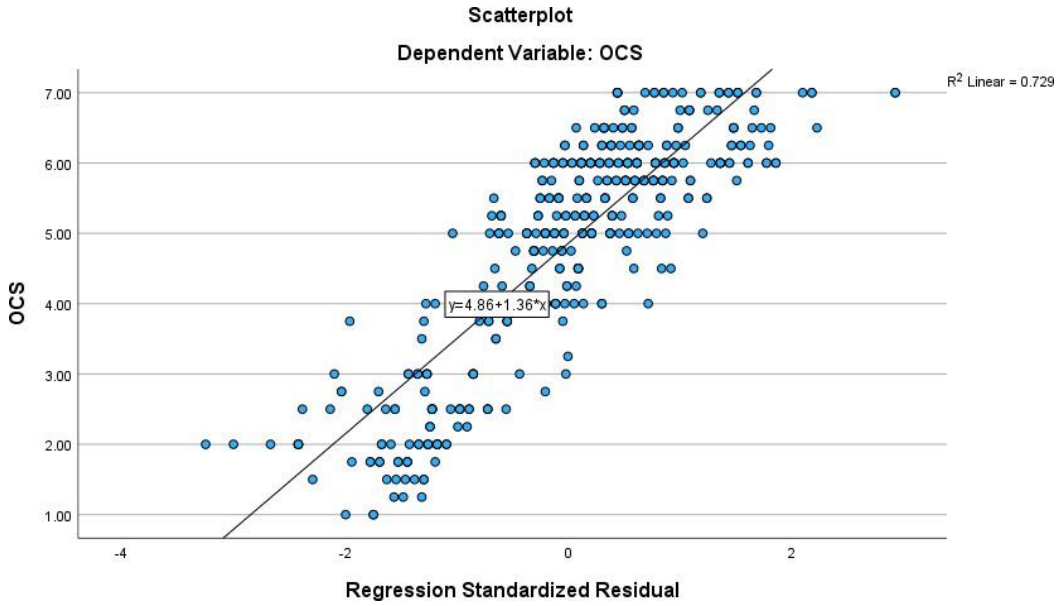


Figure 4.3: Scatter Plot of Omnichannel management and Online customer satisfaction

3. **Independent variable:** Price and Promotions

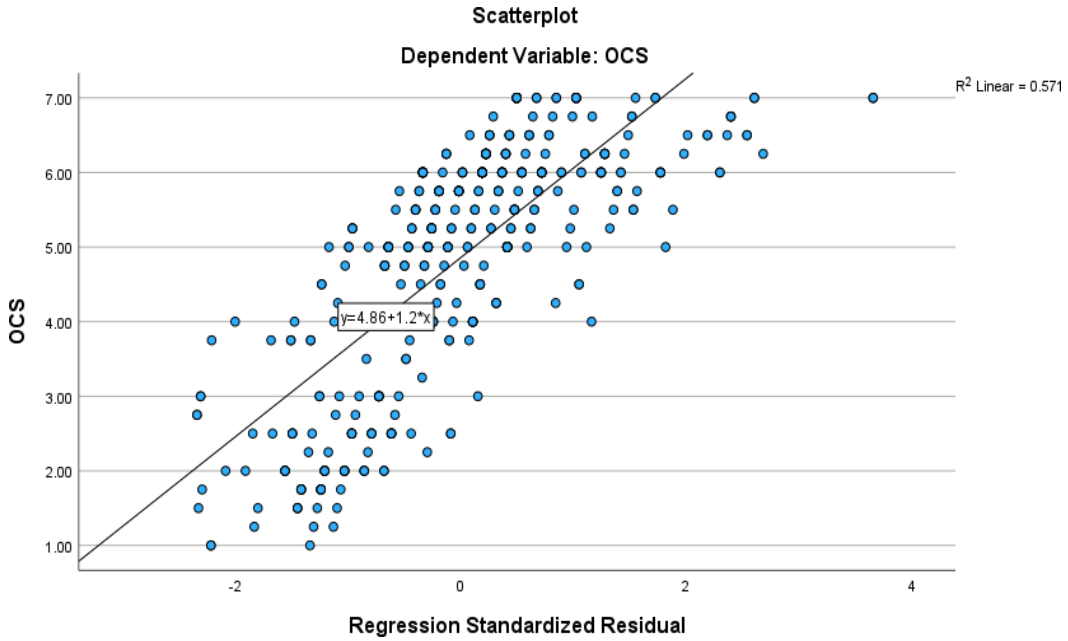


Figure 4.4: Scatter Plot of Price and Promotions and Online customer satisfaction

4. Independent variable: Customization

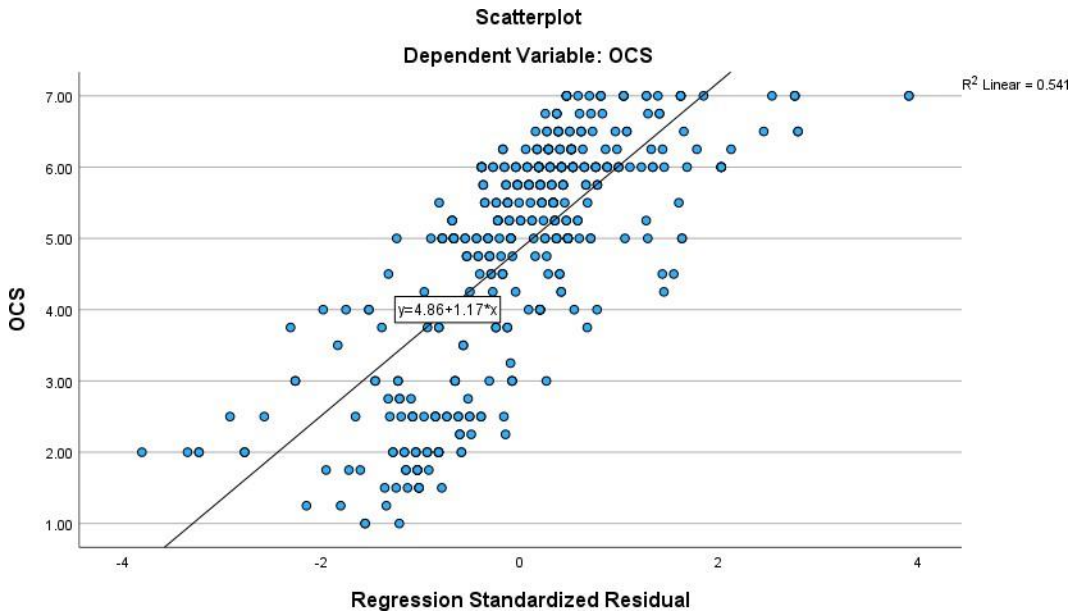


Figure 4.5: Scatter Plot of Customization and Online customer satisfaction

5. **Independent variable:** Interactivity

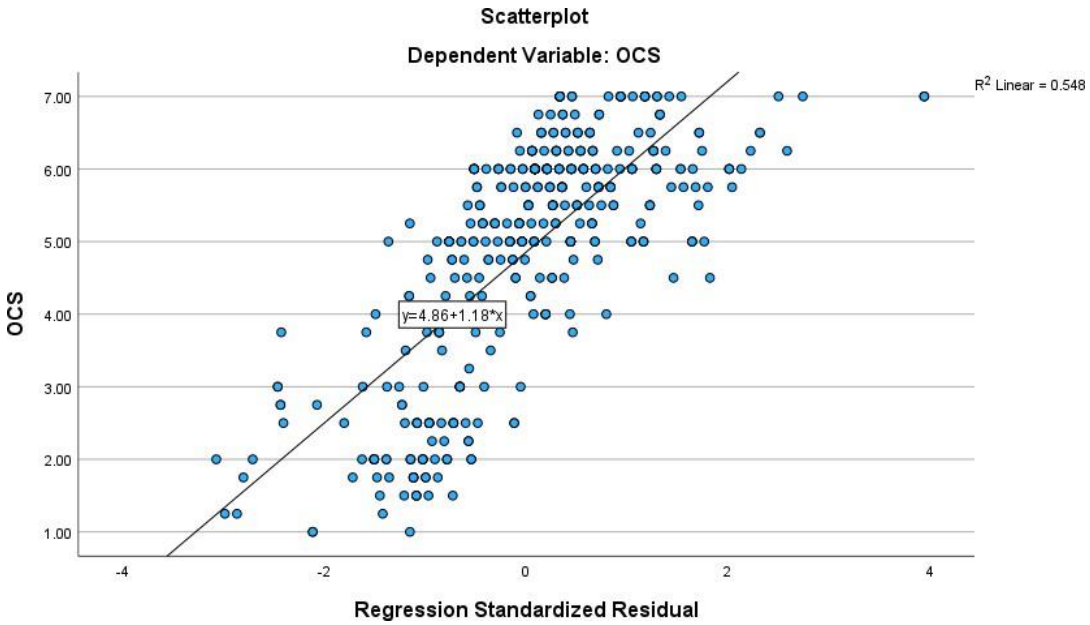


Figure 4.6: Scatter Plot of Interactivity and Online customer satisfaction

6. **Independent variable:** Perceived cancellation policy leniency

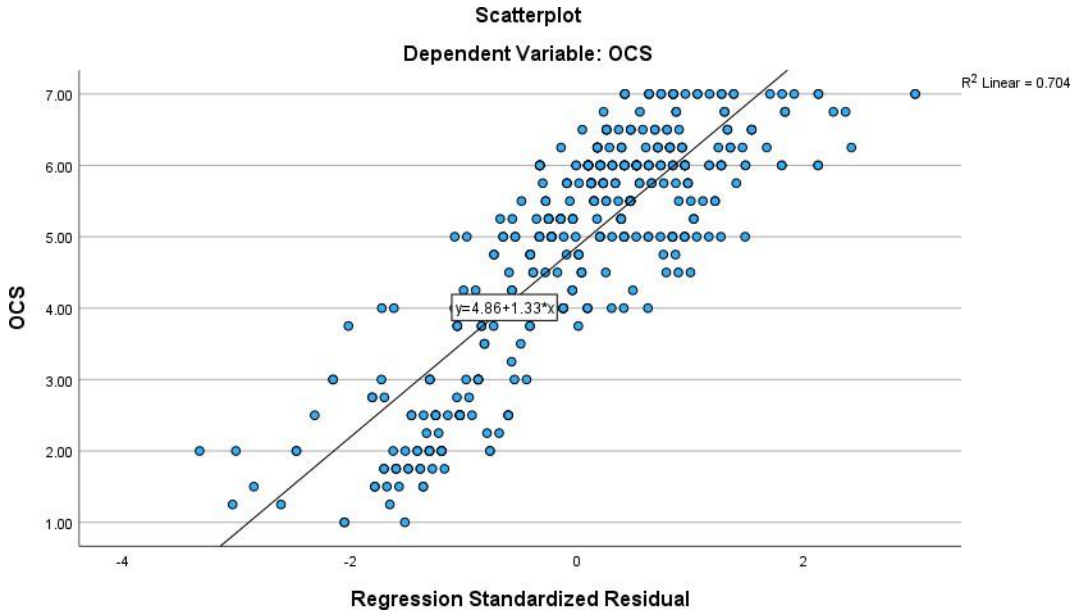


Figure 4.7: Scatter Plot of Perceived cancellation policy leniency and Online customer satisfaction

7. **Independent variable:** Security & Privacy

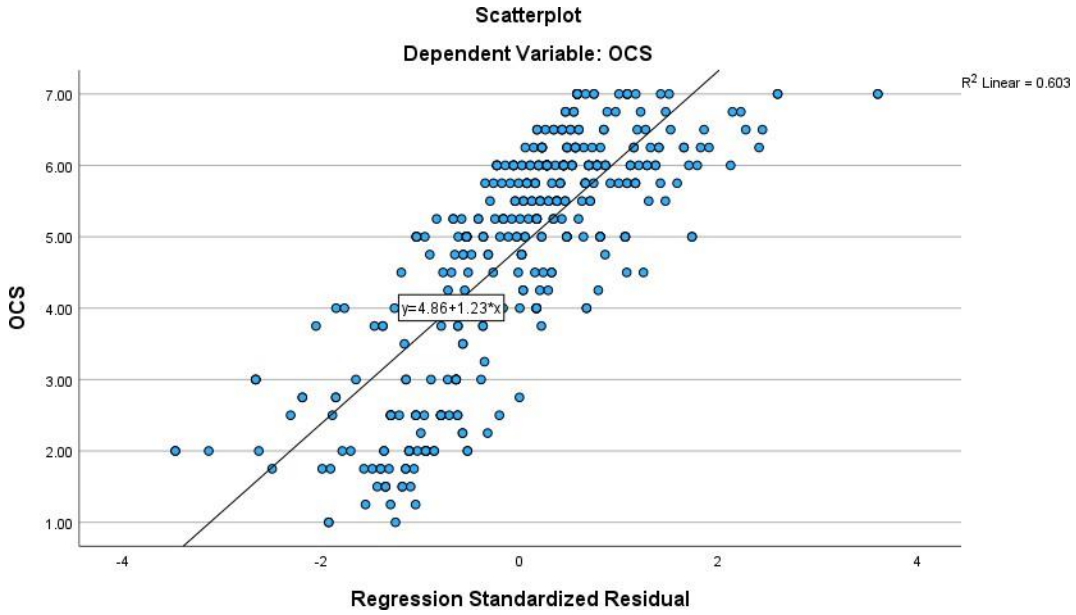


Figure 4.8: Scatter Plot of Security & Privacy and Online customer satisfaction

Post checking the assumptions of the data, the study conducts descriptive statistics to check the demographics of our sample.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

This section contains descriptive information on the variables in the research as well as the respondent profile. Descriptive statistics are used to describe data. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to summarise and effectively depict facts. Descriptive statistics are summaries of numerical, graphical, or tabular data (Anderson et al., 2011). The data can also help researchers identify sample features that may have an impact on their results.

4.3. Demographics of the sample

The demographic profile of the responders is discussed in this section. The majority of respondents have made at least one travel transaction via an online travel site in the previous six months. They were mostly from the NCR and northern India.

1. Respondent Profile: Gender

Below are the tabulated responses as per males and female responses in form of a frequent distribution table:

Table 4.3: Gender Frequency Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	241	53.91
Female	206	46.08
Total	447	

2. Respondent Profile: Age

52.1 percent of respondents were 18–25 years old, followed by 26.1 percent who were 26–35 years old. The breakup of respondent's age profile is displayed below in table.

Table 4.4: Age Frequency Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	233	52.12
26-35	117	26.17
36-45	48	10.73
46-55	37	8.27
Above 56	12	2.68
Total	447	

3. Respondent Profile: Occupation

The respondent's occupation is relevant to a number of aspects that may influence a number of variables of the study. 31% of our data was salaried, 55% were students, while 8% were self-employed. The breakup of respondent's occupation profile is displayed below in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Occupation Frequency Distribution

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Salaried	140	31.3
Homemaker	7	1.56
Self- Employed	36	8.05
Student	250	55.92
Others	14	3.13
Total	447	

4. Respondent Profile: Annual family income

The respondent's annual family income is relevant to a number of aspects that may have an impact on various relationships of the variables. The breakup of respondent's annual family income profile is displayed below in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Annual family income Frequency Distribution

Annual family income from all sources (all figures are in INR)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5,00,000	84	18.79
5,00,000-10,00,000	137	30.64
10,00,001-15,00,000	97	21.70
15,00,000-20,00,000	37	8.27
Above 20,00,001	84	18.79
Can't disclose	8	1.78
Total	447	

5 Respondent Profile: Marial status

Our sample consisted of 67% single respondents, 31% married and around 1.5% separated, data is displayed in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Marial status Frequency Distribution

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	300	67.11
Married	140	31.31
Separated	7	1.56
Total	447	

6. Respondent Profile: Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification is an important demographic which decides consumption pattern and influences decision making. 48.9% of respondents were post graduate, followed by 23.7% were graduates and 11% were undergraduate. Description of sample educational qualification wise is present on table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Educational Qualification Frequency Distribution

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	51	11.4
Graduate	106	23.71
Post-graduate	219	48.99
Professional Qualification	28	6.26
Ph.D.	43	9.61
Total	447	

7 Travel Frequency: Travel frequency could give us some very interesting insights into our respondents. Table 4.9 shows 59.7% of our sample were not so frequent travellers and 40.2 % of the sample comprised of frequent travellers. Working definition for frequent travellers were individuals who purchase online travel at least 3 times a year (Pre and post COVID) however, not so frequent travellers were any individual who purchase online travel less than 3 times a year (Pre and post COVID).

Table 4.9: Travel Frequency Distribution

Travel frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Frequent travellers	180	40.26
Not so frequent travellers	267	59.73
Total	447	

4.4. Variable Descriptive Statistics

4.4.1 Portal functionality: Portal functioning is measured with the help of five statements in the research. Table 4.10 shows descriptive analysis findings for the variable Portal functionality claims in the research.

Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics: Portal functionality

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PF1	447	1	7	4.76	1.927	-.644	.115	-.789	.230
PF2	447	1	7	4.67	1.922	-.437	.115	-1.063	.230
PF3	447	1	7	4.88	1.849	-.574	.115	-.830	.230
PF4	447	1	7	4.62	1.767	-.455	.115	-.847	.230
PF5	447	1	7	4.93	1.844	-.676	.115	-.713	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.2 Customization: Five statements are used to assess the level of customization within the research. Table 4.11 displays the descriptive analysis outcomes for the numerous customisation statements considered in the investigation.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics: Customization

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
CZ1	447	1	7	4.36	1.844	-.355	.115	-.974	.230
CZ2	447	1	7	4.56	1.705	-.392	.115	-.908	.230
CZ3	447	1	7	4.72	1.774	-.589	.115	-.728	.230
CZ4	447	1	7	4.72	1.690	-.549	.115	-.700	.230
CZ5	447	1	7	4.74	1.792	-.555	.115	-.806	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.3 Interactivity: In the study, the construct Interactivity is measured using five statements. The descriptive statistics of the Interactivity scale are displayed in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics: Interactivity

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
IA1	447	1	7	4.51	1.746	-.454	.115	-.760	.230
IA2	447	1	7	4.41	1.642	-.242	.115	-.864	.230
IA3	447	1	7	4.47	1.694	-.311	.115	-.920	.230
IA4	447	1	7	4.56	1.585	-.410	.115	-.696	.230
IA5	447	1	7	4.70	1.637	-.496	.115	-.673	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.4 Price and Promotions: In the study, the Pricing and Promotions construct is examined using three statements. Table 4.13 depicts the descriptive analysis results applied to the various Pricing and Promotional statements included in the study.

Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics: Price and Promotions

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PP1	447	1	7	4.51	1.834	-.337	.115	-1.009	.230
PP2	447	1	7	4.51	1.736	-.296	.115	-1.016	.230
PP3	447	1	7	4.66	1.767	-.357	.115	-.940	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.5 Omnichannel Management: In the study, the construct of Omnichannel Management is measured using five items. Descriptive analysis results performed to the different omnichannel management assertions are presented below in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Descriptive Statistics: Omnichannel Management

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OM1	447	1	7	4.38	1.812	-.322	.115	-.939	.230
OM2	447	1	7	4.02	1.767	-.107	.115	-1.026	.230
OM3	447	1	7	4.22	1.763	-.165	.115	-.954	.230
OM4	447	1	7	4.32	1.735	-.246	.115	-.896	.230
OM5	447	1	7	4.31	1.654	-.238	.115	-.743	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.6 Perceived cancellation policy leniency: The construct in the study, perceived cancellation policy leniency is examined using four statements. Table 4.15 depicts the results of descriptive analysis of perceived cancellation policy leniency:

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics: Perceived cancellation policy leniency

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PC1	447	1	7	4.15	1.727	-.310	.115	-.774	.230
PC2	447	1	7	4.25	1.623	-.182	.115	-.949	.230
PC3	447	1	7	4.45	1.684	-.256	.115	-.829	.230
PC4	447	1	7	4.06	1.834	-.103	.115	-1.013	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.7 Security and Privacy: The Security and Privacy construct in the study is measured using six statements. Table 4.16 depicts the descriptive analysis results applied to the various Security and Privacy statements included in the research.

Table 4.16: Descriptive Statistics: Security and Privacy

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
SP1	447	1	7	4.61	1.932	-.475	.115	-.956	.230
SP2	447	1	7	4.83	1.707	-.520	.115	-.769	.230
SP3	447	1	7	4.68	1.763	-.375	.115	-.968	.230
SP4	447	1	7	4.72	1.696	-.404	.115	-.794	.230
SP5	447	1	7	4.77	1.728	-.492	.115	-.723	.230
SP6	447	1	7	4.60	1.686	-.341	.115	-.868	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.8 Online customer satisfaction: The research measures online customer satisfaction with the aid of four statements. Table 4.17 depicts the descriptive analysis results applied to the various online customer satisfaction statements included in the study.

Table 4.18: Descriptive Statistics: Online customer satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OCS1	447	1	7	4.82	1.796	-.706	.115	-.551	.230
OCS2	447	1	7	4.85	1.621	-.660	.115	-.485	.230
OCS3	447	1	7	4.95	1.713	-.787	.115	-.354	.230
OCS4	447	1	7	4.81	1.627	-.629	.115	-.503	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.9 Online purchase intention: In the study, the construct Online purchase intention is measured using three statements. The descriptive statistics of statements of online purchase intention are displayed in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Descriptive Statistics: Online purchase intention

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OPI1	447	1	7	4.88	1.747	-.660	.115	-.565	.230
OPI2	447	1	7	4.96	1.623	-.583	.115	-.797	.230
OPI3	447	1	7	4.96	1.632	-.578	.115	-.614	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

4.4.10 Word-of-Mouth Intention: In the study, the construct of word-of-mouth intention is measured using four statements. Table 4.20 depicts the descriptive statistics of the various claims of Word-of-mouth intention included in the research.

Table 4.20: Descriptive Statistics: Word-of-mouth intention

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
WOM1	447	1	7	4.26	1.726	-.286	.115	-.802	.230
WOM2	447	1	7	4.74	1.601	-.562	.115	-.550	.230
WOM3	447	1	7	3.98	1.794	-.145	.115	-1.019	.230
WOM4	447	1	7	4.87	1.612	-.546	.115	-.459	.230
Valid N (listwise)	447								

The data analysis is conducted in two parts. Phase I is the study of the measurement model (outer model), and phase II is the investigation of the structural model (inner model).

4.5. Measurement model

The study used partial least squares (PLS) to test the proposed framework of the study. Smart PLS 3.3.3 was utilised to analyse the measurement and structural model. This software examines the psychometric properties of the measurement model and determines parameters of measurement model depicted in figure 4.9.

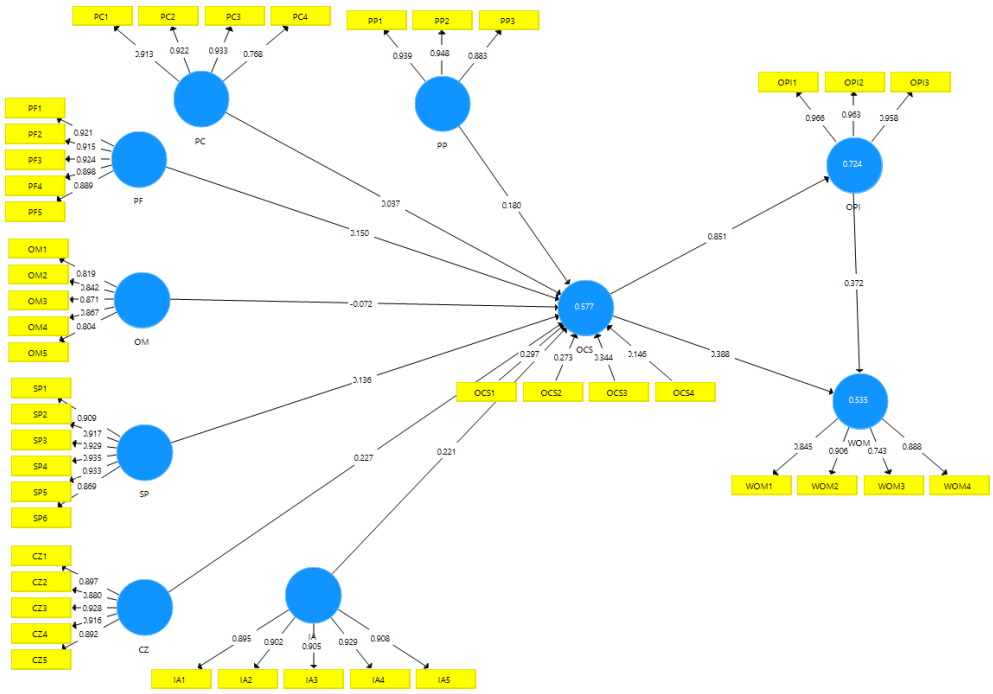


Figure 4.9: Measurement model

4.6. Reliability and Validity Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is used to determine the reliability of the scales. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients usually vary from 0 to 1. The measuring scale describing the antecedents of online customer experience is comprised of seven constructs: PF, CZ, IA, OM, PC, PP, and SP. All seven constructs are zero-order reflective constructs. In order to evaluate the reliability and validity, the Cronbach's alpha is measured which illustrates the relationship between the questionnaire questions, is a measure of internal consistency reliability. Cronbach alpha must be greater than 0.7. Table 5.22 summarises the results of the reliability analysis. Important aspects of construct validity are convergent and discriminant validities. It should be more than 0.7, while

0.6 is fine for exploratory studies (Hair et al., 2014a, 2014b). If the composite reliability value falls between 0.6 and 0.7, it is considered to have a high degree of

reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2017), and the anticipated Cronbach's alpha is more than

0.7. (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Composite reliability evaluates the precision with which a construct is evaluated based on its indications. Composite Reliability must surpass 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011), while 0.60-0.70 is acceptable for exploratory study

(Hair et al., 2011). Table 4.22 illustrates that the AVE for all variables ranges from 0.719 to 0.9263, which is greater than the minimum value of 0.5. The result demonstrates that the study model's convergent validity is adequate.

Composite reliability: Since Cronbach's alpha can exaggerate or underestimate scale dependability, it may be favoured as a measure of reliability. Composite reliability values range from 0 to 1, with 1 representing flawless predicted reliability. Composite reliability in an adequate model for exploratory purposes must be equal to or greater than 0.6 (Chin, 1998; Hock et al., 2010); equal to or greater than 0.70 for an adequate model for confirmatory purposes (Henseler et al., 2015); and equal to or greater than

0.80 for confirmatory research is regarded as good. (Daskalakis and Mantas, 2008). The composite reliability rating of various variables PF: 0.96, CZ: 0.957, IA: 0.959, OM:0. 0.924, PC: 0.936, PP: 0.946, SP: 0.969, OCS: 0.968, OPI: 0.974, WOM: 0.911 demonstrates higher levels of internal consistency reliability.

4.7. Convergent Validity

The extracted average variance (AVE) can be applied to both convergent and divergent validity tests. AVE indicates the average communality for each latent factor. In an appropriate model, the AVE should be greater than 0.5 (Chin, 1998; Hock and Ringle, 2006) and greater than the cross-loadings, indicating that the components should explain at least fifty percent of the variance of their respective indicators. The error variance exceeds the explained variance if the AVE is less than

0.50. Table 4.22 displays construct loading greater than 0.7, indicating a significant and high connection between the items and the constructs. All constructs have a composite reliability greater than 0.7 (PF:0.96, CZ:0.957, IA:0.959, OM:0.924, PC:0.936, PP:0.946, SP:0.969), showing the items that best represent the construct. Additionally, it is discovered that the AVE of all the constructs is larger than 0.5. (PF:0.828, CZ:0.815, IA:0.824, OM:0.707, PC:0.786, PP:0.853, SP:0.839). Hence, the outcome supported the convergent validity criteria.

Table 4.21: Items Loadings

	Customization	Interactivity	Online customer satisfaction	Omnichannel management	Online purchase intention	Perceived cancellation policy leniency	Portal functionality	Price & Promotions	Security and Privacy	Word-of-mouth intention
CZ1	0.897									
CZ2	0.88									
CZ3	0.928									
CZ4	0.916									
CZ5	0.892									
IA1		0.895								
IA2		0.902								
IA3		0.905								
IA4		0.929								
IA5		0.907								
OCS1			0.933							
OCS2			0.952							
OCS3			0.954							
OCS4			0.919							
OM1				0.818						
OM2				0.842						
OM3				0.871						
OM4				0.868						
OM5				0.805						
OPI1					0.966					
OPI2					0.963					
OPI3					0.958					
PC1						0.913				

Table 4.22: Results of Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs Name	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Compoite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customization CZ1 CZ2 CZ3 CZ4 CZ5	0.943	0.947	0.957	0.815
Interactivity IA1 IA2 IA3 IA4 IA 5	0.947	0.948	0.959	0.824
Online customer satisfaction OCS1 OCS2 OCS3 OCS4	0.956	0.957	0.968	0.883
Omnichannel management OM1 OM2 OM3 OM4 OM5	0.897	0.913	0.924	0.707
Online purchase intention PI1 PI2 PI3	0.96	0.96	0.974	0.926
Perceived cancellation policy leniency PC1 PC2 PC3 PC4	0.909	0.935	0.936	0.786
Portal functionality PF1 PF2	0.948	0.953	0.96	0.828
PF3 PF4 PF5				
Price & Promotions PP1 PP2 PP3	**0.914**	**0.916**	**0.946**	**0.853**
Security & Privacy SP1 SP2 SP3 SP4 SP5 SP6	**0.961**	**0.967**	**0.969**	**0.839**
Word-of-mouth intention WOM1 WOM2 WOM3 WOM4	**0.873**	**0.915**	**0.911**	**0.719**

4.8. Discriminant Validity

A measuring scale's discriminant validity indicates whether or not all of its constructs are distinct which means that measurement scale structures bring diversity to various scales and respondents have understood the distinctness in the scales. The purpose of

discriminant validity is to establish if an indicator is a good measure of its concept based on the idea that each indication must have a strong correlation with its own construct. There should be little correlation between the measurements of different structures (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Cross-loading values, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) are utilised in the Smart PLS 3.3.3 application's discriminant validity test (Carrión et al., 2016). To evaluate validity, the traditional Smart PLS 3 approach suggests the Fornell-Larcker process, the cross-loading procedure (Chian & Alves, 1988), and the HTMT ratio procedure (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 4.23: Discriminant Validity

	Customization	**Interactivity**	**Online customer satisfaction**	**Omnichannel management**	**Online purchase intention**	**Perceived cancellation policy leniency**	**Portal functionality**	**Price & Promotions**	**Security and Privacy**	**Word-of-mouth intention**
Customization	**0.903**									
Interactivity	0.731	**0.908**								
Online customer satisfaction	0.676	0.672								
Omnichannel management	0.638	0.624	0.53	**0.841**						
Online purchase intention	0.638	0.621	0.851	0.582	**0.962**					
Perceived cancellation policy leniency	0.647	0.669	0.554	0.574	0.526	**0.887**				
Portal functionality	0.586	0.589	0.584	0.599	0.594	0.495	**0.91**			
Price and Promotions	0.732	0.695	0.659	0.64	0.661	0.591	0.586	**0.924**		
Security and Privacy	0.66	0.678	0.635	0.688	0.646	0.611	0.664	0.701	**0.916**	
Word-of-mouth intention	0.557	0.584	0.705	0.505	0.702	0.5	0.449	0.549	0.523	**0.848**

Table 4.24: The Output of Cross-Loading between Constructs and Indicators

	Customization	Interactivity	Online customer satisfaction	Omnichannel management	Online purchase intention	Perceived cancellation policy leniency	Portal functionality	Price and Promotions	Security and Privacy	Word-of-mouth intention
CZ1	0.897	0.658	0.595	0.565	0.582	0.585	0.516	0.677	0.579	0.497
CZ2	0.88	0.605	0.544	0.524	0.507	0.536	0.449	0.617	0.533	0.48
CZ3	0.928	0.674	0.668	0.603	0.624	0.594	0.564	0.669	0.646	0.516
CZ4	0.916	0.684	0.62	0.621	0.582	0.604	0.564	0.673	0.618	0.52
CZ5	0.892	0.677	0.614	0.562	0.577	0.596	0.541	0.665	0.594	0.5
IA1	0.708	0.895	0.647	0.583	0.597	0.619	0.555	0.683	0.627	0.561
IA2	0.668	0.902	0.628	0.543	0.564	0.628	0.523	0.623	0.624	0.551
IA3	0.619	0.905	0.562	0.566	0.525	0.602	0.512	0.594	0.59	0.488
IA4	0.648	0.929	0.605	0.563	0.561	0.61	0.542	0.615	0.626	0.522
IA5	0.67	0.908	0.602	0.579	0.565	0.576	0.538	0.634	0.607	0.523
OCS1	0.631	0.616	0.941	0.487	0.819	0.528	0.579	0.638	0.603	0.634
OCS2	0.649	0.666	0.953	0.509	0.799	0.521	0.541	0.629	0.599	0.683
OCS3	0.646	0.633	0.961	0.5	0.813	0.523	0.561	0.627	0.61	0.689
OCS4	0.614	0.617	0.896	0.515	0.76	0.518	0.494	0.564	0.566	0.644
OM1	0.585	0.57	0.565	0.819	0.586	0.514	0.579	0.607	0.625	0.486
OM2	0.475	0.447	0.377	0.842	0.435	0.454	0.429	0.461	0.511	0.415
OM3	0.554	0.528	0.397	0.871	0.449	0.489	0.495	0.568	0.53	0.451
OM4	0.554	0.551	0.46	0.867	0.524	0.491	0.507	0.537	0.626	0.422
OM5	0.481	0.497	0.367	0.804	0.394	0.444	0.47	0.476	0.569	0.312
OPI1	0.631	0.59	0.824	0.566	0.966	0.514	0.573	0.642	0.62	0.666
OPI2	0.607	0.597	0.826	0.548	0.963	0.505	0.567	0.631	0.626	0.662
OPI3	0.604	0.606	0.806	0.567	0.958	0.499	0.575	0.636	0.619	0.7
PC1	0.637	0.604	0.543	0.565	0.526	0.913	0.476	0.563	0.563	0.475
PC2	0.583	0.593	0.477	0.525	0.47	0.922	0.446	0.543	0.545	0.476
PC3	0.601	0.647	0.557	0.532	0.539	0.933	0.514	0.566	0.605	0.467
PC4	0.447	0.521	0.349	0.387	0.274	0.768	0.275	0.398	0.43	0.336
PF1	0.585	0.568	0.58	0.561	0.6	0.472	0.921	0.589	0.658	0.454
PF2	0.52	0.538	0.573	0.555	0.576	0.494	0.915	0.519	0.599	0.43

	Customization	Interactivity	Online customer satisfaction	Omnichannel management	Online purchase intention	Perceived cancellation policy leniency	Portal functionality	Price and Promotions	Security and Privacy	Word-of-mouth intention
PF3	0.546	0.546	0.525	0.572	0.564	0.43	0.924	0.561	0.618	0.414
PF4	0.504	0.526	0.496	0.524	0.476	0.422	0.898	0.529	0.572	0.391
PF5	0.503	0.494	0.469	0.51	0.468	0.427	0.889	0.458	0.565	0.342
PP1	0.664	0.628	0.627	0.597	0.626	0.565	0.533	0.939	0.648	0.508
PP2	0.668	0.641	0.613	0.604	0.623	0.549	0.554	0.948	0.689	0.506
PP3	0.697	0.66	0.584	0.571	0.583	0.523	0.539	0.883	0.604	0.51
SP1	0.641	0.677	0.658	0.649	0.651	0.587	0.652	0.694	0.909	0.527
SP2	0.655	0.663	0.625	0.645	0.626	0.578	0.64	0.675	0.917	0.509
SP3	0.557	0.582	0.561	0.608	0.597	0.533	0.59	0.618	0.929	0.476
SP4	0.577	0.608	0.535	0.629	0.567	0.539	0.611	0.607	0.935	0.457
SP5	0.637	0.635	0.59	0.66	0.588	0.558	0.61	0.657	0.933	0.471
SP6	0.539	0.54	0.486	0.58	0.492	0.554	0.527	0.58	0.869	0.416
WOM1	0.396	0.404	0.533	0.401	0.515	0.355	0.291	0.387	0.351	0.845
WOM2	0.558	0.548	0.697	0.505	0.708	0.439	0.475	0.537	0.513	0.906
WOM3	0.346	0.366	0.374	0.285	0.353	0.355	0.179	0.314	0.269	0.743
WOM4	0.533	0.603	0.692	0.467	0.699	0.518	0.478	0.556	0.556	0.888

To evaluate the discriminant validity of the measuring scale and comparing the AVE to the maximum shared variance of each construct (MSV). Using AVE and MSV, the discriminant validity of each notion is tested. The AVE of a particular concept must exceed its MSV to satisfy the DV criteria. According to the Fornell and Larcker criterion, the square root of AVE is also evaluated by correlating several pairwise construct associations. Table 4.22 offers an overview of construct validity results. The results fully satisfy the Fornell and Larcker criteria, meeting the DV requirements of the measuring scale. Furthermore, the projected cross-loading value exceeds 0.70. (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Statistical tests utilising the Smart PLS programme table 4.21 reveal that each research construct has a cross-loading value (> 0.70), suggesting that all research items meet the criteria for instrument validity.

Utilizing the HTMT as an indicator necessitates comparing it to a predetermined threshold; if the HTMT score is greater than the threshold, this indicates a lack of discriminatory validity. Many researchers advocate the value 0.90 (Kline, 2011; Watson et al., 1995). (Gold et al., 2001; Teo et al., 2008). Second, the application of the HTMT inference data analysis indicates the lack of discriminatory validity when the confidence interval of the HTMT values for structural pathways contains the value

1. It suggests the ideas are empirically different if 1 is greater than the range of the interval. In accordance with this standard, the square root of AVE must be greater than the bivariate correlation coefficient for each latent variable. (Ringle et al., 2015).

Table 4.25: Heterotrait- Monotrait ratio

	Customization	**Interactivity**	**Omnichannel management**	**Online purchase intention**	**Perceived cancellation policy leniency**	**Portal functionality**	**Price & Promotions**	**Security and Privacy**	**Word-of-mouth intention**
Customization									
Interactivity	0.771								
Omnichannel management	0.683	0.668							
Online purchase intention	0.668	0.65	0.611						
Perceived cancellation policy leniency	0.69	0.719	0.622	0.547					
Portal functionality	0.615	0.619	0.638	0.618	0.519				
Price and Promotions	0.789	0.747	0.695	0.706	0.641	0.628			
Security and Privacy	0.687	0.706	0.73	0.667	0.646	0.69	0.744		
Word-of-mouth intention	0.593	0.62	0.541	0.73	0.546	0.457	0.591	0.539	

4.9. Validating Formative Indicators

1) Redundancy analysis

Each formatively determined construct is associated with an alternate measure of it using redundancy analysis (Chin, 1998). Single-item analysis approach by Cheah et al. (2018) was used to calculate OCX's redundancy. Due to the challenge of

formulating an expansive statement that could thoroughly characterise formative constructs, the calculated variable was utilised. The OCX single-point redundancy analysis models are depicted in Figures 4.10.

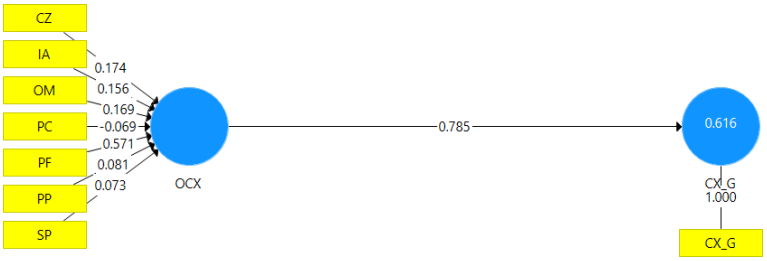


Figure 4.10: Redundancy analysis

Table 4.26: Redundancy analysis of CX_Global on CX

Path coefficient	CX_G	OCX
CX_G		
OCX	0.785	

Based on bootstrapping technique, the route coefficients, sample mean, standard deviation, inner weights, and P-values for OCX are presented in Table 4.27. All p-values were coming out to be statistically significant, and the inner weights were more than 0.7, hence OCX is a legitimate construct.

Table 4.27: Path Coefficients, Sample Mean, Std. Deviation and P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
OCX -> OCX_G	0.785	0.789	0.022	36.378	0

The path coefficient between online customer experience (Formative) and Global construct Online customer experience (Reflective) was measured by Single global item is 0.785 which is greater than 0.7 (Cheah et al., 2018). Further, the p-value was checked by running the Bootstrapping it comes out to be 0.00 which was less than 0.05. Hence, the redundancy analysis was established which is a prerequisite in case of a formative construct.

2) Higher-Order Construct: In accordance with Hair et al. (2018) recommendations, the quality of the second-order formative factor measurements was evaluated. Hence, the measurement quality of second-order items was assessed in two phases. Due to the fact that all first-order constructions were reflective, their acceptability was evaluated according to the suitable quality standards for reflective structures (Becker et al., 2012). This stage employs the assessment criteria for formative elements at this higher order level (Chin and Dibbern, 2010), with first-order structures functioning as indicators for the second-order factor. (Hair et al., 2014a, 2014b). Figure 4.11 illustrates the second phase, recommended by Sarstedt et al. (2019), which includes the generation and estimation of the 2-stage model. To do this, scores must be obtained for all lower-order components, PF, CZ, IA, OM, PC, PP, and SP. The evaluation of stage two's data begins with a formative method to gauge online customer experience.

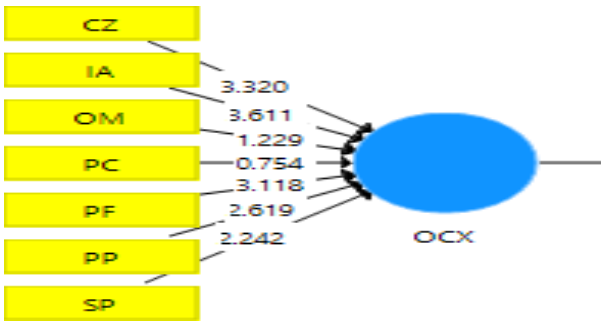


Figure 4.11: OCX: Higher order construct

Using the seven lower-order constructs as a basis portal functionality (PF), customization (CZ), interactivity (IA), Omnichannel management (OM), perceived cancellation policy leniency (PC), price and promotions (PP), and Security and privacy (SP), the online customer experience was the higher-order construct formed in the study. The measurement scores of the second-order structures were displayed in Table 4.28. The two-stage technique proposed by Ringle et al. (2012) was utilised. In the study, Online Customer Experience was the higher-order formative construct based on seven lower-order constructs: portal functionality, customization, price and promotions, Omnichannel management, Security and privacy, interactivity, and perceived cancellation policy leniency. In PLS-SEM, reflective-formative higher order construct modelling was extensively employed. In this work, a discontinuous

two-stage technique was employed to estimate the second-order formative concept "online customer experience." Sarstedt et al. (2019) highlighted that the two-stage technique has been widely utilised to specify reflective-formative type models in recent years. To obtain the latent variable scores (LVS), it initially estimated the first-order dimensions without the second-order constructs in the model. Next, in the second step of analysis, these latent variable scores (LVS) were employed to measure the second-order formative construct (Becker et al., 2012; Wilson, 2010).

3) Collinearity check while formation of higher order formative construct

To establish a formative construct, it was imperative to check the collinearity amongst variables. Collinearity among indicators is problematic due to its impact on weight estimate and statistical significance. Table 4.28 demonstrates that all VIF values in our study are less than 3. A VIF score of 3.3 or higher indicated the presence of collinearity issues. (Hair et al., 2011).

Further, the VIF value were calculated to evaluate the formative construct. To create formative construct OCX, VIF values of variables were checked which form CZ (2.995), IA (2.912), PC (2.122), PP (2.825), OM (2.325), PF (2.03), SP (2.935). As all

VIF values came out to be less than 3, this indicated that these constructs do not have high correlation and gives us a positive go towards formation of a formative construct name online costumer experience.

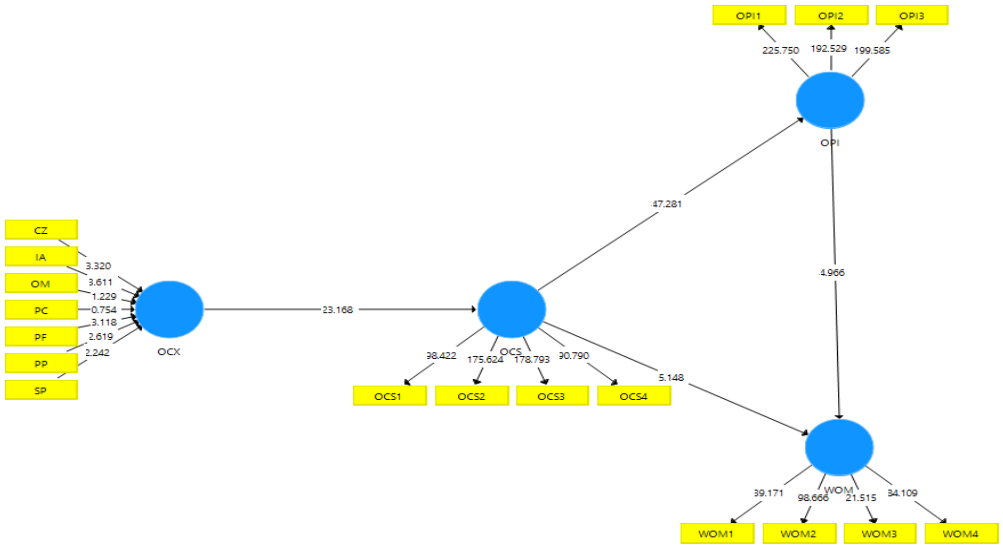


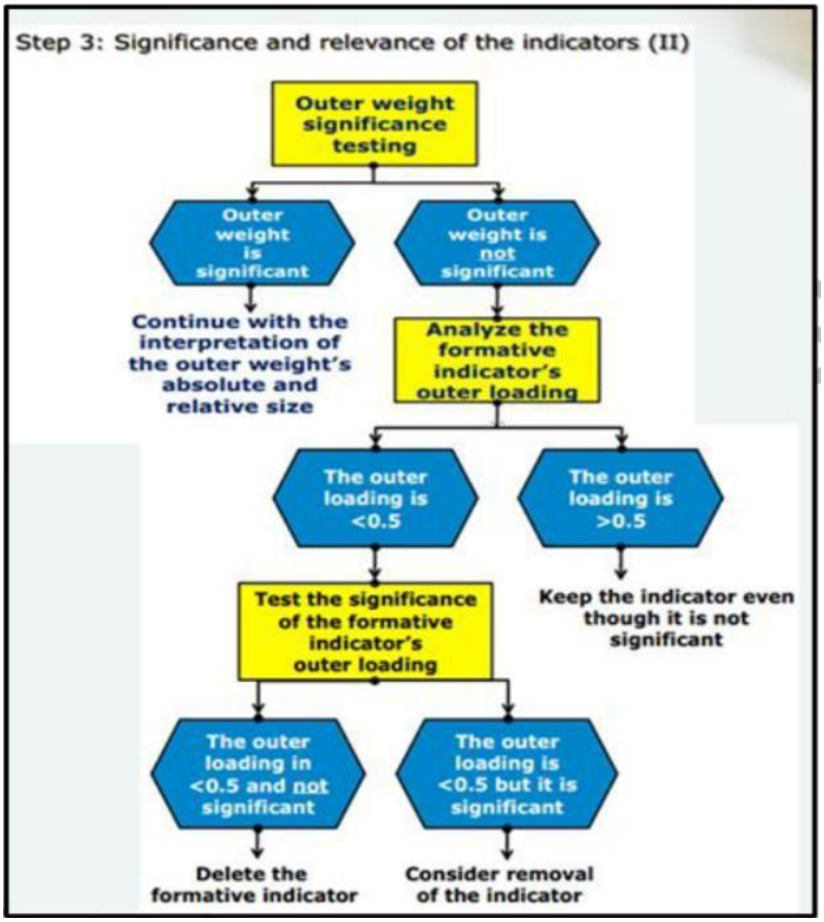
Figure 4.12: Assessment of the Formative Structural Model

To evaluate the structural equation model's fit, bootstrapping was used. In this study, the Bootstrapping method was utilised to determine the statistical significance of the path coefficient and to compute the t-values. (Rouf, 2018). In the below mentioned table 4.28, all p-values are depicted, they were coming out to be less than 0.00 i.e., CZ -> OCX is 0.002 (less than 0.00), IA -> OCX is 0 (less than 0.00), PF -> OCX is 0.003 (less than 0.00), PP -> OCX is 0.001 (less than 0.00), SP -> OCX is 0.018 (less than 0.00). Except for omnichannel management and perceived cancellation policy leniency (where the p-values were coming out to be greater than 0.00) i.e., 0.452 and

0.303 respectively, the significant first-order construct weights give empirical basis for the relevance of first order constructs to the development of formative constructs as envisioned by all approaches. (Hair et al., 2011). The next step was to check the outer weights for both the variables however, the values were greater than 0.00 as, the weights were 0.04 and 0.062 respectively. Further, the next step was to check factor loadings. The factor loading for OM-> OCX came out to be 0.761 (greater than 0.5) and factor loading for PC -> OCX came out to be 0.742 (greater than 0.5). In the present study, the indicator weight was low, but its outer loading was high, making it critical. Typically, the indication would be preserved in this situation (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Thus, each step for formative model assessment was crucial and vital.

Table 4.28: Formative model assessment

	Outer Weight	**Factor Loadings**	**T Statistic**	**P Values**	**VIF**
Customization → Online customer experience	0.236	0.881	3.114	0.002	2.995
Interactivity → Online customer experience	0.261	0.883	3.532	0	2.912
Omnichannel management → Online customer experience	0.04	0.761	0.753	0.452	2.325
Perceived cancellation policy leniency → Online customer experience	0.062	0.742	1.03	0.303	2.122
Portal Functionality → Online customer experience	0.161	0.766	2.993	0.003	2.03
Price & Promotions → Online customer experience	0.248	0.878	3.354	0.001	2.825
Security and Privacy → Online customer experience	0.169	0.849	2.374	0.018	2.935



Source: Ramayah et al. (2018)

Figure 4.13: Formative indicator approach

4.10. Model Fit

The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) is the difference between the actual correlation and the correlation matrix implied by the model. Henseler et al. (2014) provided the SRMR as a measure of goodness of fit for PLS-SEM that may be used to prevent model misspecification. A number less than 0.10 or 0.08 in a more conservative approach as per Hu and Bentler (1999) is deemed to be a good fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is defined as 1 minus the proposed model's Chi square value divided by the null model's Chi square values. The nearer the NFI is to 1 the better the fit. Generally, NFI values greater than 0.9 indicate a favourable fit (Lohmoller, 1988).

Table 4.29: Model fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.036	0.036
NFI	0.913	0.913

4.11. Structural Equation Modelling

Three sections make up the structural model's outcomes in this study: Firstly, the coefficient of determination (R2) was assessed after the examination of the structural model. The moderating and mediating effects were subsequently evaluated. Finally, the model's predictive validity was evaluated.

Structural Path significance has been analysed through t-test using sub-sample (5000) at significance level of 5%. Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair (2017) have discussed that the path coefficient is significant if T-statistics value is above 1.96 and p-value is less than 0.05 at 5 % level of significance.

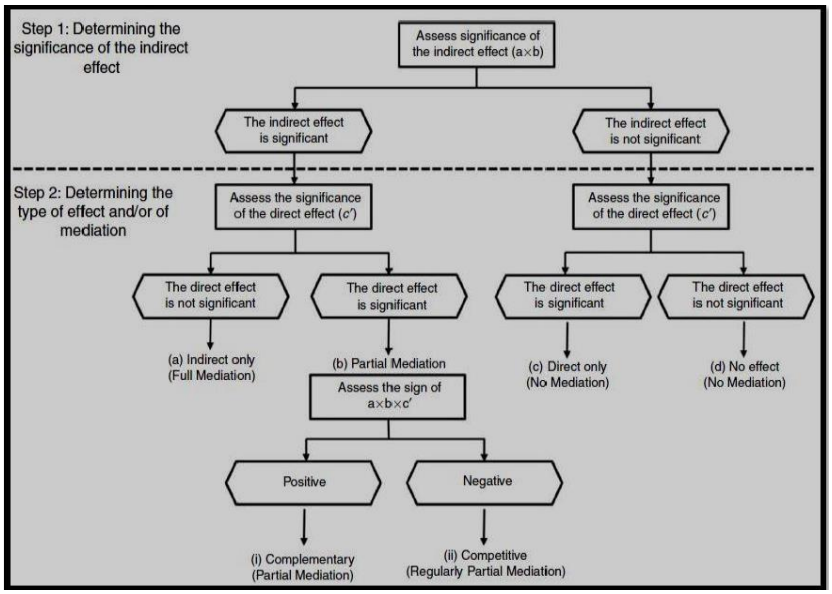
4.11.1 Coefficient of Determination (R2): The examination of the coefficient of determination is a significant component of structural model evaluation (R2) which measures how well a statistical model predicts an outcome. Strong, moderate, and weak coefficients of determination, respectively, are commonly described by threshold values of 0.25, 0.5, and 0.7, respectively (Hair et al., 2013). The primary objective of PLS-SEM analysis is to examine the explained variance (R2) of the endogenous constructs in order to evaluate the predictive potential of the research model (Chin and Dibbern, 2010). The values of OCS, OPI, and WOM are 0.577, 0.724, and 0.535 respectively meaning moderate, significant, and weak, respectively (Chin, 1998b, Hair et al., 2013).

Table 4.30: R- square vales of dependent variables

S. No.	Variable	R Square
1	Online customer satisfaction	0.577
2	Online purchase intention	0.724
3	Word-Of-Mouth intention	0.535

4.12. Mediation Effects

A mediator variable is the one which mediates the connection between two related topics (Sarstedt et al., 2020). In a mediation analysis, researchers specifically evaluate whether a change in the factor that is independent results to a difference in the mediator variable, which in turn causes a change in the model's dependent construct (e.g., Demming et al., 2017).



Source: Zhao et al. (2010) and Nitzl et al. (2016)

Figure 4.14: Mediator analysis procedure

In our proposed hypothesis, four relationships for the mediating effects were checked using the approach given by Zhai et al. (2010) and Nitzl et al. (2016). A mediation analysis may disclose that mediation does not exist or, in the event of a mediation effect, that the mediator construct explains some or all of the observed relationship between two latent variables. (Hair et al., 2021).

Therefore, the study attempts to test the first step whether the mediating relationship exists. Further, if mediating effect existed, the study investigated whether these mediations are full mediations or partial mediations. Various mediating relationships are we tested for this study are exhibited below:

Table 4.31: Mediation effects

Direct effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
OCS -> OPI	0.679	0.673	0.047	14.305	0
OCS -> WOM	0.314	0.306	0.087	3.626	0
OCX -> OCS	0.755	0.757	0.032	23.694	0
OCX -> OPI	0.225	0.233	0.047	4.755	0
OCX -> WOM	0.163	0.168	0.074	2.21	0.028
OPI -> WOM	0.315	0.318	0.087	3.621	0

H8: Online customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between online customer experience and online purchase intention.

When the mediation analysis was run in Smart PLS 3.3.3, it was concluded that the nature of mediation is partial mediation as the β-value came out to be 0.513, t-value was 14.716, p-value was 0.000. As p value was less than 0.05, OCS partially mediates the relationship between OCX and OPI was concluded.

Table 4.34: The Effect of OCX on OPI Through the Mediating Variable: OCS

Total effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
OCS -> OPI	0.679	0.673	0.047	14.305	0
OCS -> WOM	0.528	0.52	0.074	7.142	0
OCX -> OCS	0.755	0.757	0.032	23.694	0
OCX -> OPI	0.738	0.741	0.031	23.665	0
OCX -> WOM	0.633	0.635	0.042	14.995	0
OPI -> WOM	0.315	0.318	0.087	3.621	0

Table 4.33: Mediation effects

Specific indirect effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
OCX -> OPI -> WOM	0.071	0.074	0.025	2.785	0.006
OCX -> OCS -> WOM	0.237	0.232	0.066	3.589	0
OCS -> OPI -> WOM	0.214	0.214	0.061	3.49	0.001
OCX -> OCS -> OPI	0.513	0.509	0.035	14.716	0
OCX -> OCS -> OPI -> WOM	0.161	0.161	0.045	3.588	0

Table 4.34: The Effect of OCX on OPI Through the Mediating Variable: OCS

Type of effect	Standardised path Coefficient	T Statistics	P value	Remark
Total Effect (OCX -> OPI)	0.738	23.665	**0.000**	Significant Total Effect found
Indirect Effect (OCX -> OCS-> OPI)	0.513	14.716	**0.000**	Significant Indirect Effect found
Direct Effect	0.225	4.755	**0.000**	Significant Direct

H9: Online customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between online customer experience and word-of-mouth intention**.**

When the mediation analysis is run in SMART PLS 3.3.3, it was concluded that the partial mediation as the β value is 0.237, t- value is 3.589, p-value is 0.000. As p value was less than 0.05, we concluded that OCS partially mediates the relationship between OCX and WOM.

Table 4.35: The Effect of OCX on WOM Through the Mediating Variable: OCS

Type of effect	Standardised path Coefficient	T Statistics	P value	Remark
Total Effect (OCX -> WOM)	0.633	14.995	**0.000**	Significant Total Effect found
Indirect Effect (OCX -> OCS-> WOM)	0.237	3.589	**0.000**	Significant Indirect Effect found
Direct Effect (OCX -> WOM)	0.163	2.21	**0.028**	Significant Direct Effect found
Conclusion	**Partial Mediating Concluded**			

H10: Online purchase intention mediates the relationship between online customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention.

When testing the mediation effects of OPI between OCS and WOM in SMART PLS

3.3.3 it is concluded partial mediation as the β value is 0.214, t value is 3.49, p value is 0.000. As p value was less than 0.05, this conclusion was made that OPI partially mediates the relationship between OCS and WOM.

Table 4.36: The Effect of OCS on WOM Through the Mediating Variable: OPI

Type of effect	Standardised path Coefficient	T Statistics	P value	Remark
Total Effect (OCS -> WOM)	0.528	7.142	**0.000**	Significant Total Effect found
Indirect Effect (OCS -> OPI-> WOM)	0.214	3.49	**0.000**	Significant Indirect Effect found
Direct Effect (OCS -> WOM)	0.314	3.626	**0.000**	Significant Direct Effect found
Conclusion	**Partial Mediating Concluded**			

H11: Online purchase intention mediates the relationship between online customer experience and word-of-mouth intention **(β=0.071, t= 2.785, p= 0.006)**

Further, the mediation analysis between the variables OCX and WOM was tested and an attempt was made to check if OPI mediates the relationship. It was concluded partial mediation as the β value was 0.071, t value was 2.785, p value was 0.006. As p value was less than 0.05, this conclusion was made that OPI partially mediates the relationship between OCX and WOM.

Table 4.37: The Effect of OCX on WOM Through the Mediating Variable: OPI

Type of effect	Standardised path Coefficient	T Statistics	P value	Remark
Total Effect (OCX -> WOM)	0.633	14.995	**0.000**	Significant Total Effect found
Indirect Effect (OCX -> OPI-> WOM)	0.071	2.785	**0.006**	Significant Indirect Effect found
Direct Effect (OCX -> WOM)	0.163	2.21	**0.028**	Significant Direct Effect found
Conclusion	**Partial Mediating Concluded**			

4.13. Moderation effects

Moderation refers to a scenario in which the relationship between two constructs depends on the values of a third variable, known as a moderator variable. A moderator variable modifies the strength or direction of the link between two constructs in a model (Hair et al., 2021). Literature provided enough support to check moderation effect of various demographics on the relationship between Online customer experience and Online customer satisfaction. As all our moderation variables were categorical in natural namely Age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Occupation,

Travel purchase frequency moderation effects were assessed via multi group analysis and used the approach recommended by Klesel, Schuberth, Niehaves, & Henseler (2021). Multigroup analysis enables the detection of model links that vary significantly between groups (Hair et al., 2018, Chap. 4). This method provides a more complete picture of the moderator's impact on the analysis results, since the focus shifts from evaluating its effect on a particular model relationship to investigating its effect on all model relationships. But no moderation effects were found of any of the mentioned categorical variables.

H12a: Demographic variables (age, gender, income) moderate the relationship between Online customer experience and Online customer satisfaction

In the below mentioned, multigroup analysis, the study aimed to test the gender-moderating variable and it tried to test it on various relationships, OCS on OPI, OCS on WOM, OCX on OCS, OPI on WOM but the p- values in all cases were coming out to be greater than 0.00 i.e., 0.999, 0.644,0.796, 0.682 respectively.

Table 4.38: PLS-MGA Results as Gender as a moderating variable

	Path Coefficients-diff (Males - Females)	p-Value original 1-tailed (Males vs Females)	p-Value new (Males vs Females)
OCS -> OPI	0	0.5	**0.999**
OCS -> WOM	0.072	0.322	**0.644**
OCX -> OCS	0.019	0.398	**0.796**
OPI -> WOM	-0.064	0.659	**0.682**

The result signified an interesting finding that irrespective of Gender (Male or Female), if each customer was satisfied with the online travel portal, he/she had an online purchase intention as well and hence, had a word-of-mouth intention.

Further, the study made an attempt to test other demographic variables like age, income and tried to evaluate their moderation effects on various relationships but as p values were greater than 0.05, therefore, the research concluded moderation with respect to demographics does not have exist.

H12b: Travel purchase frequency moderate the relationship between Online customer experience and Online customer satisfaction

In this hypothesis, the study made an attempt to test whether the travel purchase frequency from particular online travel portal moderated the relationship between OCX and OCS. As travel purchase frequency was again a categorical variable, therefore, multi group analysis (MGA) was run and the study assessed the moderating effect and again the hypothesis was not accepted with p-value being greater than 0.000.

Table 4.39: PLS-MGA Results as Travel Purchase Frequency as a moderating variable

	Path Coefficients-diff (TPFTr_frq (1.0) - TPFTr_frq (2.0))	**p-Value original 1-tailed (TPFTr_frq (1.0) vs TPFTr_frq (2.0))**	**p-Value new (TPFTr_frq (1.0) vs TPFTr_frq (2.0))**
OCS -> OPI	0.022	0.26	**0.52**
OCS -> WOM	0.006	0.481	**0.962**
OCX -> OCS	0.03	0.296	**0.592**
OPI -> WOM	-0.035	0.59	**0.821**

4.14. Predictive Relevance: The ultimate variable to understand the power of prediction of the research is called the Stone Geisser. Using the blindfolding method, the predictive value of the PLS model is examined in this study. Inside the intelligent PLS program, the blindfolding operation estimates the Q-square. This is a table displaying the Q-squares of the endogenous constructions. If Q2 is more than zero, the model has predictive significance; if it is less than zero, the model lacks predictive relevance (Chin and Dibbern, 2010; Henseler et al., 2009). The fact that the projected

Q-square values for OCS, OPI, and WOMI are all more than zero exhibit that the model has a very high predictive relevance. Also, the predictive relevance of the model will be extremely high if applied to any external data set.

Table 4.40: Q-Square values of dependent variables for dependent variables

Endogenous constructs	**Q^2**
OCS	0.499
OPI	0.664
WOM	0.363

CHAPTER 5

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT – Makemytrip

5.1. Customer Experience Management

Some scholars and practitioners have contended that customer relationship management has not produced the anticipated levels of customer value and organisational profitability. Practitioners today recognise customer experience management is a viable marketing strategy, for addressing both current and future customer market concerns. Hence, the highlighted CEM skills aid in the continuous creation and redesign of CEs to enhance and sustain customer loyalty in dynamic market settings. The difficulty in developing a customer experience construct is integrating a generally broad variety of cues to evaluate the trade-offs involved in establishing customer value (Palmer, 2010). Customer experience management may be a framework that transcends the theoretical and practical limits of customer relationship management (Palmer, 2010). Nevertheless, CEM looks to be a complex concept that has been used to several situations. Initial CEM research is limited to service settings. On the other hand, extensive consumer behaviour research on CEs is widely scattered across service, product, internet, branding, and retailing environments (Homburg et al. ,2017). CEM refers to cultural mindsets towards CEs, strategic orientations for building CEs, and firm capabilities for continually renewing CEs in order to create and sustain long-term client loyalty (Homburg et al., 2017). Using social media is another way to improve the customer experience and increase engagement. According to Roggeveen et al. (2016), the linked, network, information, dynamic, and timeliness influence social media engagement. The connected effect is based on people's innate need to connect with others; social media has changed the nature of these relationships (Grewal et al., 2009). Historically, businesses have constructed consumer profiles using structured data, such as demographic, transactional, and log data. Nowadays, it is required to add brand-new data types

associated with cross-channel coordination, such as social media, video, RFID, sensor, geolocation, customer lifetime value, profitability, behavioural analysis, and propensity ratings in addition to contact, response, and transactional histories.

Therefore, online travel portals must prioritise creating exceptional customer experience in order to remain competitive. For online travel portals to properly manage customer experiences, they must first comprehend their consumers' wants and preferences. This can be accomplished through analysis of client data, feedback collection, and surveys. By gaining knowledge into their clients' tastes and habits, travel portals can modify their products to match their demands. In the digital age, personalization is crucial, and travel portals must utilise technology to create individualised experiences to customers. This can be accomplished through tailored advice, targeted advertising, and customised vacation plans. In addition, chatbots and other forms of AI can be used to deliver rapid and effective customer service. Additionally, online travel portals must prioritise the customer journey, ensuring that the booking procedure is streamlined and user-friendly. Customers should be able to simply navigate the portal, locate the necessary information, and complete bookings without any hassles.

5.2 Overview of Indian online travel portals sector

India is a large country- both geographically and economically. As per capita income rises, people's enthusiasm for travel also grows, driving up demand for travel agencies. Some of the most recognisable names in the travel industry are Thomas Cook, SOTC, Cox and Kings, Yatra.com, and MakeMyTrip. The average Indian consumer now has more disposable income, pays less for airline tickets, uses social media and smartphones frequently, and travels around the world. The travel sector in India is evolving quickly and a significant number of these changes correlate with those occurring on a global scale. Such modifications promise to usher in a period of customer satisfaction and convenience.

Owing to rising customer knowledge and confidence in doing online transactions, the Indian internet travel business is expanding steadily. Indian customers are aware of online travel agencies and are willing to pay for the convenience and superior support. The market has become quite profitable for customers thanks to a variety of OTA offers and discounts, which has increased competitiveness (Netscribes India Pvt. Ltd., 2012). Tourism consumer behaviour has been significantly impacted by the Internet (Mills and Law, 2004). A considerably greater variety of information is directly available to potential tourists from tourism organisations, commercial businesses, and increasingly from other users/customers. Customers conduct their own online research, book their own air tickets, hotel reservations, and other transactions (Morrison et al., 2001).

IT-enabled supply chain partnerships may be expanded to save expenses and promote higher-quality travel goods. This technology can also reduce transaction costs, reduce market volatility, enhance the efficiency of distribution networks, and facilitate the exchange of market knowledge. Providing computer systems that connect travel firms with suppliers, distributors, and retailers is the first crucial step in developing a successful e-commerce business model (Granados et al., 2008). Online travel companies must continue to promote client convenience if they want to capture a larger portion of the Indian travel market. Only if there is a deeper grasp of what motivates client pleasure for online travel firms can it be accomplished. Customer pleasure increases recurring business and fosters online service confidence (Flavian, Guinaliu, and Gurrea, 2006). How informative, interesting, and engaging a travel website will determine how satisfied its users are with it (Chu, 2001). This indicates that the growth of online shopping is contingent on a number of sub-processes, including navigation, information searching, online transactions, and consumer interactions (Lee and Lin, 2005).

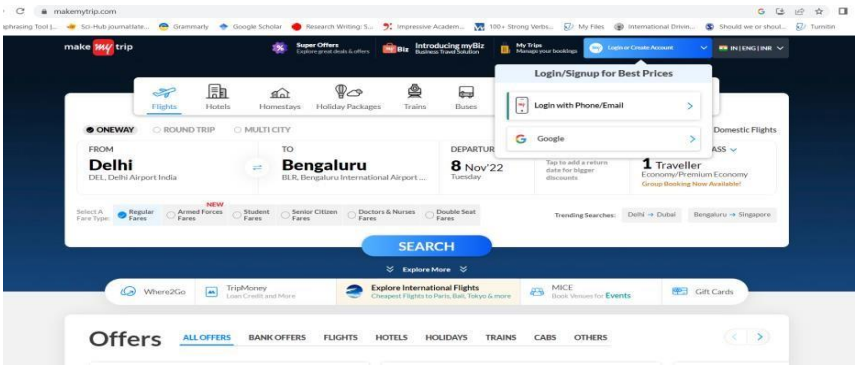


Figure 5.1: MakeMyTrip Homepage User Interface

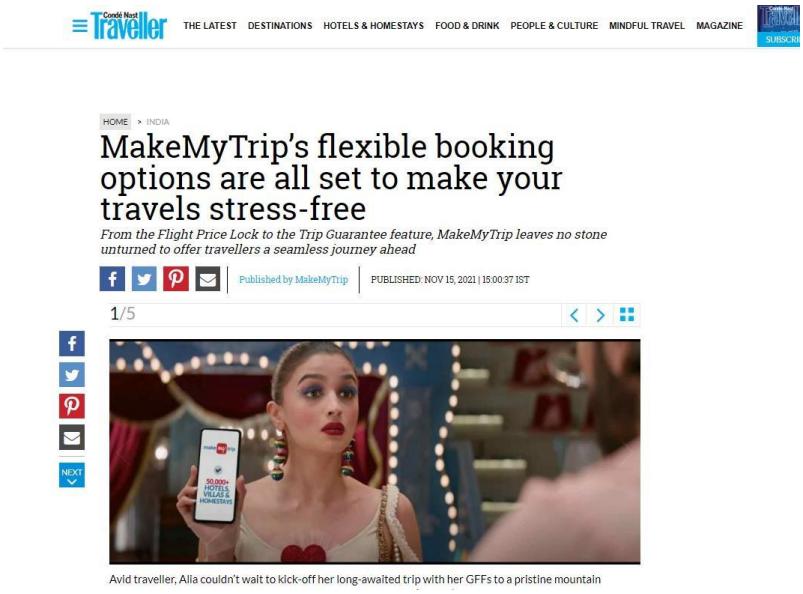


Figure 5.2: MMT Omnichannel approach

Source: https://www.cntraveller.in/article/makemytrips-flexible-booking-options-set-make-travels- stress-free/#s-cust0

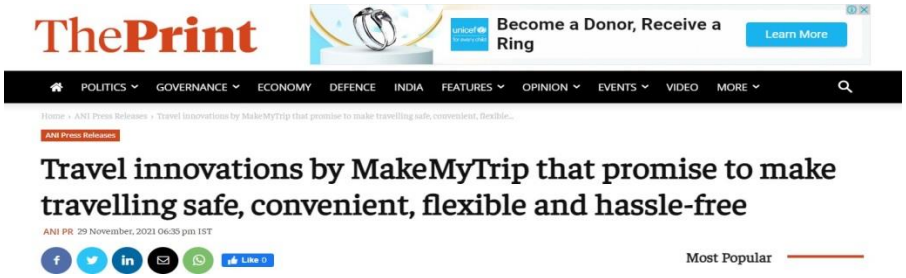


Figure 5.3: MMT in news

Source: https://theprint.in/ani-press-releases/travel-innovations-by-makemytrip- that-promise-to-make-travelling-safe-convenient-flexible-and-hassle-free/773971/

5.3. Case Study on MakeMyTrip

5.3.1. MakeMyTrip: An Overview

MakeMyTrip (MMT) is one of the top online travel service providers in India. This travel portal puts a greater emphasis on creating enduring client relationships than on offering cheaper services. The organisation has developed a solid market reputation as a cutting-edge and innovative travel platform because of its established internet presence. Known as the first internet portal of Indian origin, Deep Kalra launched MakeMyTrip Limited, an Indian online travel agency, in 2000. The organization additionally unveiled a platform to aid offline travel agencies in digitizing their business processes and improving customer service. Local travel agencies are given access to an online booking engine through MakeMyTrip's B2B2C platform, MyPartner, and are given the power to make post-booking revisions, cancellations, and other last-minute itinerary modifications. Additionally, it enables them to give their customers the choice of customization and personalization. Offline tour companies benefit from this because it improves the services they offer and the time it takes to handle each request. MakeMyTrip acquired Ibibo Group in 2016 which was one of the largest in the Indian online travel market.

MakeMyTrip is a one-stop travel shop with a wide selection of high-value goods and services, state-of-the-art technology, and round-the-clock customer support that was developed from the seed of one major idea: empowering the traveller. Making a name for itself as a company known for dependability and transparency, MakeMyTrip has changed the travel sector over the years. MakeMyTrip has always been aggressive in its pursuit of greatness, whether it is through market research, studying consumer behaviour, the creation of new products, or the promotion of its assortment of goods and services. MakeMyTrip was among the first companies to integrate social media into its marketing mix in the modern day, when digital media are essential to the success of any e-commerce firm. MMT uses social media extensively to connect with travel enthusiasts and broaden the appeal of its goods and services. On all channels, MakeMyTrip has an integrated media and marketing approach. The brand's spectrum of services is covered by a variety of high-definition and fascinating publications in the Content

Bucket. In addition, MakeMyTrip runs campaigns and competitions that are customised to take advantage of the most recent deals and chances. The percentage of participation in relation to a small number of followers is extremely mediocre, despite the company's best efforts to engage and interact with the target audience on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. The brand always communicates in a consistent, unified manner, albeit how that material is delivered varies depending on the particulars of the platform being used.

MakeMyTrip promoted the growth of its own companies, such as its affiliates and franchisees, because it did not want to present itself as only an internet portal. It also attempted to establish a solid retail foundation for the business. MakeMyTrip is a one- stop travel shop that offers a wide selection of travel and tourism-related goods and services in India today.

5.4. Research Methodology

5.4.1. Participant recruitment: For the data collection, managers were recruited who had more than 2 years of experience working with MakeMyTrip. They were chosen based on personal contacts and their vast experience in the related area. Some of them were contacted on LinkedIn. Snowball sampling was used where managers gave us reference for further discussion which helped us widen our knowledge base.

Table 5.1: Respondent demographics

Demographics	Number of respondents	%
Gender		
Male	6	66.6
Female	3	33.3
Age		
25-34	3	33.3
35-44	4	44.4
45-54	1	11.1
Above 55	1	11.1
Work Experience		
Less than 5 years	4	44.4
5-10 years	3	33.3
10-15 years	2	22.2

5.4.2. Data Collection: Questions from the interview guide were intended at eliciting the current customer experience practices at their respective organizations. What factors lead to online customer experience with respect to MakeMyTrip? Which areas online travel portals struggle to deliver elevated customer experience? Subsequent questions included what strategies is MMT going to implement in near future to tackle present issues? Appendix II provides a complete detail of open-ended semi structured questionnaire. Groenland & Dana (2019) suggest qualitative methods are always more appropriate for responding "how" questions in novel situations. Interview questions were shared in advance so that they could gather information and prepare themselves. All interviews were recorded & transcribed. To validate data, triangulation technique was used. Patton (1990) describes an interview guide as a list of questions that are explained during the process of interviews. With the help of an interview guide, interviewer can probe and explore more to elucidate on a subject. Hence, respondents can choose to express their views and experience in their own words (De Keyser et al., 2015). Sampling took place concurrently with data collection and ended when it was concluded that thematic saturation had been reached through discussion. They were given information on the study's objective, process, risks, and benefits, as well as the study's anonymity and voluntary nature. The participants were also aware that the interviews would be audio-recorded, which would capture the data.

5.4.3. Data Analysis: Content analysis was used to inductively find themes through continual comparison. Microsoft Word and NVIVO 12 plus were used to organise data. Independent coding was carried out for the first three interviews and then, a prototype codebook with topics and example quotes (first level coding) was constructed. The study group looked over the themes and quotes. Few codes where the authors did had conflict, interviewees were contacted again to make amendments. Responses helped in elaborating new linkages and, complimented existing literature by helping in establishing the validity and reliability of the data. In-depth Interviews helps to obtain qualitative data to enhance perception. The authors tabulated data (themes, quotations) by

participant role and theme type in order to compare subjects. The study group looked over the themes and quotes. To describe participants, a combination of summary statistics and text was used (Anderson et al, 2021). The initial step in interview analysis was to transcribe the content of audio recordings. The interviews were transcribed as quickly as possible after they were completed. For evaluating the qualitative interview data, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis is a prominent data analysis method with an aim to create themes and sub themes that might be identified in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) observed thematic analysis produce reliable results. Interviewer and interviewee bias are two major issues that affect the study's dependability. According to Saunders et al. (2015), interviewer bias occurs when the interviewer's behavior, such as comments and nonverbal communication, influences the interviewee's responses. The researchers ensured to minimize and reduce all kinds of bias.

5.5. Case Findings: Managers highlighted below mentioned touchpoints which make or break customer experience in case of online travel portals.

Portal Functionality: Respondents pointed out the portal must be user friendly and comfortable to be used. From showing options, to logging in into personal account, adding cash back, points redemption, availing customized deals, the functionality must be smooth, and it is also ensured that the processing time is slow. The checkout procedure considers the available tools and options for promptly fulfilling orders and concluding the checkout procedure securely. Since each step increases the risk of losing a customer, the checkout and payment processes must be as simple and fast as possible. (Mangiaracina et al., 2009). Design and development are a never-ending process, and the organisation must make changes as they are necessary to improve the design. The next goal is to lead the customers through the payment process efficiently and without any surprises. Several characteristics were classified into categories like log in, booking options, payment options, and cancellations. Industry experts gave following statements in the present context:

"Customers expect non-negotiable accurate and timely information delivery with

respect to flight updates, hospitality, packages. Any changes with respect to policies on individual capacity must be timely informed to the customer ...."

"While selling intangibles, it becomes imperative to give the customer enough proof, enough content in terms of pictures, photographs so that the chances of post purchase dissonance is less"

"Inefficient and time-consuming methods for checking out an online order can irritate online shoppers and may deter them from completing the transaction..."

"Having numerous options like different ban credit cards/ debit cards, e-wallets make the process easier and less biased"

Omni channel management: Because customers commonly use touchpoints that are a part of different touchpoint clusters, omnichannel efforts may be ineffective and unsuccessful because the same marketing messages can be distributed across an ostensibly uniform group of touchpoints (according to retail managers). However, it has become increasingly clear that treating channels as autonomous entities does not result in a positive customer experience as more retailers prioritise customer experience in their business models (Melero et al., 2016). To provide a consistent and enhanced customer experience across all channels, businesses have chosen to combine their online and offline platforms (Lemon et al., 2016). This approach is called "omnichannel retailing," and earlier research has demonstrated that this brand-new sort of interaction can enhance customers' perceptions of retailers. Further thought was given to the idea of changing the landing page by combining the upper and bottom portions of the case company website with the online service. Customers are using mobile devices more frequently. To put it another way, the travel portals are required to develop their own strategies to offer for a seamless experience through mobile phones.

Customers should be able to navigate seamlessly between online, physical, and mobile touchpoints because of the company's efforts. Customer Experience is defined as a holistic and multidimensional construct comprised of internal and

contextual components that influence customers' subjective responses to physical retail environments (Bustamante & Rubio, 2017). Below are some of the excerpts from the interaction with respondents:

…" *One of the most difficult aspects of omni-channel marketing is keeping track of customers' needs and wants as they move through the decision-making process across numerous devices. Will a customer go through the material and fill in the details again if he starts his search on his phone and wants to book his vacation the next day on his workplace laptop?" …*

"Customers may begin in one channel and move to another as they work toward a resolution using omni-channel… It is imperative to maintain the same experience across all portals".

Perceived cancellation policy leniency: One of the most contentious issues between travel agents, their suppliers (such as airlines and hotels), and their customers is cancellation (e.g., customer). If a customer cancels a reservation after the cancellation deadline or does not guarantee it in advance, travel agencies and suppliers may have no other choice but to impose a cancellation fee to make up for lost revenue (Ivanov, Stoilova, & Illum, 2015). If a flight reservation is cancelled just a few days before the scheduled departure date, travel agents (or airlines) should conduct a clearing sale for unsold airline seats before the plane departs due to the perishability of unsold airline seats (Sahay, 2007). As a result, airlines calculate the extent of overbooking by forecasting the likelihood of a booking surviving in order to save money (Iliescu, Garrow, & Parker, 2008). Cancellation rules are designed to encourage buyers to cancel sooner rather than later, allowing unsold inventory to be sold to someone else. Cancellation restrictions are in place to avoid this type of "switching" conduct. According to studies, cancellation has a direct effect on capacity allocation and pricing strategy (Koide and Ishii, 2005; Xie and Gerstner, 2007). In conclusion, while lenient cancellation policies are utilised to reduce consumer anxiety and increase booking intentions, tighter cancellation rules can be used to maximise profits in the event of no-shows or cancellations. Respondents elucidated:

"Customers may cancel their reservations for a variety of reasons, including scheduling issues or urgent matters that can properly trigger existing booking cancellations."

"Cancellations is one area we get maximum escalations".

"One key area of negative customer experience in online travel portals is cancellations and refunds. Specially, with regularly policy changes with respect to the pandemic there has been a state of utter confusion and dissatisfaction".

Customization: MakeMyTrip pays special attention to customize their products and offering via all touchpoints. Customized travel portal can expand the reach to new heights. From information regarding tour plans, hotels to huge number of flights, trains, buses, available for booking**,** MakeMyTrip offers customized layout options. Customized travel portal development solutions and booking engine software that seamlessly integrates with GDS, tour operator and OTA websites. While making an air travel, travel booking purchase, customers have access to transparency and can book their choice seat/ cancel the booking/ have the option to get refund into their portal wallet, UPI wallet or directly into their bank account. Custom website design gives the website a search engine optimization (SEO) advantage. Since content marketing and user experience helps to rank sites better, it gives the website the attention it needs.

"*Recommendations based on past behaviour; recommendations based on their google search engine regarding their travel help the whole process very easy…."*

"From pricing engines, price comparison tools, mobile ticket booking we provide customized solutions".

"Creating a beautiful, sensitive and SEO-friendly website/portal helps in seizing the demand and boosting the productivity…"

Source: Created in NVIVO

Figure 5.4: Word cloud of interview transcripts

Interactivity: Personalization also helps customers to complete transactions more quickly by providing them with interactive choice tools and pertinent data (Srinivasan et al., 2002). User-generated content may help travel agents take their social media marketing to the next level. This is since the travel business is ideal for user-generated content. And most people still snap a lot of pictures on vacation. A customer can post photographs, reviews, or positive consumer feedback. Users examine a variety of digital channels during the traveler's customer journey (Mariani et al., 2018). Travelers frequently use partner-owned touchpoints, such as online travel agencies (OTAs) like Booking.com, to book overnight accommodation directly, disrupting the hospitality distribution channel system (Dieck et al., 2018). As a result, social media has become a crucial tool for hospitality organizations to reach their target audience (Moro & Rita, 2018), and their investment on these platforms has been rapidly increasing (Su et al., 2015). Engaging with influencers who talk about trending subjects is also an important part of social media marketing for travel brokers. Respondents mentioned they employ a social media management platform to find these influencers. Because trip expenditures constitute a big financial, emotional, and time investment, the audience of a travel agency relies on feedback from reviews and social media to

determine how to spend their money and effort. Therefore, in order to establish a travel brand's presence, it's critical to keep active and responsive on social media and review sites. Some of the excerpts from the interviews are given below:

"*Travel agency is one area where social presence is high. People get influenced by seeing their fellow travelling and putting pictures. Hence, for us social media plays a great role in touching base with customers at different levels".*

"… Every Social Media platform caters to separate audience; We use various handles for different strata of population Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn …"

"We do regular upgradations to make our portal interactive; timely replies to customers queries- be it via our Chatbot/ customer support or various Social Media pages."

"We ensure to reply to posts where we are tagged so that the customer feels our presence always."

Price and Promotions: The ability to manage the trip in real-time and compose different variants provides cost-efficient business solution. The travel agency wins when the users get the lowest price for the travel tour package. Simultaneously, travel agencies can make more income by building transparent relationships with customers and increasing the number of portal users. Respondents of MMT quoted:

"Promotions are a major attraction especially with Indian customer base, we keep changing our deals as per latest collaborations and events".

"One of the tactics is that the travellers accrue bonus points that can later be redeemed for rewards or discounts. And earning enough miles to get extra discounts is one of the significant aspects. When spending money on items like auto rentals, cruise bookings, credit cards (which a bank co-brands with an airline), and other marketing partner services, loyal customers can accrue points…"

"Different OTPs have different policies. Different collaborations help design promotions for different OTPs".

Word of Mouth Intention: As per travel industry experts, reading product reviews has become a must practice for travel consumers before diving into a purchase. They want to hear what fellow customers thought about the travel, booking experience. Positive feedback from other consumers backs up the decision to buy, whilst poor ones threaten to put the purchase on hold altogether. Customers regard information from peer customers as dependable and trustworthy. Therefore, customer reviews become a significant touchpoint. Onboarding was seen as a source of frustration and something that should be improved. Customer testimonials and anecdotes were also suggested to be a key touchpoint by managers. Customer reviews can number in the millions, but they must be translated into target languages to be read globally. Reviews can be difficult to localize and translate due to the sheer number and speed with which they are published. Machine translation (MT) and other forms of translation automation can help with this. Customers are satisfied as long as they can comprehend the review; they are not concerned with the content's quality. Machine translation can handle large volumes and post them right away, still, paying attention to customer reviews is a manner to gain online reputation for brands. Few sample comments of industry experts are:

"*Only looking at the star rating gives you a partial picture of the customer's conduct. We study customer (guest) textual reviews to see how the policy change has affected the valence of the reviews".*

"When customers are treated exceptionally well, they will be much more likely to share their experiences with others, leading to more business for you".

"Customer feedback is a turning point for our business. It is a make- or-break deal".

"Online reputation management team specifically looks after providing timely feedback of customers. Immediately negative feedbacks have to closed to avoid

further escalations and provide coupons/ vouchers for next visit and giving the OTA a second chance".

Source: Created in NVIVO

Figure 5.5: Clustered themes

5.6. Findings of the Case study

To comprehend the issue of this research in a practical, everyday setting, the case study's analysis was done with that goal in mind. The basic objective of conducting a case study on MMT was primarily to cross check the findings of what was observed in analysing primary data. The findings of the case study emerged in the form of themes from our data analysis of the case study. Customization erupted as an important theme which implied that MakeMyTrip provides customized solutions, services, promotions, content to make a prospect into a customer. MMT not only makes use of various tools/ technologies for targeting specific segments but also understands the significance of price and promotions in delivering experience and purchase intention. On festivals or certain occasions they design special promotions to attract customer base who is price sensitive. Also, other membership offers make them fetch a larger customer base. Furthermore, Omnichannel management was another antecedent of

customer experience as described by MMT managers. They have a special team post COVID i.e., year 2020 which handles omnichannel experience delivery and MMT makes special effort for integration of platform to deliver seamless experience amongst various devices. MMT faces high grievances on perceived cancellation policy aspect is evidence of Perceived cancellation policy leniency to be an antecedent of Customer Experience while purchasing travel online. Another theme representing security and privacy erupted where MMT uses high level of technology, ERP protection software so that the personal, financial customer data is safe. Portal functionality which is an indispensable part to deliver customer experience where aesthetics, font, images, pictures of destination form a very important theme of delivering quality booking experience. Therefore, our results mapped with the themes which emerged out of the content analysis carried out for the case study.

5.7. Conclusion

The case throws light into the activities performed by the travel portals which takes care of the basic constructs of customer experience like portal functionality, omnichannel management, interactivity, price and promotions, customization, perceived cancellation policy leniency, security and privacy. The case also discusses the latest practises followed by MMT to the customer experience. In today's ever-expanding omnichannel travel landscape, practically everything is a fresh opportunity to connect to the customers. The landscape is being shaped by more than just social media and mobile devices. Screens and client contact points can be found in hotel rooms, on flights, at airports, on smart watches. Each of these new platforms is a "blank canvas" on which travel brands may communicate with customers and assist them on their journey. Companies should strive to have a "single picture" of consumers that they can track across their journeys in order to become more customer centric. There are several ways that can make this process go more smoothly. Different dimensions of an experience must be reflected to understand the potential sources of disruption. Also, customer journey forms a chain that how one micro experience follows another micro experience. Each

touchpoint leads to a unique micro experience. Also, the transition between channels is quite important. Ensuring continuity while changing channels is which has led to omnichannel marketing. Multi-channel approach led to greater efficiency and enhanced productivity. The absence of social and human components in online transactions is a challenge that limits the development of this industry. Customization enhances the likelihood that buyers will find what they want to buy without having to shift through thousands of products available on the internet. Customers will be more likely to return to the site in the future because of the benefits of personalization.

Customer experience measurement also must happen via business tracking and measuring progress. Customer experience needs to be customized based on the customer’s demographics and their choices. Marketers and product developers benefit from this since they don't have to build a single monolithic path and risk missing out on customers who may not interact with the online travel portal in the way they intend. As a result, visual and descriptive information, particularly reviews, is in high demand.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Discussions

The findings of our study are in sync with Chahal & Dutta's (2015) study which revealed a strong association between customer experience and satisfaction, brand equity, and word-of-mouth.

Customization: Today, more than ever before, online travel portals (OTPs) are paying more attention to customization, and our results reveal the same. OTPs can do wonders with respect to delivering customized experiences with the help of cookies which is used in segmenting the client base perfectly. Targeting customers based on filters, specific locations for flights, suggesting accommodation via appropriate filters could indeed be helpful. Multiple customized encounters with a particular OTP do make an impression on customers that they are being understood and valued. In the process, the OTPs develop a rapport and trust with customers. Customization can be delivered via customized buttons and links; customers feel empowered and quick action can be taken. Another example would be when OTPs conduct behavioral targeting via social media accounts. Here, the chances of converting a prospect into a customer are high; depending on the OTPs' social media marketing expertise and strategies, they could crack the code. Customization therefore may be understood to boost a service provider's perceived service quality, customer trust, customer satisfaction, leading up to customer loyalty (Coelho & Henseler, 2012). Customization and process effectiveness were cited by Kraus et al. (2019) as important traits that are closely related to customer satisfaction. According to Kumar (2022), adaptability and customization are also factors in the customer experience. Additionally, the results show a variety of customized service delivery options, including bulk customization and individual level customization, and their impacts on the caliber of the client experience (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010).

Interactivity: Interactions adds to the trustworthiness of the organization. Throughout the customer journey, each interaction with a brand causes a customer to acquire

opinions or perceptions of it. These touchpoints are essential for leaving a lasting impact on a specific customer, his/her close friends, family, and neighborhood. Consequently, each touchpoint's interaction is important. For example- Let's assume a situation where airfares might be great, but the customer service might not be up to the mark or imagine getting a refund after 6 months of follow-ups, writing on twitter, multiple tickets raised and spreading to ten different customer support employees. Digital customer experience must treat the customer as a single entity from one interaction to another. Customer-to-customer dialogue, the availability of reviews, and personalized recommendations are all components of website interactivity. Interactivity is crucial, because it facilitates more extensive, quicker, and pertinent information exchanges between the website and its users. The production of experiences revolves around interaction. According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), the relationship between the stimuli (organizational or environmental) and the organism (customers' emotional state of pleasure, arousal, and dominance); effectively that is what determines customer responses (approach or avoidance).

Omnichannel management: For travel portals to increase customer satisfaction, it was observed in our study that they must adopt a more omnichannel approach to customer experience. Every touchpoint of the digital customer experience must produce a seamless customer experience. Between company units, it breaks down silos to reduce conflict and boost employee engagement. As a result, the customer obtains integrated information, integrated experience, and integrated accounts both offline and online. Customers now use call centers, compare products on aggregator websites, connect with offline channels, and then make purchases online. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the customer's journey and ensure that he/she has consistent experience at every stage. It must be ensured that the overall customer engagement experience is consistent across all channels, as more and more travelers are upgrading to smartphones and tablets. At the same time, OTPs must make sure that every customer may contact the company through the channel of his or her choice and that switching between several channels is seamless. The focus must be on developing a uniform omnichannel customer experience so that businesses at large could gather feedback from customers from a variety of sources and respond to each one

predictably and consistently. Tyrväinen et al. (2020) found a favorable correlation between consumer purchase intention and both the cognitive and emotional aspects of the experience within an omnichannel environment. Therefore, the rationale of conducting the study becomes more important as the bottom-up understanding of the omnichannel variables that influence a seamless customer experience was required, considering omnichannel customer behavior. MakeMyTrip case analysis also led to the significance of an omnichannel approach that help advance the competence to render a dependable customer experience, and in the process, remove confusing conditions/contexts that effectively lead to customer dissatisfaction. Hence, we conclude customers can easily transition between online and offline channels when purchasing in an omnichannel system with a high level of seamlessness (Hure et al., 2017).

Portal functionality: In digital platforms, design is the queen, while content is the king. Therefore, to improve the website user experience for the customers, combine them in the best way feasible. The organization of the website, along with the creation of as many categories as the travel portal can accommodate are the keys to easy navigation. Additionally, it is best to avoid using features that detract from the user experience for the potential customers, such as auto scrolling or arbitrary pop-ups. Customers should have no trouble navigating the website and finding anything they're looking for right away.

However, it may appear confusing if relevant information is placed on the home page in an ineffective manner. Each category of product or service must be distinct and present in a logical order. The most important information must be accessible with just one click from the home page, and the main links must be named using keywords. When categorical divisions are being used in the navigation, it is imperative to ensure that each and every ‘heading elements must have links that are ‘clickable’. As a matter of fact, this would be applicable even with ‘drop-down menus’, in which, customers are often inclined to click a sub-category link.

Consumers no longer accept websites that take a long time to load. Whether a page loads quickly on a desktop browser or a mobile device, it has a significant impact on

how Google ranks a website in its search engine results pages (SERP). Users would be more interested in browsing a website longer, if they don't have to zoom, squeeze, or scroll to do so. Fonts, colors, and images, Headlines and CTAs, availability of contact information, Page load time, Form design are a few web design and development features that are extremely important in users' experience. Effective and efficient website navigation enables users to smoothly move from one page to the other without getting frustrated. If and when a user leaves websites of an OTP, and has intent to return, and even may consider procuring something from the website or sign up, it may be considered as a job done well.

Price & Promotions: These issues have gotten worse as more customers opt to purchase travel-related goods via websites like Expedia.com, Travelocity.com, and Orbiz.com rather than from principal service providers directly. They help address the cost transparency issue. Measures of pricing, merchandise, security, service, social shopping, and hours of operation refer to the attitude toward online shopping. The findings of the primary data analysis and case study analysis have supported the previous studies like lattberg and Neslin (1989) highlighted the influence of sales promotions on consumer behavior, while Ashraf et al. (2014) noted that this effect can be caused by a variety of causes, including various marketing actions like discounts. Functional values can be divided into two categories: monetary value and quality-of-benefits value. Monetary value is measured in terms of fair pricing, price comparisons, along with the availability of promotional offers. Quality-of-benefits value on the other hand, is measured from the perspective of consistency in offering benefits, convenience, while maintaining high level of benefits. One pricing strategy is discount pricing, in which OTPs can reduce the cost of their services. Providing timely promotions and deals help to capture Indian market in a nice manner.

Perceived cancellation policy leniency: According to the idea of customers' risk perceptions, the leniency of return policies lowers customers' pre-purchase financial and product risk perception levels (Janakiraman et al., 2016; Ramanathan, 2011; Van den Poel and Leunis, 1999). In the event of no-shows or cancellations, stricter cancellation policies can be used to maximize revenues, while flexible cancellation policies are used to lessen customer uncertainty and boost booking intentions. Return

policies are regarded as service process attributes, which operate as a key factor in determining the general level of service quality. A return policy outlines the steps customers must take to return products. Lenient return policies can be utilized as market cues to indicate the caliber of an online business. Both indicate good service process quality, which increases perceived service quality overall. Convenient return policies enhance future purchase intentions by giving the customer a sense of solidarity for future transactions. Such regulations also demonstrate professionalism in handling the service recovery process and reduce dissonance in the event that customers receive damaged or defective products (Rao et al., 2017). E-tailers face a double-edged sword with the return policy. However, easy and convenient return policies can help them draw more customers and increase sales, but they come at a price. When anticipating cancellations for any hotel, factors such lead time, country, length of stay, market segment, and distribution channel are crucial, albeit their weight varies depending on the hotel (Falk & Vieru, 2018; Morales and Wang, 2010). Recent forecast/prediction experiments (Antonio et al., 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Falk & Vieru, 2018; Huang et al., 2013) have demonstrated that it is possible to estimate each booking's likelihood of cancellation using cutting-edge machine learning algorithms. Generally, when the cancellation rates rise significantly, spatial, arbitrary, and economic distances tend to shrink. With a smartphone, customers seem to be more prone to cancel the reservation, as opposed to when they're with a computer (further spatial distance). Another argument is that consumers can alter their behavior by being exposed to more up-to-date information over a longer period of time between planning a trip and taking it (Fishbein and Jaccard, 1973; Kah et al., 2016).

Schwartz & Chen (2012) believed that a customer's decision to purchase is largely triggered by hedonic (finding the cheapest rate) and utilitarian (need to book a room) motivations. In fact, generally, when customers are 'booking', the dominant motive is utilitarian in terms of their decisions to purchase. Hedonic motivations on the other hand, especially in today's context, are triggered through OTAs from the transparency of rates provide increased satisfaction from deal-seeking behavior.

Security and Privacy: The terms and conditions of travel purchase business need to be updated or implemented as quickly as possible. This guarantees that the staff

complies with the regulations; it would also assist them in making wise travel choices.

With the use of various safeguards, such as a two-factor authentication system, tourism and hospitality businesses must make sure that all the equipment used to store the financial information of their customers is secure. Even if fraudsters are successful in gathering passwords and other sensitive financial information in such circumstances, they might not have the second factor for authentication.

6.2 Suggestions for Online travel portals

It is very important to track the customer experience across each touchpoint of travel portals like social media pages, websites, applications, chatbots, customer support team etc. Feedback/inputs from customers are almost sacrosanct, as they offer critical insights that go on to build an effective customer-experience strategy. Measuring CX across customer journey would tell us critical points that are not delivering up to the mark, and where efforts must be put in. Customer feedback can be gathered in a variety of ways, including email, push notifications, and a company's customer experience application. The greatest strategy for OTPs would be to increase positive customer feedback is to build strong relationships with their customers and communicate with them frequently during the fulfillment process to give them the impression that they are important for the travel portal.

Further, online travel portals must anticipate the target customers' needs and interests. Cutting down layers in the customer lifecycle is essential for providing excellent customer service. Utilizing these technologies makes the same possible. Leveraging technologies like AI, chatbots not only help optimize costs for online travel portals but make data coherent and deliver more value with streamlined processes. The Internet of Things (IoT) is a disruptive technology that requires updating OTPs' current procedures to stay competitive and relevant in the long-term. IoT-enabled machine-to-machine connectivity and communication are opening new possibilities for customers experience redesign and response. Chatbots enable more cordial and efficient customer-business interactions without the requirement for a strong contact center infrastructure or additional staff. The entire customer management workflow would be optimized by chatbots utilizing the advantages of AI and IoT. Further,

highly specialized customer experience analytics that can depict the customers' journey, simulate the experience, and measure the customer experience across many channels will be the next big thing in customer experience. In addition, practices like SEO/SEM are equally significant because there won't be any engagement between a brand and a customer if they can't find them through a search engine, SEO helps with usability. When a customer lands on a web page using Google search, they should immediately be able to find the content that they were looking for; this shows that proper SEO procedures have been followed, which guarantee that relevant content is properly indexed.

Novel customer trends like cashless transactions, omnichannel management, and revenge tourism, among others need to be tapped on a timely basis. Further, it must be ensured by the travel portals that the branding and messaging are consistent across all platforms, including the website, mobile app, social media, email, and phone. This would help customers recognize and trust a brand across channels. Provide uniform booking experience across all channels, so that clients could smoothly transition between channels to finish a booking. This involves establishing a single customer profile that retains their preferences and booking history, and thereby provides the same pricing and inventory across all channels. Provide consistent customer care across all channels, so that consumers may receive assistance and support regardless of the channel they choose. This could include live chat, phone, and social media help, as well as a consolidated knowledge-base and customer service personnel that can answer enquiries across all channels. Segmenting customers based on information and transaction history could help in knowing the customer better and target all communications accordingly.

Further, Customization can be achieved by evaluating data, such as consumer preferences, purchase history, and browsing behavior, OTPs may adapt their online services to each individual client, giving them with more likely-to-appeal recommendations and offers. Big data analytics may also improve online customer experience, by detecting customer-frustrating or -confusing points during a customer's online journey. By evaluating customer feedback, click-through rates, and bounce rates, organizations may discover pain points in the customer journey, and make

adjustments to decrease customer aggravation and boost customer satisfaction. Big data analytics may also be used to enhance the performance of online services, including website speed, page load times, and mobile responsiveness. By evaluating website traffic, page views, and bounce rates, businesses may find areas where the online experience could be enhanced, and thereby optimize their online services for better performance. Besides, Big data analytics help deliver significant insights into consumer behavior and preferences, enabling them to enhance the online customer experience in several ways. By using this information to tailor the online experience, organizations could decrease consumer irritation, and further strengthen customer connections, boosting customer loyalty in the process.

Carving separate strategies for price sensitive customers can tab the specific market without washing out the revenue further. Moreover, it may be noted herein that travel for instance, is a highly visual and experience-based commodity that lends itself well to social media. Thus, the travel sector is ideally suited for influencer marketing; by collaborating with travel bloggers, Instagrammers, and YouTubers, who have a huge following and strong social media presence. In turn, these influencers could advertise the travel portal's services to their followers, who may be motivated to book a trip as a result. Online travel sites may also utilize influencer marketing by developing original content with influencers. For instance, they could produce trip guides and movies showing influencers who utilized their services in the past. This sort of material may be posted on social media platforms and the travel portal's website in order to promote their services and attract new consumers. The days when people only wanted the bare minimum in terms of user experience are long gone. People prefer to spend time on websites that are attractive, sophisticated, and powerful.

Lastly, B2C interactivity is a significant tool which cannot be ignored. It requires time and effort, but the payback in terms of improved client loyalty and income may be substantial. Pleasant experiences lead customers to post favorable reviews on different platform which lead to positive WOM. However, they could also encompass the good and bad experiences of the services during the trip, albeit with complete professionalism and courtesy. Thus, it is imperative to engage with the customers and promote the travel portals using social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and

Twitter). Furthermore, providing information that would resonate with OTP's target audience, such as images, videos, and travel advice, could possibly be another 'good' practice that may be adopted by the travel portals. Another example would be to check internet reviews and promptly reply to any unfavorable comments or suggestions and acknowledge any concerns mentioned by customers and strive to resolve their problems. To encourage repeat business and favorable word-of-mouth, organizations must look to provide loyalty programs and rewards. For instance, provide incentives or discounts to consumers, who recommend friends or book numerous trips through travel portal's website.

Laws linked to this topic are in place to protect data and protect people's privacy from outside threats The data sovereignty principle grants any business the freedom to release or withhold any information that has been kept confidential by its cyber security measures. The risk of data breaches is increased because the majority of travel companies lack data storage and disposal standards for sensitive client data and electronic information. The application of cutting-edge technologies offers a number of chances to improve data security and privacy policies. For instance, there are several ways to use blockchain to enhance travel and expenditure management.

Regardless of the channel, whether it is on websites or in physical stores, customer service is an essential in delivering an exceptional customer experience. However, unlike the traditional method, OTPs are not required to personally attend to them every time. The majority of customers today favor self-service customer care platforms like chatbots where they can follow instructions and troubleshoot independently. The effectiveness of fulfillment of booking will now more than ever determine the worth of a travel portal. Customers are more concerned with order fulfillment quickly and affordably than they are with operational flaws. Recurring customers would be attracted by personalization, ease, and good performance with a touch of powerful branding. The greatest method to boost a travel agency's sales in today's cutthroat industry is to invest in scaling up deals, cooperating with the appropriate partners, and putting in place business-appropriate technologies.

E-commerce has a strategic focus for businesses and customers (Aakash et al., 2021; Verma et al., 2021). Since it may increase customer loyalty, repurchase intention, positive word-of-mouth publicity, and eventually revenue through improved customer experience, customer satisfaction has been a key target of corporate marketing campaigns.

6.3. Conclusion

In the process of identifying aspects that affect online customer experience, this study discussed the relationships between independent variables that include portal functionality, customization, price and promotions, Omnichannel management, security and privacy, interactivity and perceived leniency in cancellation policy and online customer satisfaction, online purchase intention and word of mouth intention as dependent variable. Our results validated the model proposed and also supported all the hypotheses. The results further affirmed that online customer satisfaction does play the mediator's role between the relationship of customers' intent of digital purchase vis a vis customer experience. Customers' online purchase intention also played a mediating role between the relationship of online customer satisfaction and word of mouth intention. Further, we concluded Online customer satisfaction is a mediators role between the relationship of online customer experience and word of mouth intention. Online purchase intention has a mediating effect between the relationship of online customer satisfaction and word of mouth intention. It was also noted that age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, travel purchase frequency are moderators, when it comes to the relationship between online customer experience and online customer satisfaction, albeit the fact this was pretty insignificant. The present study makes a specific theoretical contribution in identifying novel significant antecedents with respect to online customer experience.

The privacy paradox may hinder customization practices these days as the organizations takes undue advantage of customer's personal data. Websites places cookies and at the same time save search engine related data for demographic and psychographic profiling. A good example here would be how a customer's sudden requirement to book a flight may show a surge in airfares. Many other organizations seem to do it. The danger of a consumer trust going wrong could be reduced by the

various stakeholders, including nation ambassadors, hotel and destination managers, through the usage of internet reviews. As consumers participate as co-marketers, managers can take advantage of the power of online reviews by delivering reviews that have a significant impact on consumers' decisions (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Filieri and McLeay, 2013). For consumers to report positive e-WOM and for marketers to find ways to encourage their customers to share helpful information via e-WOM, all parties involved in the process should work to establish marketing strategies that will deliver customer happiness.

6.4. Implications

6.4.1 Theoretical Implications

The study has multiple theoretical implications which are covered in the following points:

- The study advances theory because it broadens our understanding of customer experience phenomenon. The study added to the list of factors influencing Customer experience to the existing literature, for example- omnichannel management, perceived cancellation policy leniency.
- An integrated framework to understand customer experience phenomena was proposed and tested through the use of Smart -PLS to test all the relationships. The research offered some novel insights on mediating effects on certain relationships which have not been previously tested in the literature.
- The study observed some new insights on how online customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between online customer experience and purchase intention is an implication worthy insight for online travel portals. Further, how online purchase intention mediates the relationship between online customer satisfaction and WOM.
- The study enhanced the predictive power of travel agents' attitudes and intentions to participate in online collaborations. Further, the proposed framework extended the scope of existing theories through integration and addition of new perspective to the research done in this area.

6.4.2 Managerial Implications

The study will assist travel portals in improving the user and online customer experience, making it easier and more convenient for customers to book their travel online.

- This study's findings suggest that travel agencies might consent to lay the foundation on UI/UX to understand what must be delivered. The user interface of the travel portal should be simple to use and comprehend. This can include simple, intuitive design, clear and succinct instructions, and simple search and filtering options.
- There are certain other factors, nevertheless, that have a big impact on people's attitudes and intentions. These features include clearly defining the collaboration's objectives, establishing strict rules and regulations to guide the cooperation, and coordinating the interactions between the affiliated members.
- The study offers significant points to ponder for online travel industry marketers and policy makers to help the destination's marketing plan and the related stakeholders.
- This study attempts to add value cross the entire value chain, by suggesting measure to employ in case of B2B and B2C such as the study suggests Online collaboration between local attractions, travel suppliers like travel agents, and their subsets of travel packages, such as hotels, museums, car rentals, cruises, and so on, could aid visitors in choosing their packages, comparing costs, and making online reservations or bookings through website or through partner players.
- When people opt to cancel their reservation, psychological distance has differing effects on package tour consumers and independent travellers. Therefore, when determining the extent of overbooking, tourism companies must consult this outcome.
- Cancellation fees could be dynamically calculated based on the likelihood of a reservation being cancelled.

6.5. Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are as follows:

- The current research studied 3 dependent variables: online customer satisfaction, online purchase intention, word-of-mouth intention were studied. There is a scope to study a few more dependent variables, and that could possibly contribute substantially to designing better Customer experience, which could predict better revenue of online travel portals.
- The findings of the primary data analysis were supported by taking one case study of MMT. A more detailed analysis of other players would have helped map our results better and give us deeper insights into how OTPs manage Customer Expeirnce.
- This study has been online restricted to the online travel portals. The antecedents might be overlapping in case of different streams like e-commerce, grocery, clothing, travel, banking, pharma products, there is a considerable difference in designing a service experience versus product delivery experience versus a destination travel experience.

6.6. Scope for Future research

Future studies could include additional dependent variables, like loyalty intention/repurchase intention and moderators like social influence. A study focused on data collection from Social Media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook could reveal the significant factors that effectively lead to customer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction respectively. Such a study may yield exact touchpoints while designing the customer journey, especially in terms of which the areas which need more focus in the case of OTPs. Future studies may corroborate this study's results by conducting additional analysis in other sectors and other contexts of different countries in order to get interesting insights. As mentioned in the limitations section, studying sections like e-commerce, grocery, clothing, pharma, travel would give us deeper insights and help conclude essential non-compromising antecedents of customer experience. Finally, a longitudinal study can throw light as to how customer experience and online travel portals have evolved as a phenomenon over the years.

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APPENDIX I

MISSING DATA

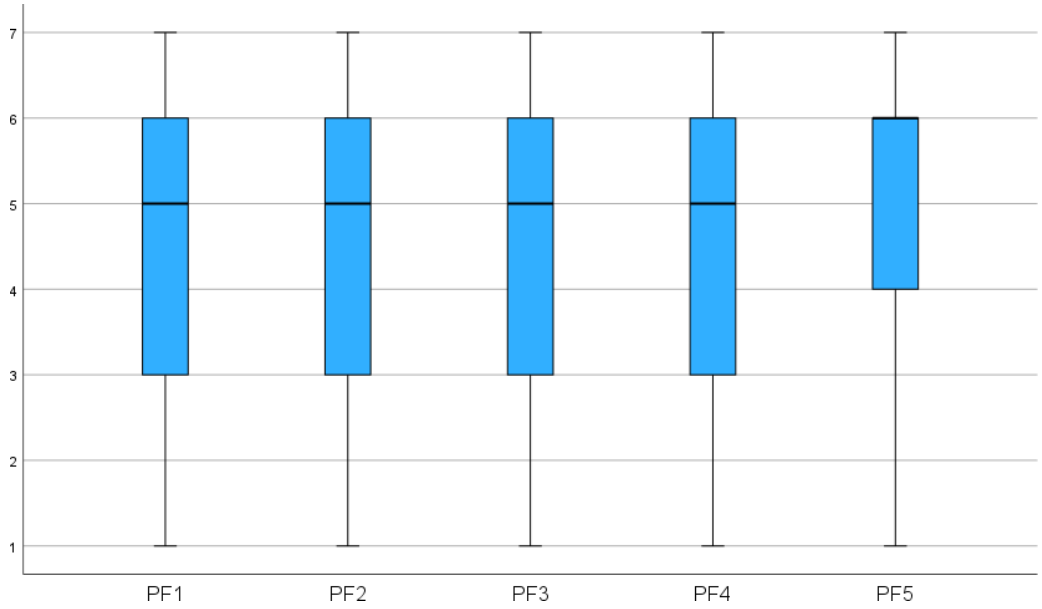

Figure A1: Portal Functionality

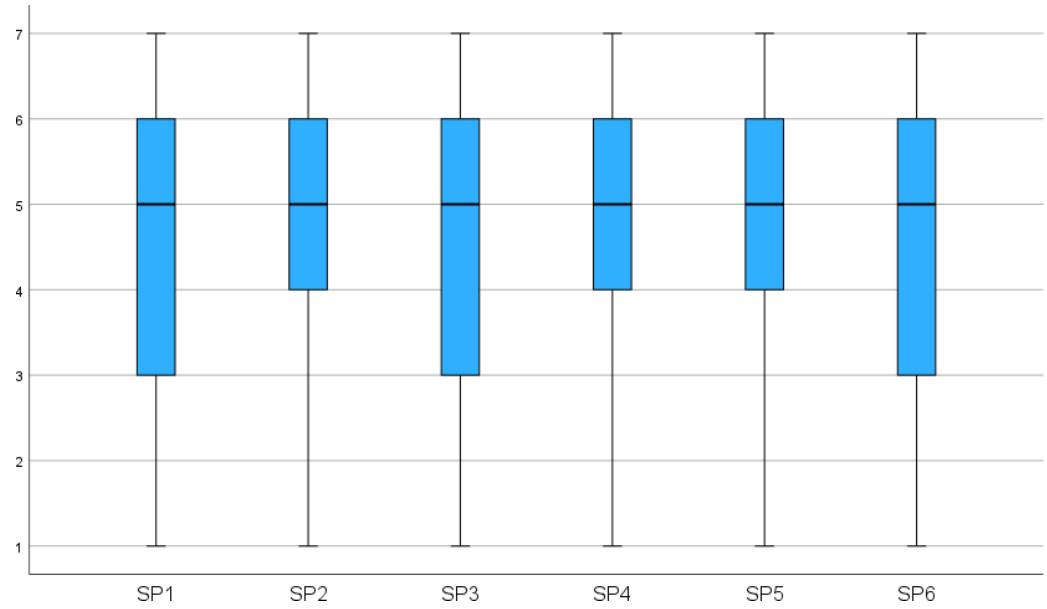

Figure A2: Security and Privacy

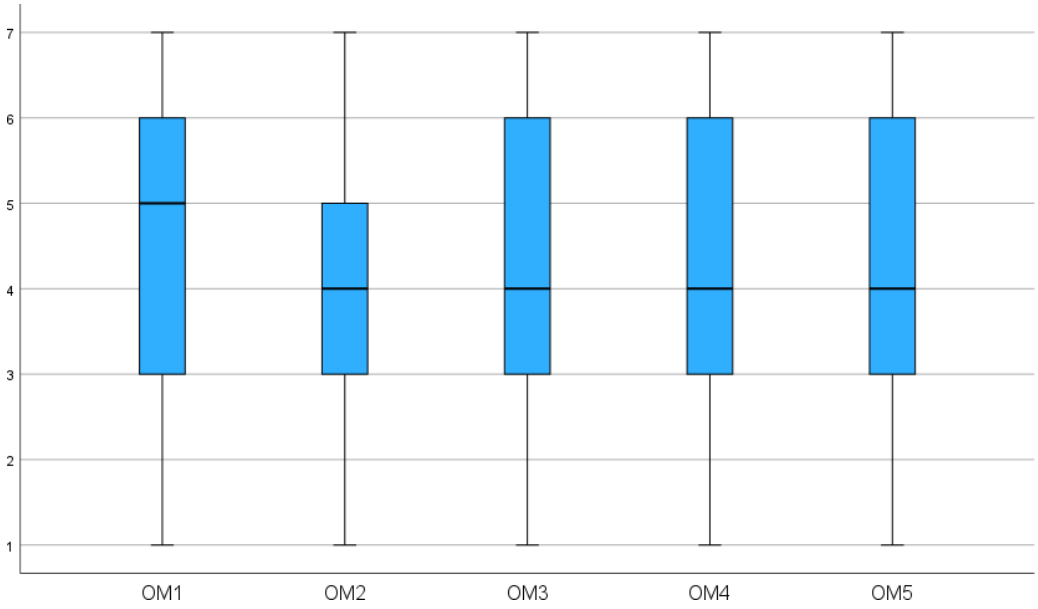

Figure A3: Omnichannel management

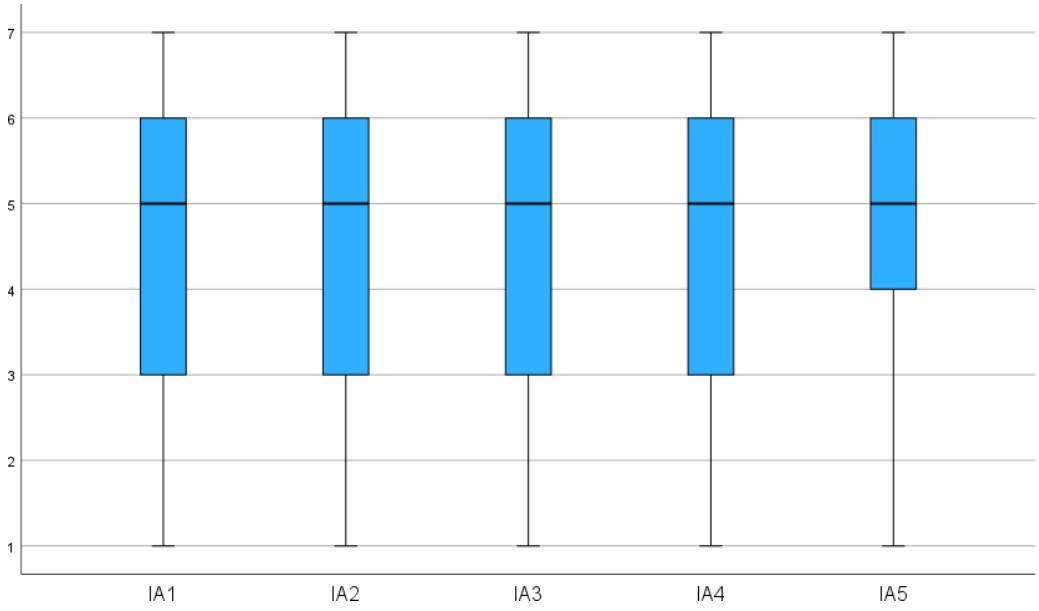

Figure A4: Interactivity

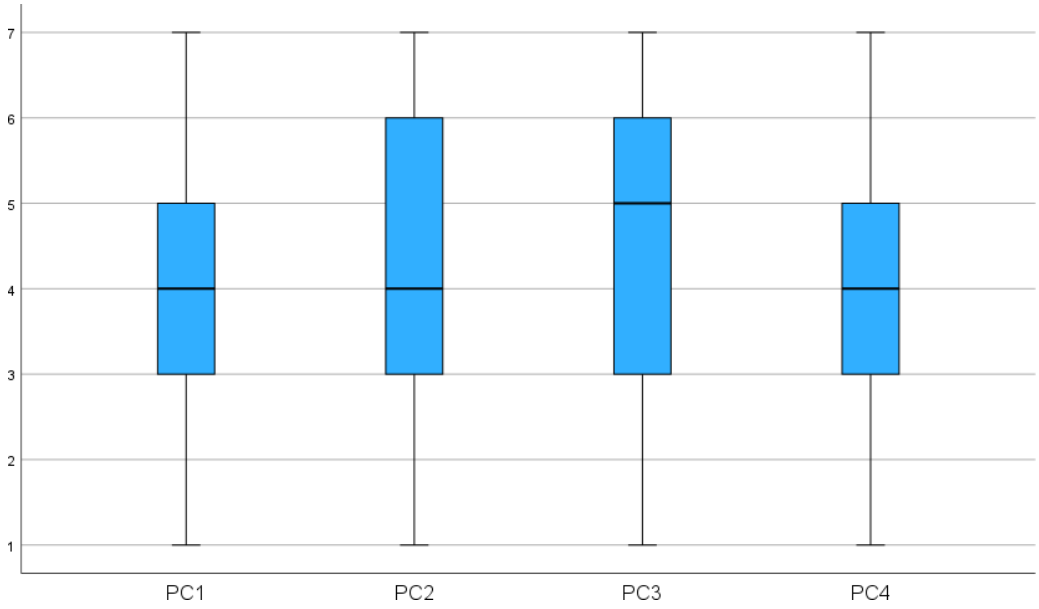

Figure A5: Perceived cancellation policy leniency

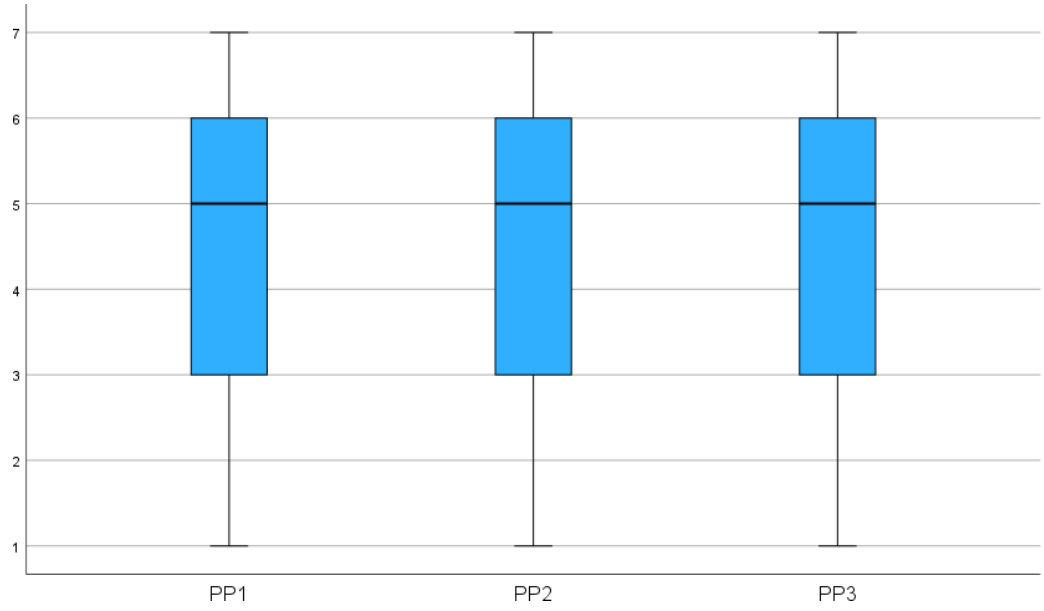

Figure A6: Price and promotions

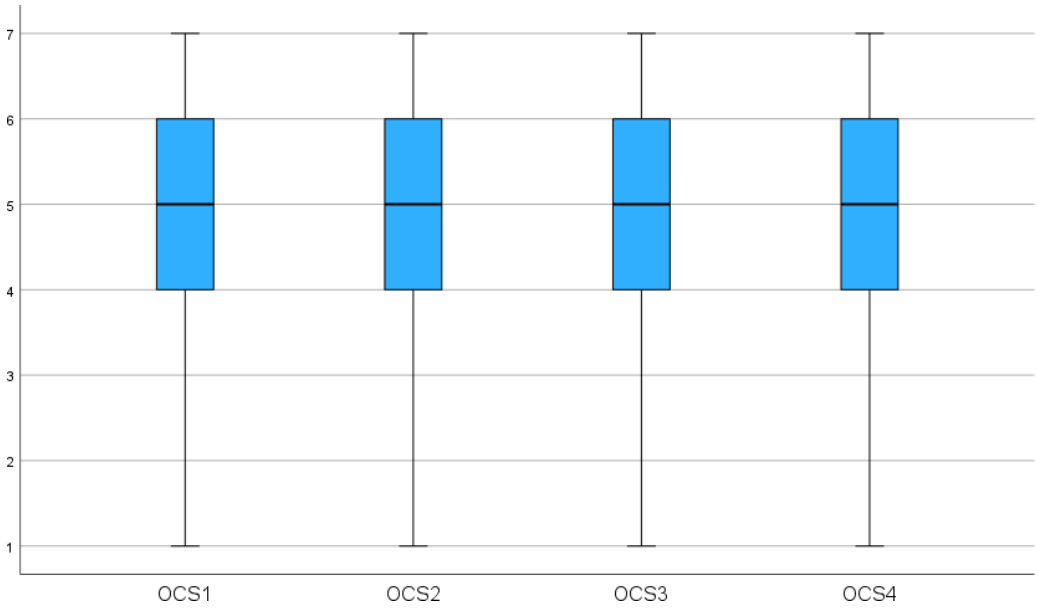

Figure A7: Online customer satisfaction

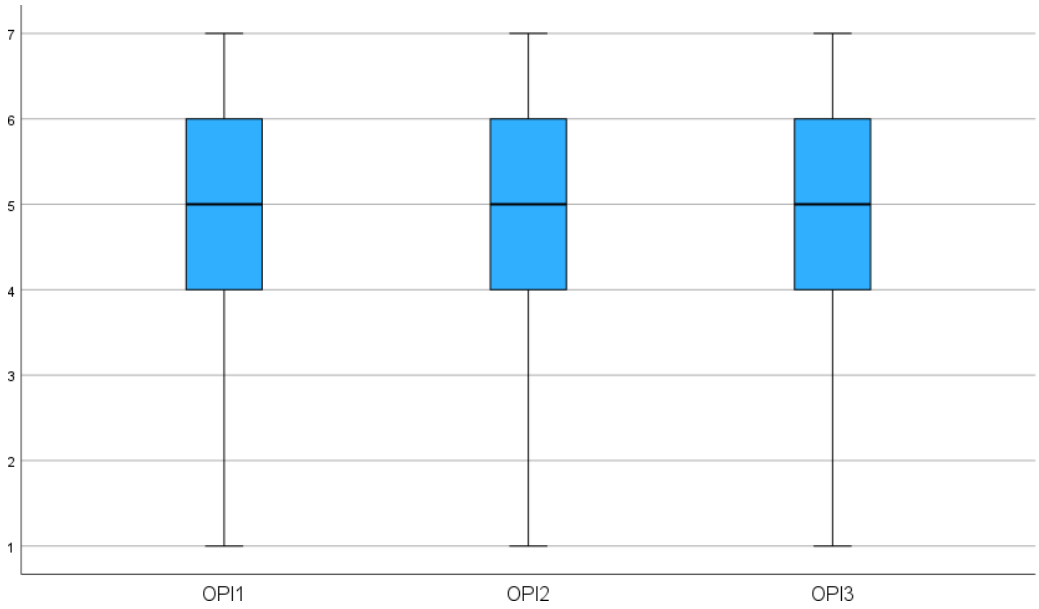

Figure A8: Online purchase intention

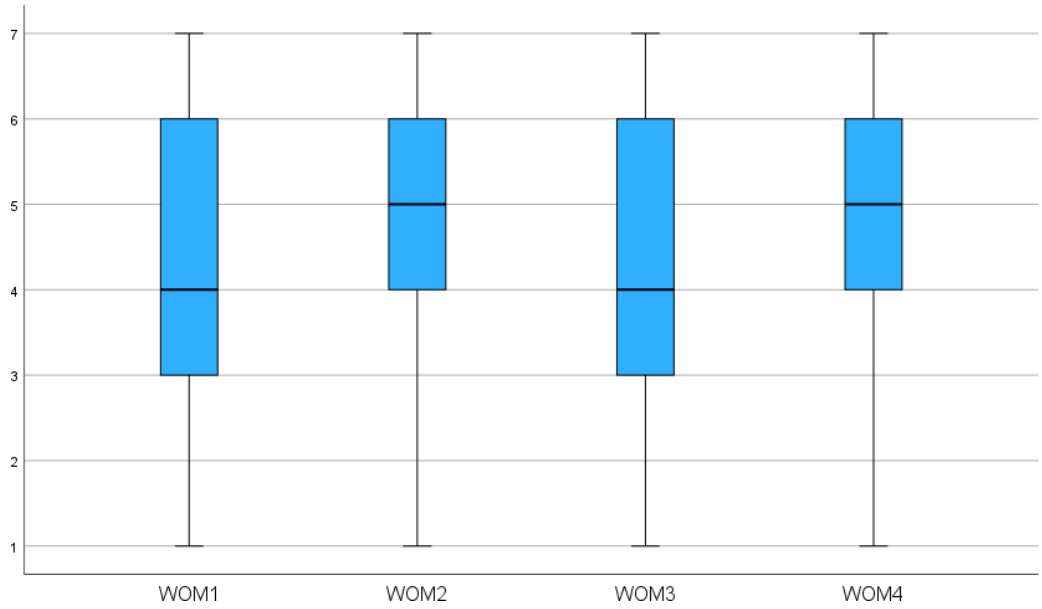

Figure A9: Word of Mouth intention

APPENDIX II

Makemytrip TOOL

How Online Travel portals build Online Customer Experience

I am a Research scholar of Delhi Technological University (DTU) conducting a study on "Influence of Online Customer Experience on Purchase Intention: A Study on Online Travel Portals" to complete my PhD dissertation. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions below. I am only interested in your personal opinions. Your responses will be treated in strict confidence and will only be used for research purposes. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Purpose of Research:

The purpose of this research is to study the customer experience practices at your organization. Our attempt through this research is to study the reasons and ways of delivering elevated customer experience at MakeMyTrip.

The questions are as below:

1. What are the major factors of online customer experience in online travel domain space?

2. What is the influence of online customer experience on purchase intention?

3. What, according to you, is customer experience? Why is it important?

4. What are the significant factors contributing to online customer experience?

5. How do you drive customer experience at MakeMyTrip? (Probe-departments, technology etc.)

6. What are the Customer experience management practices followed in your organization?

7. What can be done differently to achieve a great customer experience while purchasing travel online?

8. What is omnichannel marketing with respect to OTPs? (Probe: Integration of offline and online sales via different platforms- stores-website- mobile applications)

9. What were some of the major changes at MMT travel planning post COVID pandemic? (Probe: Policy changes, Portal functionality)

Personal Details:

Age (in years)_____

Location _____

Designation_____

Work Experience in travel industry_____

Work Experience (with MakeMyTrip) _____

Thank you so much for sparing your valuable time and participating in this study.

Please Note: Personal Information shall not be published.

APPENDIX III

RESEACH QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Questionnaire (Ph.D. Study)

I am a Doctoral candidate at Delhi Technological University. I am conducting a survey on "Influence of online customer experience on purchase intention: A study on online travel portals". The survey comprises of different kinds of questions. There are no right or wrong answers to the question. I am only interested in your personal opinions. Your responses shallremain strictly confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

* Required

1. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Male Female
- ◯ Transgender
- ◯

2. Age *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Below 18
- ◯ 18-25
- ◯ 26-35
- ◯ 36-45
- ◯ 46-55
- ◯ Above 56

3. Occupation *

Mark only one oval.

- Student
- Salaried
- Self- Employed
- Homemaker
- Others

4. Annual family income from all sources (all figures are in rupees)

Mark only one oval.

- Below 5,00,000
- 5,00,001-10,00,000
- 10,00,001-15,00,000
- 15,00,001-20,00,000
- Above 20,00,001

5. Marital status *

Mark only one oval.

- Single
- Married
- Separated

6. Educational Qualification *

Mark only one oval.

- Under-graduate
- Graduate
- Post-graduate Professional
- QualificationPh.D.
-

7. Since how long have you using Internet? *

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 5 years5-
- 10 years
- 10-15 years
- More than 15 years

8. Rate your computer skills *

Mark only one oval.

Poor

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

6 ◯

7 ◯

Excellent

9. How often do you browse the Internet during the day? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Less than 2 hours2-

◯ 4 hours

◯ 4-6 hours

◯ More than 7 hours

◯ Cannot Say

Online Travel Purchase Information

10. To which extent would you prefer making travel purchases online instead of offline? *

Mark only one oval.

	Prefer Online
1	◯
2	◯
3	◯
4	◯
5	◯
6	◯
7	◯
	Prefer Offline

11. How many times have you made online travel purchases in last 1 year? (Post COVID era) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ None
- ◯ 1-3 times
- ◯ 4-6 times
- ◯ >6 times

12. How many times would you usually make online travel purchases in a span of 1 year? (Post COVID era) *

Mark only one oval.

- 1-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-9 times
- >10 times

13. e Purpose of travel portal services are mainly for: (You can choose more than 1) *

Check all that apply.

- Business travel Recreational
- travel/pleasureMedical
- Others
-

14. Rank from 1 to 5 the most preferred Travel Portals for Your Travel Purchase (Choose your top 5 & then Rank 1- most Preferred and 5- least Preferred)

Check all that apply.

	1	2	3	4	5
MakeMyTrip	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gobbo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Yatra	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cleartrip	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Via.com	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Musa fir	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Booking.com	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inigo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expedia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MakeMyTrip	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IIRCTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Agoda	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. What Travel Products have you purchased online? (You can choose more than one) *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Airline Ticket
- ☐ Lodging
- ☐ Travel Package
- ☐ Rent Car
- ☐ Activities

16. What platform do you use to access Online Travel portal? (You can choose more than one option) *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] PC (Desktop version)
- [ ] Tablet (Mobile version of the website)
- [ ] Tablet (Mobile app)
- [ ] Smartphone (Mobile version of the website)
- [ ] Smartphone (Mobile app)

17. Which of the above-mentioned travel portals did you make your latest booking with? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ MakeMyTrip
- ◯ Yatra Gobbo
- ◯ Via.com
- ◯ Clear trip
- ◯ Musa fir
- ◯ Inigo
- ◯ Booking.com
- ◯ MakeMyTrip
- ◯ Expedia
- ◯ IRCTC
- ◯ Others

18. With Respect to the choice made in above question, please answer the following question: *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ First -time customer (not consumed the service before)Repeat
- ◯ customer (consumed the services before)

Section B-
Statements

Considering your latest online booking experience mentioned in abovesection, answer the following questions (according to the scale mentioned below):
We would like to know how much you agree or
disagree with the following statements.

Request to use your smartphone screen in landscape mode (Rotatethe device until it is horizontal) so that all seven scales are perfectly.
visible and true result of the study can be arrived.

19. Portal Functionality: e functional characteristics of the website including Responsiveness, Reliability, and ease of use. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree} *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This online travel portalhas well-arranged categories.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It is easy to make or cancel reservations.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It is easy to navigate on this Online travel	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
portal.							
The page loads quickly on this portal.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It is easy and quick to complete a transaction on this travelportal.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

20. Are you aware you can Interact with the online travel portal via divergent channels? (For Example- Website, Apps, E-mail, Social Media landing pages, Customer Care) *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

21. How many different channels have you used while interacting/booking with online travel portal? *

Mark only one oval.

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- more than four

22. Omnichannel management: e Synergetic management of the numerous available channels (Like App, Website, Social Media landing page) and Customer touchpoints, in such a way that the Customer experience across channels and the Performance over channels are optimized. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = N neutral,5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree} *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
II can choose alternative channels in order tomake antitravel purchase.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My member accounts across different channels are connected.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My interactions across different channels are integrated and taken into accountfor each purchase.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The qualityof travel products isconsistent across different channels.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The service performanceis consistentacross	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

different
channels.

23. Security and privacy: e technical safeguards to ensure that legal Requirements are met and best practices adhered to when dealing with Personal details. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree} *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Online Travel Portal (OTP) was safe and hada privacy policy regarding consumer and privacy information.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The OTP informed the consumer about security andprivacy policies.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II felt safe when sending personal information through the OTP.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II think my rights regarding my personaldetails were respected bythe OTP.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II think the OTP had mechanisms that ensure.							

the safe transmissionof its users'' information.							
II felt safe sending confidential information (credit card number, bank account information) when II paid to the OTP.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

24. Price and Promotions: Price Promotions are Reduce the Price for a given quantity or increase * the quantity available at the same Price, thereby enhancing value and create an economic incentive to Purchase. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree}

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The online travel portal makes me save money compared to offline purchasing.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Travel purchase from OTP is an economical transaction.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
This online travel portal usually offers special promotion.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

25. Customization: A shoppers' experience of Personal tailoring of appearance and functionality. *
{Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = SomewhatAgree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree}

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Online travel portal (OTP) enables me to book services thatare tailor-made for me.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Online travel portal (OTP) sends me information customized to my personal preference.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Online travel portal (OTP) website enables to keep save my preferred items for future purchase.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The OTP makes recommendationsthat match my needs.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II receive reminders aboutmaking purchases from this website.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

26. Perceived cancellation policy leniency: A cancellation is de½ned as a Reservation that is terminated by a customer at some point before the time of service. Cancellation policies can be described by the degree of di cult for cancelling the bookings: lenient or strict. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree,6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree} *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Compared with the cancellation policies of other OTPs,the cancellation policy of this OTP is verry lenient	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The cancellation policy of this OTP is less restrictive.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The cancellation policy of this OTP makes me feel verry convenient.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
This OTP provides free cancellation policy.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

27. Interactivity: Interactivity is de½ned as the degree to which two or more communicating *parties can synchronize and act on each other through the communicative medium with their messages. On Web, two main types of interactivities are customer interactivity and Customer portal interactivity. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree}

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
II think the OTP was able to respond to my specific requests for information so II could access it quickly and efficiently.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The OTP allowed me to easily communicate with the company if II ever had a specific question or wanted to purchase a product.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The OTP lets me access other consumers'' opinions about the products featured.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II think the OTP really gave me some control (i.e...,,	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

flexibility) over the content that II wanted to see.

Overalls, II think

the OTPwas highly interactive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

28. Online Customer Satisfaction: Perceived degree of contentment about a customer's prior *Purchase experience with a given travel portal. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree}

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
II am satirized with my overallexperience withthis travel portal.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II am satirized with the prep-purchase experience of online travel portal (e.g... product search, quality of information about products,product comparison).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II am satirized with the purchase experience of the online travelportal (e.g..., ordering, payment procedure).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II am satirized with the post-purchase experience of the online travelportal (e.g..., customer support and after salles support, handling of	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

returns/refunds, delivery care).

29. Online Purchase intention: Consumers expected or planned purchasing behavior in the *future and that their beliefs and/or attitudes can be manifested through their purchasing behavior. {Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Nneutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree}

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
II intend to use online travel portals (e.g... purchasing online travel or seek travel information).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using online travel portals for purchasing my travel is something II would do.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
II could see myself using the online travel portals to buy online travel.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

30. WOM (Word-of-mouth) Intention: Word-of-mouth Represents the client's willingness to Recommend *the product and service to others in the near future.
{Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 =Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree}

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to share my online travel portal booking experience on social media.							
I will speak well about this online travel portal if other people ask me.							
I share comments, photos, or videos on social media about my travel purchase with this portal.							
I will recommend other people to purchase through this online travel portal.							

Reasons of not purchasing travel Products online

31. Why are you not purchasing travel Products online? (You can choose more than one option)

Check all that apply.

- [ ] It is expensive to buy online.
- [ ] I am not aware of online purchasing websiteNo
- [ ] purchase guarantees.
- [ ] Poor website design
- [ ] Poor quality products
- [ ] The process of online shopping is too complexI
- [ ] cannot find what I look for.
- [ ] Poor after sales service
- [ ] I feel insecure paying for something but need to wait days or weeks to get the productFears of
- [ ] fraud and not confident with the security of online transaction.
- [ ] I do not like to give out personal information.
- [ ] Other: _____

APPENDIX IV

CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS AND FDPs

Details of Publications:

S. No.	Title of the Paper	Name of the authors	Name of the Journal	Indexation	Published/ Accepted	Publisher
1	Understanding customer experience of culinary tourism through food tours of Delhi	Vaishali Kaushal Rajan Yadav	International Journal of Tourism Cities	ABDC, ESCI	Published	Emerald
2	The role of Chatbots in academic Libraries: an experience-based perspective	Vaishali Kaushal Rajan Yadav	Journal of Australian Library and information association	SSCI, Scopus	Published	Taylor & Francis
3	Learning successful implementation of chatbots in businesses from B2B customer experience perspective	Vaishali Kaushal Rajan Yadav	Concurrency and computation Practice and experience	SCIE, Scopus	Published	Wiley
4.	Exploring Maldives' luxury hospitality experience amidst Covid- 19 pandemic with User Generated Content	Vaishali Kaushal Rajan Yadav	Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality	ABDC, Scopus	Published	Emerald

Chapter Publication:

S.No.	Title	Name of the authors	Book name	ISBN details	Publisher
1	Delivering Superior customer experience through new-age technologies	Vaishali Kaushal Rajan Yadav	Industry 4.0 Technologies for Business Excellence	9781003140474	CRC Press
2.	The Effect of Mortgage Digitalization on Customer Relationship with Banks: A Comparison Between Traditional and Digitalized Model	Vaishali Kaushal Rajan Yadav	Empowering to create smart future through e-governance and digitization	978-93-86608-32-1.	Bharti publications

Details of International conferences:

S. No.	Complete name of the conference	Organizers of the conference	Date	Venue of the conference
1	Empowering to create smart future through e-governance and digitization	Bharati Vidyapeeth	January, 2018	New Delhi
2	International conference on digital economy 2019	IIM Raipur	February, 2019	Raipur
3	International conference on Business and Management	DTU	March, 2019	New Delhi
4	Flexibility, Resilience and Sustainability	GLOGIFT 2021, IIM Shillong	April, 2022	Shillong
5	Recent Trends in Management & Social Sciences	NIT Hamirpur	March, 2021	Online

FDP Details:

S.No	FDP Details	Organizers	Date	Venue
1	Advanced Statistical Techniques in Research in Social Sciences	NIT, Hamirpur	October 2020	NIT Hamirpur
2	Structural equation model using AMOS	RDIAS, New Delhi	May 2018	RDIAS, New Delhi
3	Case Method of learning	Delhi Productivity council	June 2020	Online
4	**Research Methods and Business Analytics Using SPSS & R - Studio**	DIAS, New Delhi	June 2019	DIAS, New Delhi
5	Qualitative methods using NVivo software	IIT- Delhi	October,2019	IIT- Delhi
6	Qualitative design & research	IMI, New Delhi	January,2020.	IMI, New Delhi

7	Advances in Research Methods and Teaching Pedagogy"	Delhi School of management, DTU	June,2018.	Delhi School of management, DTU
8	Structural Equation Modelling and Artificial Neural Network	LBSIM, New Delhi	June 2022	LBSIM, New Delhi
9	Basic Statistical Analysis to Doctoral Research	Koach Scholar, New Delhi	September 2020	Online
10	Demystifying Literature Review Techniques	Koach Scholar, New Delhi	August, 2020	Online