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DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES & SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING EFFECTS ON CUSTOMER ADVOCACY IN THE TOURISM/HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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Abstract:
This study investigates how digital marketing strategy strength and sustainability messaging jointly shape customer advocacy in the tourism and hospitality sector, highlighting the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust. Drawing on an integrated framework that combines relationship marketing and stimulus–organism–response logic, we employ a quantitative, cross-sectional design and analyze survey data using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS). The measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and validity (e.g., CR = 0.853–0.961; AVE = 0.661–0.804), and discriminant validity is confirmed via Fornell–Larcker and HTMT criteria. Structural results validate all hypotheses: digital marketing strategy strength exerts a substantial direct effect on customer advocacy ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$), while sustainability messaging shows a positive direct effect ($\beta = 0.077$, $p = 0.012$). Customer engagement and brand trust transmit these influences, with significant indirect effects for both digital marketing (via engagement: $\beta = 0.082$; via trust: $\beta = 0.036$) and sustainability messaging (via engagement: $\beta = 0.061$; via trust: $\beta = 0.086$; all $p < 0.001$). The model explains a large share of variance in advocacy ($R^2 = 0.600$; $Q^2 = 0.401$) and demonstrates moderate predictive relevance for engagement ($R^2 = 0.327$; $Q^2 = 0.213$) and brand trust ($R^2 = 0.267$; $Q^2 = 0.191$). Findings indicate that well-orchestrated, personalized, multi-channel digital strategies directly foster advocacy, while credible sustainability communication primarily operates through trust and engagement. Managerially, aligning digital excellence with authentic sustainability execution can convert satisfied guests into vocal brand advocates. The study advances theory by integrating digital and ethical branding pathways within a single advocacy model and offers actionable guidance for hospitality marketers seeking durable, values-driven growth.

Keywords: *digital marketing strategy, sustainability messaging, customer advocacy, customer engagement, brand trust, tourism and hospitality, PLS-SEM.*

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality sector has been radically transformed by the digital era, as technological advancement reshapes how firms communicate, engage, and build relationships with customers. In recent years, digital marketing strategies have become an essential driver of

competitiveness for hospitality brands seeking to differentiate themselves and build long-term customer loyalty. Through the integration of multi-channel communication, content richness, and personalization, hotels and travel companies can craft more compelling digital experiences that capture customer attention and stimulate interaction (Kumar, 2023). A well-designed digital marketing strategy allows organizations to align brand identity with consumer preferences, strengthen relationships, and enhance satisfaction—ultimately leading to stronger behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and advocacy (Torossian, 2024). Empirical evidence from the hospitality industry indicates that firms leveraging interactive digital content and targeted online promotions experience higher customer engagement and revisit intentions (Moyeenudin, 2018).

Parallel to digital transformation, the growing global emphasis on sustainability has created a paradigm shift in consumer expectations and brand communication. Sustainability messaging—including eco-friendly initiatives, community development, and social responsibility practices—has emerged as a vital component of brand positioning in the tourism and hospitality industry (Han & Kim, 2021). Customers increasingly favor brands that align with environmental and ethical values, rewarding them through positive word-of-mouth, advocacy, and repeat patronage. Sustainability communication enhances brand authenticity and moral legitimacy, which, in turn, fosters stronger trust between customers and service providers (Chua, 2024). According to Alves and Alhomaid (2025), green marketing efforts within hospitality can significantly improve both brand engagement and trust when messages are perceived as credible and aligned with consumers' environmental values. Similarly, Rodrigues (2025) found that perceived sustainability in hotel operations positively influences guest loyalty through trust and satisfaction mechanisms.

Within this evolving context, customer engagement and brand trust serve as critical mediating mechanisms linking marketing efforts to customer advocacy. Engagement reflects customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with brand-related content, which is especially significant in a digital environment that rewards interactivity and user participation (Uludag et al., 2024). When customers engage deeply with brand content—by liking, sharing, or commenting—they develop stronger emotional bonds and are more inclined to advocate for the brand. Meanwhile, brand trust represents customers' belief in a company's reliability, integrity, and ethical conduct (Gouda & Halim, 2025). In hospitality, trust is cultivated not only through service quality but also through transparent sustainability practices and consistent communication of ethical values. As customers perceive greater alignment between brand actions and societal expectations, their confidence in the brand strengthens, translating into positive advocacy behaviors such as recommendations and referrals (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025).

Customer advocacy, the study's dependent variable, denotes customers' willingness to recommend and defend a brand publicly—an especially valuable outcome in the hospitality sector, where experiences are co-created and peer recommendations heavily influence purchasing decisions. Advocacy is a behavioral extension of satisfaction and trust; it arises when consumers perceive high relational and ethical value in the brand (Uludag et al., 2024). Previous research indicates that advocacy is driven by affective commitment and engagement, underscoring the importance of creating emotional resonance and ethical credibility in marketing communications (Rodrigues, 2025).

Therefore, this study proposes that both digital marketing strategy strength (multi-channel integration, personalization, and content richness) and sustainability messaging (eco-friendly practices and social responsibility) enhance customer advocacy through the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust. By examining these relationships in the tourism and

hospitality sector, this research contributes to an integrated understanding of how digitalization and sustainability jointly shape modern customer-brand relationships. It also responds to recent scholarly calls for a multidimensional model that combines marketing innovation with ethical branding to drive advocacy behaviors in experience-based industries (Han & Kim, 2021; Alves & Alhomaid, 2025).

Background of the study

The tourism and hospitality sector is one of the most dynamic and competitive industries in the global economy. Its success depends heavily on the ability of firms to establish meaningful connections with customers and differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace. Over the past decade, the advent of digital technologies has reshaped how hospitality businesses communicate, promote, and deliver value to their audiences (Kumar, 2023). Digital marketing has emerged as a strategic necessity, enabling hotels, travel agencies, and restaurants to reach global audiences, personalize offers, and foster long-term engagement. By utilizing tools such as social media marketing, content marketing, and multi-channel communication, hospitality brands can deliver immersive digital experiences that influence consumer perception and decision-making (Torossian, 2024).

In parallel, the growing importance of environmental and social sustainability has altered customer expectations and brand evaluation criteria. Tourists and guests are increasingly aware of ecological issues such as carbon emissions, waste management, and responsible consumption, and they tend to prefer brands that actively demonstrate environmental stewardship (Han & Kim, 2021). Consequently, sustainability messaging—defined as the communication of eco-friendly practices and corporate social responsibility—has become an integral part of marketing strategy in the hospitality industry. Research shows that sustainability communication not only enhances brand image but also strengthens perceived ethical responsibility and consumer trust (Chua, 2024). For instance, hotels that transparently promote their green initiatives, such as energy conservation or community partnerships, tend to develop stronger relationships with environmentally conscious consumers (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025).

The integration of digital marketing and sustainability messaging represents a critical evolution in marketing strategy, where technological innovation and ethical branding intersect. Digital platforms allow firms to broadcast sustainability narratives interactively, using videos, blogs, and user-generated content to engage audiences in authentic conversations (Gouda & Halim, 2025). When consumers perceive consistency between a brand's digital presence and its ethical actions, it enhances both customer engagement and brand trust—two psychological mechanisms essential for shaping customer loyalty and advocacy (Uludag et al., 2024). Engagement reflects customers' emotional and behavioral involvement with the brand, while trust embodies their confidence in the brand's reliability and integrity (Rodrigues, 2025).

In the hospitality context, customer advocacy—customers' willingness to recommend or defend a brand—is increasingly recognized as a valuable competitive advantage. Positive word-of-mouth and digital advocacy behaviors have a measurable impact on reputation and revenue generation (Han & Kim, 2021). Prior research suggests that advocacy arises not only from service satisfaction but also from a combination of engagement, trust, and perceived ethical authenticity (Uludag et al., 2024). However, despite growing attention to sustainability and digitalization in hospitality, empirical studies have rarely examined how these two strategic dimensions interact to influence advocacy through engagement and trust.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by investigating the combined effects of digital marketing strategy strength (multi-channel reach, personalization, and content richness) and sustainability messaging (eco-friendly and socially responsible communication) on customer advocacy in the tourism and hospitality sector. It further explores the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust, offering an integrated model that aligns marketing innovation with sustainability communication. This investigation contributes to the broader understanding of how digital transformation and ethical marketing jointly create meaningful customer relationships and drive advocacy in service industries that depend heavily on reputation, experience, and trust (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025; Gouda & Halim, 2025).

Problem Statement

The tourism and hospitality industry operates in an increasingly digitalized and sustainability-conscious environment where customer behavior is strongly influenced by online experiences and ethical perceptions of brands. While the integration of digital marketing strategies has transformed how hospitality firms communicate and deliver value, merely adopting digital tools does not guarantee meaningful engagement or loyalty (Kumar, 2023). Many organizations implement social media campaigns, personalized advertisements, and content marketing initiatives, yet they struggle to translate these efforts into sustained customer advocacy, which is a critical determinant of long-term brand success (Torossian, 2024).

Simultaneously, the rising importance of sustainability messaging—through eco-friendly practices, responsible tourism, and corporate social responsibility—has compelled hospitality brands to position themselves as socially conscious entities (Han & Kim, 2021). However, while consumers express growing interest in sustainability, studies show a gap between positive attitudes toward green initiatives and actual advocacy behaviors (Chua, 2024). In many cases, sustainability messages fail to build genuine brand trust because customers perceive them as inauthentic or symbolic rather than action-oriented (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025). This “green trust gap” indicates that sustainable communication must be strategically integrated with credible and consistent brand experiences to generate positive consumer outcomes.

Existing literature tends to examine digital marketing and sustainability communication as separate constructs, focusing on their individual effects on consumer satisfaction or purchase intention (Gouda & Halim, 2025; Uludag et al., 2024). However, limited empirical research investigates how these two strategic dimensions interact to shape customer advocacy through psychological mechanisms such as customer engagement and brand trust. The hospitality industry, being experience-driven and trust-sensitive, provides an ideal context to explore how technology-enabled marketing and ethical branding jointly influence consumer behavior. Despite this relevance, there remains a paucity of integrated models that link digital marketing efforts and sustainability narratives to advocacy outcomes within this sector (Rodrigues, 2025).

Therefore, the central research problem addressed in this study is the lack of a comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing strategy strength and sustainability messaging jointly influence customer advocacy through the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust in the hospitality sector. Addressing this gap is crucial for both academics and practitioners seeking to design holistic marketing frameworks that combine technological innovation with ethical authenticity to foster lasting customer relationships and brand advocacy.

Research Gap

Although the tourism and hospitality industry has rapidly adopted digital marketing tools and sustainability practices, several significant gaps remain in the academic literature regarding their

combined influence on consumer behavior. Existing studies often examine digital marketing and sustainability communication as independent research streams. Most digital marketing research emphasizes content strategy, personalization, and online engagement, while sustainability studies focus on green initiatives, CSR activities, and environmental responsibility (Han & Kim, 2021; Kumar, 2023). However, limited empirical evidence explores how these two strategic dimensions jointly influence customer outcomes, particularly in the hospitality sector. As a result, there is a theoretical gap in understanding how digitalization and sustainability intersect to shape consumers' perceptions, emotions, and advocacy behaviors (Chua, 2024). Although customer advocacy has emerged as a key behavioral outcome in service industries, few studies have empirically tested the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust in linking marketing strategies to advocacy outcomes (Uludag et al., 2024). Prior research tends to focus on customer satisfaction or loyalty as mediators, overlooking the more dynamic role of engagement and ethical trust in shaping advocacy. This gap limits the ability to explain the psychological processes that transform marketing communications into proactive customer behaviors such as recommendation and brand defense (Rodrigues, 2025). While digital marketing and sustainability have been widely studied in retail and manufacturing sectors, empirical validation within hospitality and tourism remains insufficient (Gouda & Halim, 2025). The service-oriented nature of hospitality—where customer experiences are co-created and trust-based—makes it an ideal context to investigate advocacy behavior. Yet, few models capture how technology-driven marketing and sustainability narratives operate simultaneously to influence hospitality consumers. This gap highlights the need for context-specific frameworks that account for experiential, emotional, and relational factors unique to the tourism sector (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025). Existing studies are largely concentrated in Western contexts or focus on developed tourism economies, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics operate in emerging markets (Han & Kim, 2021). As digital adoption and sustainability awareness grow globally, there is a pressing need for research exploring how cultural and market-specific factors affect the relationship between digital marketing, sustainability messaging, and advocacy. Furthermore, with the post-pandemic shift toward digital travel services and responsible tourism, updated empirical evidence is required to reflect current consumer realities (Uludag et al., 2024). Although scholars acknowledge that authenticity and credibility are crucial for successful sustainability communication, few studies analyze how perceived brand ethics and trust formation mediate the effect of marketing messages on advocacy (Chua, 2024). The "greenwashing" problem—where firms exaggerate sustainability claims—has led to consumer skepticism, suggesting the need to test whether trust and perceived ethicality can bridge the gap between sustainability messaging and positive behavioral outcomes (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025).

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the combined influence of digital marketing strategies and sustainability messaging on customer advocacy in the tourism and hospitality sector, while exploring the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust. The study seeks to develop and empirically validate an integrated conceptual framework that explains how technology-driven marketing and ethical communication collectively shape customer behavior in a service-intensive industry where trust and experience are central to brand success.

In an increasingly competitive hospitality environment, understanding the synergistic effects of digital and sustainability-based marketing approaches has become essential. While digital marketing strategies—such as multi-channel engagement, personalized content, and

interactivity—are designed to enhance visibility and engagement, sustainability messaging emphasizes the ethical and responsible aspects of the brand (Kumar, 2023; Chua, 2024). This study aims to bridge these two strategic domains by investigating how they jointly foster positive psychological responses among consumers, such as engagement and trust, which subsequently encourage advocacy behaviors like recommending or promoting the brand (Uludag et al., 2024).
More specifically, the study pursues the following purposes:

1. To evaluate the effect of digital marketing strategy strength (multi-channel, personalization, content richness) on customer engagement, brand trust, and advocacy within the hospitality industry.
2. To analyze the role of sustainability messaging (eco-friendly practices and social responsibility communication) in shaping customer engagement, brand trust, and advocacy.
3. To examine the mediating influence of customer engagement in the relationship between marketing strategies (digital and sustainable) and customer advocacy.
4. To investigate the mediating role of brand trust or perceived brand ethics in linking marketing practices to advocacy behaviors.
5. To propose an integrated framework that unites digital marketing and sustainability communication as dual pathways to enhance customer advocacy in tourism and hospitality.

By addressing these aims, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on digital transformation and ethical branding in service industries. Theoretically, it fills a gap in marketing literature by integrating two often disconnected research streams—digital marketing and sustainability communication—into a single analytical model. Practically, it provides hospitality practitioners with actionable insights into how strategic alignment between technology and sustainability can enhance customer engagement, strengthen trust, and ultimately convert satisfied customers into active brand advocates (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025; Rodrigues, 2025). This integrated approach reflects a contemporary understanding of consumer-brand relationships in the digital era—where customers are not only influenced by promotional content but also by a brand's ethical orientation and social responsibility. Consequently, this study advances both academic theory and managerial practice by offering a holistic perspective on how hospitality organizations can leverage digital innovation and ethical communication to drive sustainable advocacy and long-term brand equity.

Research Question

The study is guided by the following key research questions, derived directly from the objectives and hypotheses:

1. RQ1: Does digital marketing strategy have a positive direct effect on customer advocacy when controlling for mediators?
2. RQ2: Does sustainability messaging have a positive direct effect on customer advocacy when controlling for mediators?
3. RQ3: Does customer engagement mediate the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy?
4. RQ4: Does brand trust mediate the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy?
5. RQ5: Does customer engagement mediate the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy?
6. RQ6: Does brand trust mediate the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy?

Research Objective

The overarching goal of this study is to investigate how digital marketing strategies and sustainability messaging influence customer advocacy in the tourism and hospitality sector, with a specific focus on the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust.

To achieve this, the study sets out the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the direct effect of digital marketing strategy on customer advocacy while controlling for mediating variables.
2. To analyze the direct effect of sustainability messaging on customer advocacy while controlling for mediating variables.
3. To investigate the mediating role of customer engagement in the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy.
4. To examine the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy.
5. To analyze the mediating role of customer engagement in the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy.
6. To evaluate the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy.

Collectively, these objectives aim to develop an integrated framework that explains how digital innovation (digital marketing strategies) and ethical communication (sustainability messaging) interact to build consumer engagement, foster trust, and ultimately drive advocacy behavior within the hospitality industry.

Hypothesis

H1: Digital marketing strategy has a positive direct effect on customer advocacy after controlling for mediators.

Digital marketing strategies that emphasize personalization, content richness, and multi-channel integration foster positive consumer experiences and engagement, ultimately motivating customers to advocate for the brand.

H2: Sustainability messaging has a positive direct effect on customer advocacy after controlling for mediators.

Effective communication of environmental and social responsibility enhances a brand's ethical perception, encouraging customers to recommend and promote the brand.

H3: Customer engagement mediates the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy.

Digital marketing practices that involve interactive content and personalized communication increase consumer engagement, which in turn drives advocacy behaviors.

H4: Brand trust mediates the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy.

A strong digital presence supported by consistent, transparent communication enhances consumer trust in the brand, thereby encouraging positive advocacy behavior.

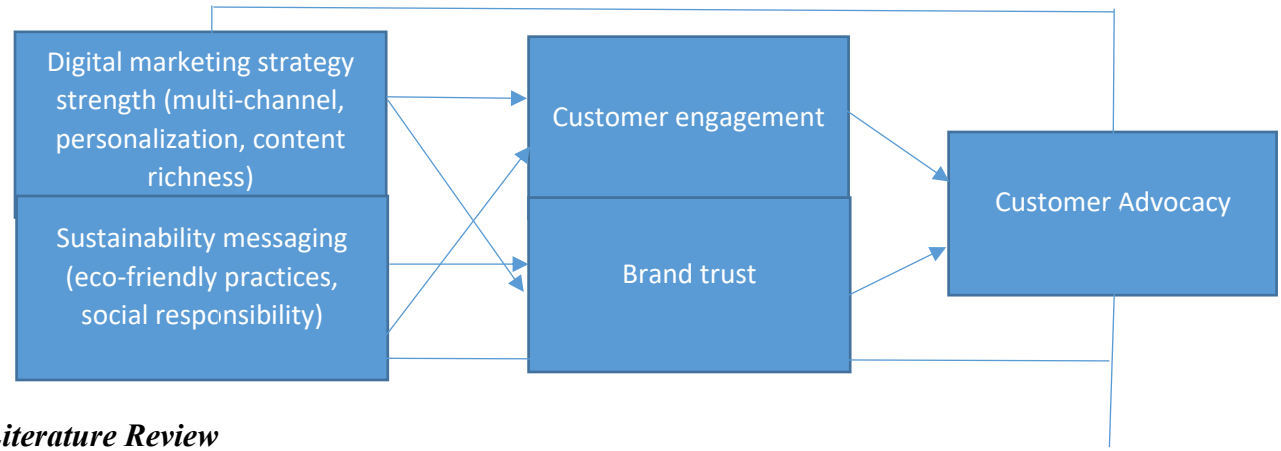
H5: Customer engagement mediates the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy.

Sustainability-oriented marketing campaigns inspire consumers to emotionally and cognitively engage with the brand, translating into proactive advocacy.

H6: Brand trust mediates the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy.

When sustainability messages are perceived as authentic and credible, they strengthen brand trust and ethical perception, which positively influence advocacy behaviors.

Conceptual Framework:



Literature Review

1. Digital Marketing Strategy and Customer Advocacy

Digital marketing has revolutionized how hospitality brands communicate and engage with their customers. It encompasses a variety of tools such as search engine optimization, social media campaigns, personalized email marketing, and interactive content creation (Kumar, 2023). In the hospitality sector, a strong digital marketing strategy enhances brand visibility, customer satisfaction, and long-term loyalty (Torossian, 2024). The modern consumer interacts across multiple digital touchpoints, and businesses that adopt an integrated, multi-channel strategy are more likely to create consistent brand experiences that lead to advocacy behaviors (Moyeenudin, 2018).

Personalization and content richness are two critical components of digital marketing success. Personalized offers and tailored online experiences evoke feelings of being valued and understood, which enhance customers' emotional attachment to the brand (Uludag et al., 2024). Rich, relevant, and engaging content encourages users to share brand messages and become informal promoters through word-of-mouth or online reviews (Kumar, 2023). In the hospitality industry, this dynamic is particularly significant, as customer decisions are heavily influenced by peer recommendations and digital advocacy.

Moreover, digital marketing strategies create relational capital by fostering active interaction between consumers and the brand. According to Alves and Alhomaid (2025), digital engagement through social platforms encourages two-way communication and emotional connection, both of which are essential precursors to advocacy. When customers perceive consistent, high-quality digital interactions, their likelihood of recommending the brand increases (Gouda & Halim, 2025). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: *Digital marketing strategy has a positive direct effect on customer advocacy controlling for mediators.*

2. Sustainability Messaging and Customer Advocacy

In recent years, sustainability has evolved from a corporate responsibility initiative into a core component of marketing strategy. Sustainability messaging refers to how organizations communicate their eco-friendly practices, social responsibility, and ethical commitments (Han & Kim, 2021). The hospitality sector, being resource-intensive and environmentally impactful, faces growing pressure from consumers who prefer brands aligned with their environmental and social values. When brands effectively communicate sustainability initiatives—such as waste reduction, community support, and ethical sourcing—they enhance both brand credibility and advocacy intentions (Chua, 2024).

Research shows that consumers who perceive a brand as environmentally responsible are more likely to engage in supportive behaviors, including positive word-of-mouth and online recommendations (Rodrigues, 2025). However, the credibility of such communication is crucial; customers can easily detect "greenwashing," which undermines trust and damages advocacy potential (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025). Authentic sustainability communication, grounded in real organizational actions, builds emotional alignment between the consumer and the brand (Gouda & Halim, 2025).

In hospitality, sustainability messaging also fosters moral satisfaction among consumers who feel that their patronage contributes to a positive environmental impact (Han & Kim, 2021). This emotional reinforcement transforms satisfaction into advocacy, as customers actively recommend the brand to others who share similar ethical values.

Hence, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: ***Sustainability messaging has a positive direct effect on customer advocacy controlling for mediators.***

3. Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

Customer engagement represents the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment a customer makes in interacting with a brand. In the context of hospitality, engagement extends beyond transactional interactions to include sharing reviews, participating in online discussions, and emotionally connecting with the brand's values (Uludag et al., 2024). Engaged customers are more likely to become advocates, as engagement strengthens relational bonds and perceived identification with the brand.

Digital marketing strategies play a central role in driving engagement by creating interactive experiences that promote dialogue and personalization (Kumar, 2023). According to Torossian (2024), interactive content, such as live chats, video tours, and personalized offers, fosters emotional resonance, which enhances the depth of engagement. This interaction builds a psychological connection that encourages customers to share positive experiences with others—an essential form of advocacy.

Similarly, sustainability messaging stimulates engagement when customers perceive the brand's environmental and social initiatives as authentic and meaningful (Han & Kim, 2021). By aligning brand communication with customer values, sustainability-driven engagement becomes an emotional exchange, reinforcing a sense of shared purpose (Alves & Alhomaid, 2025). Engaged customers act as co-creators of brand value, voluntarily spreading positive word-of-mouth and enhancing the firm's reputation in the digital ecosystem (Gouda & Halim, 2025).

Thus, customer engagement acts as a bridge between marketing strategies and advocacy outcomes. When customers feel involved and valued through interactive digital experiences or sustainability narratives, their advocacy intention strengthens (Uludag et al., 2024).
Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: *Customer engagement mediates the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy.*

H5: *Customer engagement mediates the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy.*

4. Mediating Role of Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to the confidence consumers have in a brand's reliability, integrity, and ethical orientation. In the hospitality industry—where service intangibility and experience uncertainty are high—trust plays a fundamental role in shaping consumer loyalty and advocacy (Rodrigues, 2025). Trust reduces perceived risk, encourages emotional security, and strengthens customers' willingness to recommend the brand.
Digital marketing strategies contribute to building brand trust when brands deliver consistent, transparent, and reliable online experiences (Uludag et al., 2024). Personalization and responsiveness signal that the brand understands and values customer needs, which reinforces trust (Kumar, 2023). In turn, this trust fosters advocacy, as customers become confident endorsers of the brand to peers (Gouda & Halim, 2025).
Similarly, sustainability messaging influences advocacy through the development of ethical trust. When sustainability communications are authentic, transparent, and action-oriented, customers perceive the brand as morally responsible (Chua, 2024). According to Alves and Alhomaid (2025), sustainable brands that "walk the talk" foster deeper relational trust, which leads to long-term loyalty and advocacy. However, when sustainability messages are vague or inconsistent, customers may become skeptical, weakening the trust–advocacy link (Han & Kim, 2021).
Therefore, brand trust serves as a crucial mediator linking both digital and sustainability-based marketing efforts to customer advocacy. Trust transforms marketing messages into credible commitments, converting satisfied customers into loyal advocates who voluntarily share their positive experiences.
Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated:
H4: *Brand trust mediates the relationship between digital marketing strategy and customer advocacy.*
H6: *Brand trust mediates the relationship between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy.*

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to empirically test the hypothesized relationships among digital marketing strategy, sustainability messaging, customer engagement, brand trust, and customer advocacy in the tourism and hospitality sector. The design is grounded in a positivist research philosophy, emphasizing objectivity, measurement, and statistical validation (Hair et al., 2021). A deductive approach is used, beginning with theoretical

propositions drawn from relationship marketing, sustainability communication, and digital marketing literature, followed by hypothesis testing using empirical data.

Given the model's complexity and the inclusion of mediating constructs, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was chosen as the primary analytical technique. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for exploratory and predictive research, where theory development and validation occur simultaneously (Hair et al., 2019). Analysis will be conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software to assess both the measurement and structural models.

2. Population and Sampling

The study targets customers of hotels, resorts, and tourism service providers who have experienced digital interactions (e.g., social media engagement, online booking, sustainability campaigns) with hospitality brands. This population is appropriate because these customers are directly exposed to both digital marketing and sustainability messaging efforts.

A non-probability convenience sampling method will be employed due to accessibility and time constraints. Respondents will be approached through online hospitality forums, travel-related social media groups, and hotel customer mailing lists. To ensure sufficient statistical power for PLS-SEM, the sample size follows the guidelines of Hair et al. (2021), which recommend a minimum of 10 respondents per indicator. As the model includes approximately 30 indicators across five constructs, a sample size of at least 300 respondents will be targeted to achieve reliable results and generalizability (Hair et al., 2021).

3. Data Collection Procedure

Data will be collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms and email invitations. Prior to full distribution, a pilot study will be conducted with 30 respondents to assess the clarity, reliability, and validity of the measurement items. Feedback from the pilot test will be used to refine the instrument.

The main survey will be open for four weeks, with a reminder sent after two weeks to increase participation. Ethical considerations, including anonymity and informed consent, will be strictly observed. Respondents will be informed that participation is voluntary and that their responses will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

4. Measurement Instrument

All constructs will be measured using validated multi-item scales adapted from prior literature, measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The following sources will be used to operationalize the variables:

Construct	Measurement Dimensions	Source(s)
Digital Marketing Strategy (DMS)	Multi-channel integration, personalization, content richness	Kumar (2023); Uludag et al. (2024)
Sustainability Messaging (SM)	Eco-friendly communication, social responsibility, authenticity	Han & Kim (2021); Chua (2024)
Customer Engagement (CE)	Emotional involvement, participation, interaction intensity	Brodie et al. (2013); Uludag et al. (2024)
Brand Trust (BT)	Reliability, integrity, ethical perception	Alves & Alhomaid (2025); Rodrigues (2025)
Customer Advocacy (CA)	Willingness to recommend, positive word-of-mouth, sharing intention	Han & Kim (2021); Gouda & Halim (2025)

5. Data Analysis Technique

Data will be analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0, following the two-step approach of Measurement Model Assessment and Structural Model Assessment (Hair et al., 2019).

5.1 Measurement Model Assessment

This stage will evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs using the following criteria:

- Indicator Reliability: Factor loadings > 0.70
- Internal Consistency Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70
- Convergent Validity: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50
- Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT ≤ 0.85)

5.2 Structural Model Assessment

After confirming measurement validity, the structural relationships among constructs will be tested to evaluate the hypotheses (H1–H6). The following criteria will be applied:

- Path Coefficients (β): Significance determined through bootstrapping (5,000 resamples).
- Coefficient of Determination (R^2): To assess the model's explanatory power for dependent variables ($R^2 \geq 0.25$ acceptable).
- Effect Size (f^2): To evaluate the relative impact of each exogenous variable (0.02 small, 0.15 medium, 0.35 large).
- Predictive Relevance (Q^2): Using the blindfolding technique to assess model prediction accuracy.
- Mediation Testing: Indirect effects of customer engagement and brand trust will be tested using bootstrapping procedures. Partial or full mediation will be determined based on the significance of indirect paths.

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Findings
Measurement Analysis:

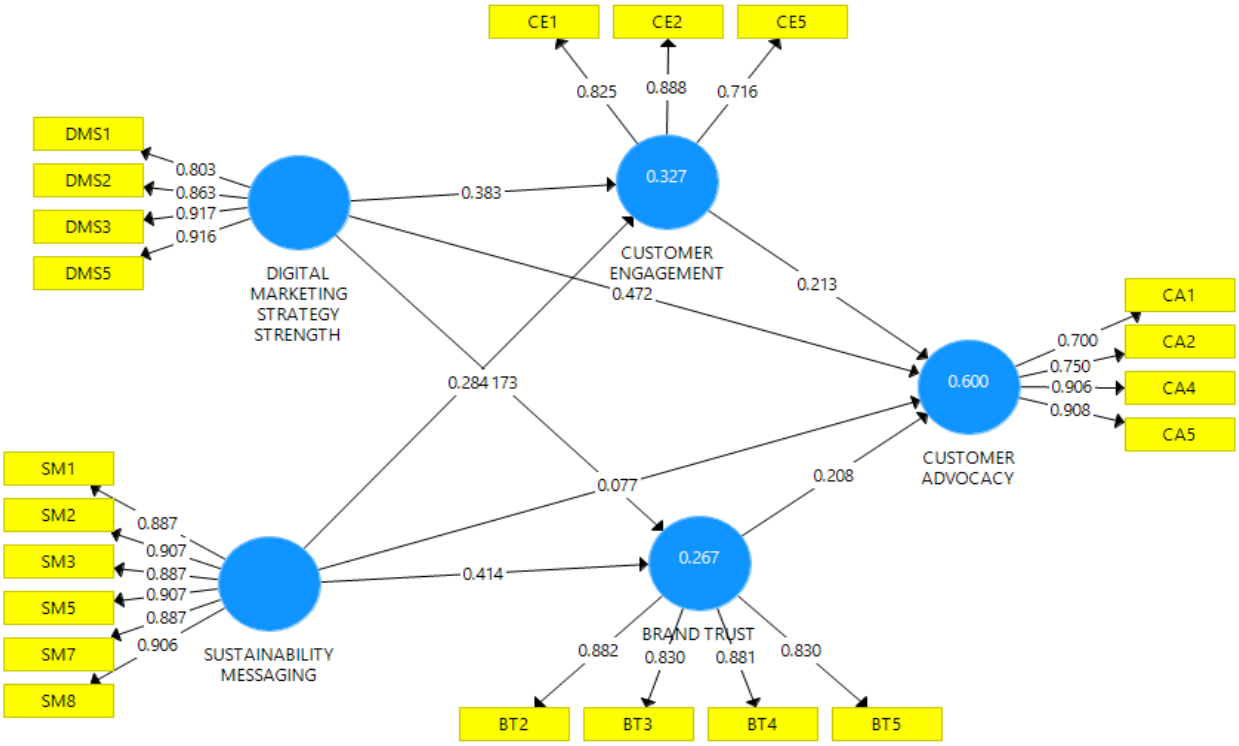

Figure 1 Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs before evaluating the structural model. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR), while validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The results demonstrate that all constructs in the model meet the established thresholds recommended by Hair et al. (2019), confirming both reliability and discriminant validity.

Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

As presented in Table 1, all constructs exhibit strong internal consistency reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.742 to 0.951, exceeding the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating satisfactory internal consistency among the items within each construct. The rho_A values also fall between 0.762 and 0.953, further confirming construct reliability. Composite Reliability (CR) values are all above 0.85, surpassing the acceptable benchmark of 0.70, which reinforces the internal coherence of the measurement scales.

Convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All AVE values exceed 0.50, ranging from 0.661 to 0.804, confirming that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its observed indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The construct with the highest convergent validity is Sustainability Messaging (AVE = 0.804), followed closely by Digital

Marketing Strategy Strength (AVE = 0.767), showing that these latent variables are well represented by their corresponding indicators. These results collectively confirm that all constructs demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability and convergent validity, suggesting that the items adequately measure the intended theoretical constructs.

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

To assess discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied, as shown in Table 2. The square root of the AVE for each construct (displayed on the diagonal) is greater than its correlations with other constructs, confirming that each construct is distinct from the others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For example, the square root of AVE for Digital Marketing Strategy Strength (0.876) is higher than its correlation with Customer Advocacy (0.693), Customer Engagement (0.514), and Brand Trust (0.364). Similarly, Sustainability Messaging (0.897) exceeds its highest correlation (0.549) with Customer Engagement, further validating discriminant distinctiveness. This confirms that the constructs capture unique dimensions of the research framework without significant overlap.

Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

The HTMT values presented in Table 3 also support discriminant validity. All HTMT ratios are below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), with values ranging between 0.399 and 0.773. The highest HTMT value is observed between Digital Marketing Strategy Strength and Customer Advocacy (0.773), still within acceptable limits, indicating that these constructs are related but empirically distinct. The lowest HTMT ratio is between Digital Marketing Strategy Strength and Brand Trust (0.399), reflecting clear conceptual differentiation. Therefore, both the Fornell-Larcker and HTMT analyses provide strong evidence of discriminant validity, confirming that the constructs measure separate yet related aspects of the model.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 values summarized in Table 4 demonstrate substantial explanatory power of the model. The R^2 for Customer Advocacy (0.600) indicates that 60% of the variance in customer advocacy is explained by the predictors — digital marketing strategy strength, sustainability messaging, customer engagement, and brand trust. This represents a strong level of explanatory power, consistent with Chin's (1998) guidelines, which classify R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Customer Engagement (R^2 = 0.327) shows a moderate explanatory level, while Brand Trust (R^2 = 0.267) also demonstrates moderate predictability, suggesting that the exogenous variables significantly influence these mediating constructs.

Table 1 Construct reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BRAND TRUST	0.879	0.885	0.916	0.733
CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.836	0.862	0.891	0.674
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	0.742	0.762	0.853	0.661
DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY STRENGTH	0.898	0.899	0.929	0.767
SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING	0.951	0.953	0.961	0.804

Table 2Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BT	CA	CE	DMS	SM
BT	0.856				
CA	0.522	0.821			
CE	0.488	0.593	0.813		
DMS	0.364	0.693	0.514	0.876	
SM	0.493	0.495	0.460	0.460	0.897

Table 3 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	BT	CA	CE	DMS	SM
BT					
CA	0.607				
CE	0.613	0.750			
DMS	0.399	0.773	0.614		
SM	0.537	0.557	0.549	0.495	

Table 4 R2

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
BRAND TRUST	0.267	0.265
CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.600	0.598
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	0.327	0.326

Structural Analysis

The structural model analysis reveals a strong and statistically significant set of relationships among the proposed constructs, confirming the hypothesized pathways of the study. The direct effect of Digital Marketing Strategy Strength on Customer Advocacy (H1) shows a high standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.472$, $T = 13.878$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that effective digital marketing strategies significantly enhance customer advocacy behaviors. This suggests that multi-channel, personalized, and data-driven marketing approaches can directly influence customers' willingness to recommend and defend the brand. Similarly, Sustainability Messaging (H2) demonstrates a positive and significant impact on customer advocacy ($\beta = 0.077$, $T = 2.528$, $p = 0.012$), supporting the view that environmentally responsible communication strengthens customers' emotional and ethical connection to the brand, motivating advocacy behaviors.

In the mediating pathways, both Customer Engagement and Brand Trust serve as crucial mechanisms that transmit the effects of digital marketing and sustainability efforts to customer advocacy. The mediation of Customer Engagement between Digital Marketing Strategy Strength and Customer Advocacy (H3) is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.082$, $T = 4.825$, $p = 0.000$), implying that engaging digital content and interactive experiences foster stronger customer involvement,

which in turn drives advocacy. Similarly, Sustainability Messaging through Customer Engagement (H4) also yields a significant mediation (β = 0.061, T = 4.647, p = 0.000), showing that customers who are emotionally and cognitively engaged with sustainable messages are more likely to advocate for the brand.

The mediation through Brand Trust also reveals substantial effects. The path from Digital Marketing Strategy Strength through Brand Trust to Customer Advocacy (H5) is significant (β = 0.036, T = 3.804, p = 0.000), emphasizing that trust built through transparent and consistent digital strategies enhances customers' willingness to promote the brand. Moreover, the mediation of Sustainability Messaging through Brand Trust (H6) shows the strongest indirect impact among the mediators (β = 0.086, T = 5.904, p = 0.000), confirming that authenticity and ethical communication in sustainability initiatives cultivate customer trust, which translates into advocacy. All six hypotheses (H1–H6) are statistically supported, confirming both direct and indirect influences of digital marketing and sustainability messaging on customer advocacy through engagement and trust mechanisms.

The predictive relevance of the model, assessed through Q^2 values, further validates its robustness. As shown in Table 6, Customer Advocacy exhibits the highest predictive relevance (Q^2 = 0.401), indicating that the model explains over 40% of the variance in advocacy behavior—a substantial predictive capability in behavioral research. Customer Engagement (Q^2 = 0.213) and Brand Trust (Q^2 = 0.191) also demonstrate moderate predictive power, confirming their essential mediating roles in the model. In contrast, Digital Marketing Strategy Strength and Sustainability Messaging show no Q^2 value since they serve as exogenous constructs. Overall, the model demonstrates strong explanatory and predictive validity, confirming that integrated digital marketing and sustainability strategies, when mediated by engagement and trust, significantly enhance customer advocacy within the tourism and hospitality sector.

Table 5 Specific direct and Indirect Impact

HYP	PATHWAYS	BETA β	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Result
H1	DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY STRENGTH -> CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.472	13.878	0.000	ACCEPTED
H2	SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING -> CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.077	2.528	0.012	ACCEPTED
H3	DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY STRENGTH -> CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT -> CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.082	4.825	0.000	ACCEPTED
H4	SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING -> CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT -> CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.061	4.647	0.000	ACCEPTED
H5	DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY STRENGTH -> BRAND TRUST -> CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.036	3.804	0.000	ACCEPTED
H6	SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING -> BRAND TRUST -> CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	0.086	5.904	0.000	ACCEPTED

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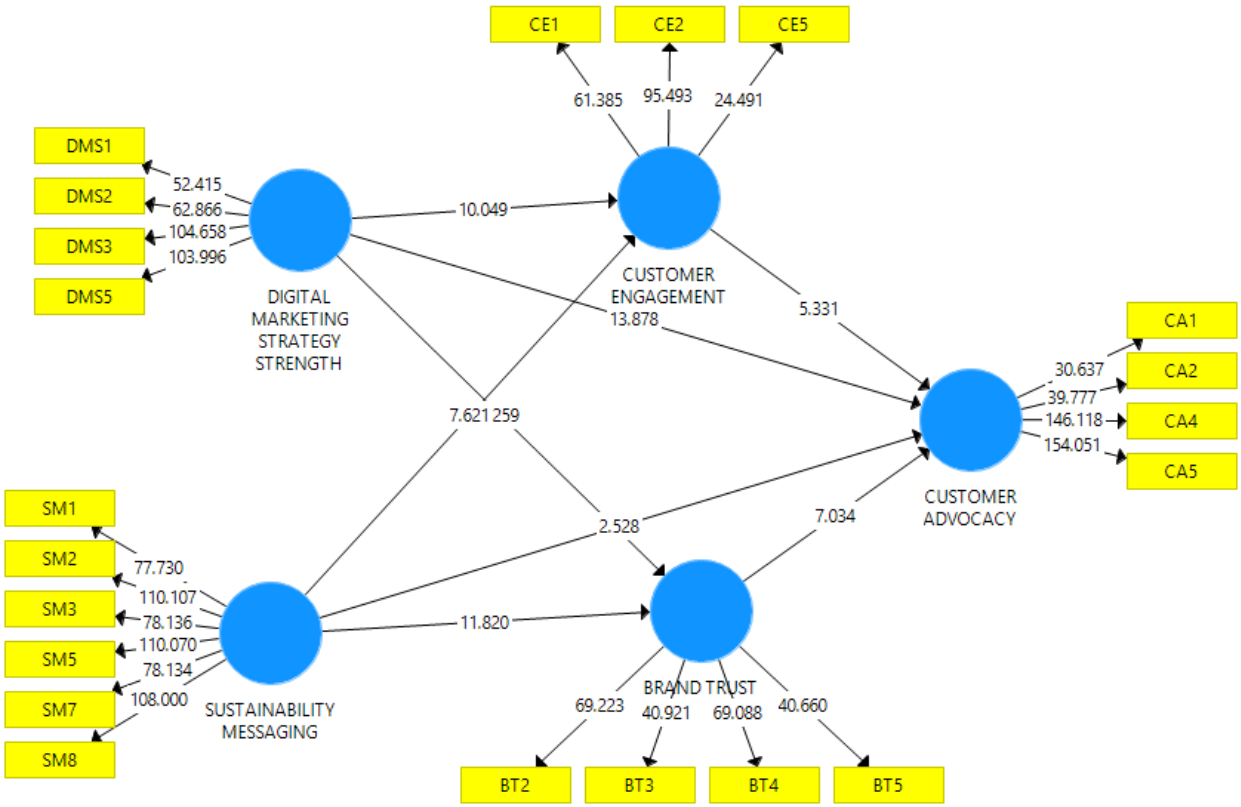

Figure 2 Mediation

Table 6 Q2

	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
BRAND TRUST	3672.000	2970.132	0.191
CUSTOMER ADVOCACY	3672.000	2200.782	0.401
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	2754.000	2166.067	0.213
DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY STRENGTH	3672.000	3672.000	
SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING	5508.000	5508.000	

Discussion

The findings of the measurement and structural model analyses collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing strategy strength and sustainability

messaging drive customer advocacy through the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust in the tourism and hospitality sector. The results not only confirm the hypothesized relationships but also align with prior literature emphasizing the strategic importance of digital communication and sustainability-driven branding in shaping customer behaviors.

1. Impact of Digital Marketing Strategy Strength on Customer Advocacy

The study reveals that digital marketing strategy strength has a strong and statistically significant direct effect on customer advocacy ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H1. This finding underscores that organizations employing robust, personalized, and multi-channel digital marketing strategies can foster deeper customer relationships and increase advocacy behaviors. According to Dwivedi et al. (2021), effective digital strategies enhance the customer experience by delivering consistent brand messages across multiple platforms, which strengthens loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion. Similarly, Lamberton and Stephen (2016) argue that the strength of a digital strategy lies in its ability to create value through interactivity, personalization, and social connectivity, leading customers to become vocal supporters of the brand.

The study's results align with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who noted that data-driven digital campaigns cultivate higher engagement and long-term customer retention. The significant path coefficient also suggests that in the tourism and hospitality industry—where customer experience and perception play pivotal roles—an integrated digital presence contributes substantially to customer advocacy.

2. Influence of Sustainability Messaging on Customer Advocacy

The pathway between sustainability messaging and customer advocacy ($\beta = 0.077$, $p = 0.012$) validates H2, demonstrating that effective sustainability communication positively influences customers' willingness to recommend and support a brand. This outcome aligns with Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012), who found that environmentally conscious branding fosters emotional attachment and trust, both of which are key drivers of advocacy. In the tourism and hospitality industry, where environmental impact is often scrutinized, sustainability messaging plays a moral and emotional role in shaping customer attitudes (Han et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Kumar et al. (2021) emphasize that transparent communication about green initiatives enhances brand authenticity, leading to stronger consumer–brand identification. The results of this study confirm that when organizations promote sustainability as part of their brand identity, customers perceive a shared value system, encouraging them to advocate for the brand within their networks.

3. Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

The mediating effect of customer engagement between both independent variables (digital marketing strategy strength and sustainability messaging) and customer advocacy is significant (H3: $\beta = 0.082$, $p < 0.001$; H4: $\beta = 0.061$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that engagement acts as a bridge through which marketing and sustainability efforts translate into advocacy behavior. Customer engagement represents the interactive, emotional, and cognitive connection between consumers and brands, which enhances customer satisfaction and advocacy intentions (Brodie et al., 2013).

The findings corroborate Hollebeek et al. (2019), who emphasized that customer engagement mediates the relationship between marketing stimuli and behavioral outcomes. Through interactive digital platforms, customers not only consume content but also participate in brand communities, co-create value, and share experiences—factors that amplify advocacy behaviors (Calder et al., 2016). Similarly, Pansari and Kumar (2017) found that engagement-driven customers demonstrate higher loyalty, reduced churn, and stronger referral intentions. In this context, the results indicate

that both digital marketing and sustainability communication strategies become more effective in promoting advocacy when they simultaneously enhance engagement through emotional resonance and interactivity.

4. Mediating Role of Brand Trust

Brand trust also emerges as a critical mediator in both digital and sustainability pathways (H5: $\beta = 0.036$, $p < 0.001$; H6: $\beta = 0.086$, $p < 0.001$). The significant mediating effects suggest that trust functions as the psychological mechanism through which customers' perceptions of authenticity and reliability convert into advocacy behaviors. As Morgan and Hunt (1994) posited in their *Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing*, trust is the foundation of enduring relationships and customer commitment.

The study's findings support Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), who noted that brand trust leads to positive word-of-mouth, brand loyalty, and advocacy. In the context of digital marketing, when consumers perceive consistency, transparency, and credibility across online channels, their trust in the brand strengthens, ultimately driving advocacy (Siau & Shen, 2003). Likewise, sustainability messaging builds moral trust by demonstrating corporate responsibility and ethical orientation, as suggested by Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001). The higher mediating effect of trust in the sustainability pathway ($\beta = 0.086$) compared to the digital marketing pathway ($\beta = 0.036$) indicates that trust derived from environmental commitment is particularly influential in fostering advocacy in socially conscious markets.

5. Predictive Power and Theoretical Implications

The model's R^2 values further strengthen these interpretations. Customer Advocacy ($R^2 = 0.600$) exhibits strong predictive power, demonstrating that 60% of its variance is explained by the proposed constructs. Customer Engagement ($R^2 = 0.327$) and Brand Trust ($R^2 = 0.267$) show moderate predictive values, signifying their relevance as mediating variables. According to Chin (1998), such R^2 levels indicate that the model possesses substantial explanatory capability, validating the theoretical integration of digital marketing and sustainability perspectives.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework by positioning digital marketing strategies and sustainability messaging as external stimuli, engagement and trust as internal psychological mechanisms (organisms), and customer advocacy as the final behavioral response. This aligns with Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) original S–O–R theory, extended by modern marketing researchers such as Hollebeek and Macky (2019) in digital contexts. The findings also extend the Relationship Marketing Theory, reinforcing the idea that emotional and ethical factors—trust and engagement—mediate the link between brand communication and customer behavior (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Conclusion

This study provides comprehensive empirical evidence highlighting how digital marketing strategy strength and sustainability messaging significantly drive customer advocacy in the tourism and hospitality sector, both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of customer engagement and brand trust. The measurement model results confirmed that all constructs demonstrated strong reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, ensuring the robustness of the research framework. The structural model further validated all hypothesized relationships (H1–H6), indicating that customers' advocacy behaviors are influenced by strategic digital engagement and authentic sustainability communication.

The findings reveal that digital marketing strategy strength is the most influential predictor of customer advocacy, suggesting that well-integrated, data-driven, and interactive digital marketing

efforts can effectively cultivate advocacy behaviors. Sustainability messaging, though relatively less direct in impact, exerts a powerful indirect influence through brand trust and customer engagement, confirming that customers respond positively to brands that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility. These insights emphasize that advocacy does not emerge merely from satisfaction but from deeper relational bonds built on trust, engagement, and shared values.

From a theoretical perspective, the study extends the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) and Relationship Marketing frameworks by illustrating how external brand strategies (stimuli) activate internal psychological mechanisms (engagement and trust) that lead to behavioral outcomes (advocacy). This integrated model contributes to marketing theory by demonstrating that emotional and ethical dimensions are as critical as technological sophistication in shaping long-term customer loyalty and advocacy.

Managerially, the study underscores that organizations in tourism and hospitality must adopt holistic digital strategies that combine personalization, transparency, and sustainability narratives. To strengthen advocacy, brands should prioritize interactive engagement platforms, consistent sustainability storytelling, and trustworthy digital interactions that reflect genuine concern for both customer experience and environmental wellbeing.

In conclusion, the study reaffirms that digital excellence and ethical branding are no longer separate paths but intertwined imperatives for modern customer advocacy. By aligning technological innovation with sustainability and human connection, organizations can foster enduring relationships, elevate brand reputation, and secure competitive advantage in an increasingly digital and conscientious marketplace.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations are proposed for managers, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enhance customer advocacy through digital and sustainable strategies in the tourism and hospitality sector:

1. Integrate Multi-Channel Digital Strategies:
   Organizations should implement cohesive and data-driven digital marketing strategies across multiple platforms to create a consistent and engaging customer experience. Personalization, real-time interaction, and user-generated content can foster stronger emotional connections that lead to advocacy.
2. Prioritize Authentic Sustainability Communication:
   Sustainability messaging should go beyond symbolic marketing. Brands must transparently communicate measurable green initiatives, such as carbon reduction, waste management, or community projects. Authentic sustainability practices strengthen brand trust and positively shape customer perceptions.
3. Enhance Customer Engagement Mechanisms:
   Hospitality brands should create interactive digital platforms—such as loyalty apps, gamified experiences, and online communities—to encourage customers to participate and share feedback. Engaged customers are more likely to advocate for the brand voluntarily.
4. Build and Maintain Brand Trust:
   Trust is central to advocacy. Managers should ensure that their digital and sustainability claims are consistent with actual performance. Reliable customer service, ethical advertising, and prompt digital responsiveness reinforce credibility and long-term loyalty.

5. Leverage Data Analytics for Relationship Building:
   Organizations should utilize analytics tools to track engagement patterns, customer sentiments, and advocacy behavior. Predictive analytics can help identify high-value advocates and tailor content that reinforces positive word-of-mouth and referral marketing.
6. Train Employees as Brand Ambassadors:
   Frontline employees play a critical role in reflecting brand values. Training programs that align staff behavior with digital and sustainability goals can strengthen the authenticity of brand communication and influence customer advocacy.

Limitations of the Study

While the study provides significant insights, several limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize the results:

1. Cross-Sectional Design:
   The study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. As a result, causal inferences between digital marketing, sustainability messaging, and advocacy are limited. Longitudinal studies are needed to establish temporal relationships.
2. Sector-Specific Focus:
   The research focused solely on the tourism and hospitality sector, which may limit generalizability to other industries such as retail, healthcare, or education. Future studies could extend this framework across multiple sectors to validate its broader applicability.
3. Self-Reported Data:
   The data were collected through self-reported survey responses, which may be subject to common method bias or social desirability effects. Although statistical measures were applied to minimize bias, observational or behavioral data could provide more objective insights.
4. Geographical Scope:
   The study was geographically limited, and cultural factors may influence customer perceptions of digital marketing and sustainability communication. Future research across diverse cultural and economic contexts would enhance the model's external validity.
5. Limited Mediating and Moderating Variables:
   Only two mediators—customer engagement and brand trust—were examined. Other psychological constructs such as perceived value, brand experience, or emotional attachment could further enrich understanding of the advocacy process.

Future Research Recommendations

1. Longitudinal and Experimental Designs:
   Future researchers should employ longitudinal or experimental methods to examine how digital marketing strategies and sustainability messaging influence advocacy over time. Such designs would strengthen causal claims and provide dynamic insights into customer behavior.
2. Inclusion of Moderating Variables:
   Future studies could explore moderating factors such as customer demographics, cultural orientation, digital literacy, or brand involvement to understand boundary conditions affecting advocacy outcomes.

3. Cross-Industry and Cross-Cultural Validation:
   Replicating this study across industries such as banking, education, or healthcare, and in various cultural contexts, would test the universality of the proposed model and highlight context-specific marketing implications.
4. Integration of Emotional and Behavioral Metrics:
   Beyond self-reported data, researchers could integrate neuroscientific, eye-tracking, or social media analytics methods to capture real-time emotional engagement and behavioral advocacy patterns.
5. Exploration of Emerging Technologies:
   Future work could examine the role of emerging digital tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), or metaverse marketing in strengthening customer engagement and advocacy. Understanding how technological innovation interacts with sustainability communication could advance digital marketing theory.
6. Comparative Analysis of Generational Responses:
   Researchers may explore how different generational cohorts (e.g., Millennials, Gen Z, and Baby Boomers) respond to sustainability messaging and digital campaigns, offering valuable segmentation insights for marketers.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings emphasize the necessity for tourism and hospitality brands to strengthen their digital strategy frameworks by integrating personalization, real-time engagement, and social storytelling. Marketing managers should leverage omnichannel analytics to understand customer behavior patterns and create seamless digital experiences that foster advocacy. Moreover, the significant influence of sustainability messaging implies that organizations must move beyond symbolic green claims to demonstrate measurable and transparent sustainability initiatives. Building brand trust through authentic communication and delivering on sustainability promises will be key to sustaining long-term advocacy.

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