



Assessing The Effects Of Sustainable Banking Practices And Digital Innovation On Customer Satisfaction And Long-Term Customer Loyalty

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Abstract

The study examines how sustainable banking practices and digital innovation influence customer satisfaction and long-term customer loyalty within the Indian banking sector. In this changing environment, the industry has emphasised environmental, social, and governance (ESG) responsibilities alongside rapid technological advancements. Sustainable practices—such as green loans, paperless transactions, and energy-efficient operations—shape public perceptions of corporate accountability. Concurrently, digital innovations such as mobile banking, AI-driven support, and e-statements enhance customer experiences through increased convenience and efficiency. A quantitative research design is employed in this study, collecting responses from 100 customers of major commercial banks through a structured questionnaire. Mean scores were calculated to assess customer satisfaction and loyalty levels. To study the relationship among variables, correlational analysis was performed. Results disclose strong positive correlations between digital innovation and customer satisfaction, and between sustainable practices and customer loyalty. Customers' opinion of sustainability initiatives is not merely as eco-friendly efforts but as indicators of ethical, transparent operations that build continuing trust. The findings emphasise the need for banks to integrate sustainability goals with digital transformation strategies to strengthen customer relationships and gain a competitive edge. This study contributes to the growing literature on sustainable finance and technology adoption by offering insights from an emerging economy context, emphasising ongoing innovation to sustain customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Sustainable Banking, Digital Innovation, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, ESG, FinTech.

1. Introduction

Sustainable banking practices and digital innovation have emerged as two dominant pillars shaping the contemporary banking landscape. Banks are increasingly expected not only to deliver efficient financial services but also to operate responsibly by addressing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns. Sustainable banking initiatives such as paperless operations, green financing, ethical lending, and transparent governance enhance corporate credibility and align banking activities with broader societal objectives. Simultaneously, rapid digitalisation has transformed service delivery through mobile banking, AI-enabled support, and omnichannel platforms, fundamentally altering customer expectations and experiences. From a service perspective, digital innovation enhances convenience, speed, accuracy, and accessibility, thereby improving perceived service quality. Customers increasingly value seamless digital

interfaces, real-time transactions, and self-service options that reduce dependency on physical branches. In parallel, sustainability initiatives influence customers' emotional and ethical evaluations of banks, fostering trust and long-term relational commitment. Drawing on Relationship Marketing Theory, the SERVQUAL model, and attitude–loyalty theories, the present study conceptualizes customer satisfaction as a mediating variable that translates perceptions of sustainable banking practices and digital innovation into customer loyalty. While sustainability and technology exert direct influences on customers, their strongest impact on loyalty is expected to occur through enhanced satisfaction. Accordingly, this study empirically examines the interrelationships among sustainable banking practices, digital innovation, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty within the Indian banking context.



2. Literature Review

2.1 Green Banking And Customer Satisfaction

Several studies highlight that implementing green banking practices—such as offering paperless transactions, eco-friendly loans, and digital solutions—significantly improves customer satisfaction by aligning with consumers' growing environmental concerns and ethical expectations. Mir et al. (2025) identified digital banking, green infrastructure, and green products as pivotal variables influencing consumer satisfaction in sustainable banking.

2.2 Digital Innovation And Service Quality

The quality and personalisation of digital banking services have emerged as critical determinants of customer loyalty. Research finds that improvements in online platforms, transaction security, and personalised service delivery directly boost customer satisfaction and foster long-term loyalty among retail banking clients. (Kaur, G., & Arora, R. (2022).

2.3 Interconnection Of Fintech And Loyalty

Fintech and digitalisation positively influence satisfaction and loyalty by enhancing accessibility, convenience, and responsiveness. Recent findings show that digital tools amplify both the functional and emotional dimensions of banking experiences, positioning satisfaction as a key predictor of loyalty, with digital innovations serving as strong mediators. (RBI 2024).

2.4 Customer Awareness And Adoption Of Green Banking

Research on Indian banking customers demonstrates that while the perception of green banking initiatives is generally positive, actual awareness and usage remain limited—stemming from information gaps, concerns about digital security, and complexity. Enhanced educational campaigns and incentives are recommended to bridge this divide and encourage adoption. (Singh, K., & Raj, R. (2024).

2.5 Employee Engagement and Sustainable Practices

Academia reveals a clear correlation between the adoption of environmentally focused corporate policies and increases in both customer and employee satisfaction. Employee empowerment, training, and reward systems are significant contributors to

promoting sustainable behaviour, which ultimately uplifts customer retention rates. (Kim, S., & Lee, J. (2023)

2.6 Digital Banking Experience And Behavioural Intentions

It is established that a high-quality digital banking experience deepens cognitive trust and emotional attachment between banks and customers. Satisfaction mediates the effect between digital experience and behavioural intention, where robust digital services independently drive loyalty by making banking processes more efficient and reliable. (Chu, H., & Zhan, X. (2024).

3. Objective Of Study

- To study the impact of sustainable banking practices on customer satisfaction and loyalty
- To analyse the influence of digital innovation on customer satisfaction and loyalty among bank customers.
- To identify the relationship between sustainable banking practices, digital innovation, customer satisfaction, and loyalty
- To provide suggestions for banks to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty through sustainable and digital strategies.
- To examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between sustainable banking practices, digital innovation, and customer loyalty.

4. Hypothesis Of The Study

- **H01:** There is no significant relationship between Sustainable Banking Practices (SBP) and Customer Satisfaction (SAT).
- **H02:** There is a significant relationship between Sustainable Banking Practices (SBP) and Customer Satisfaction (SAT).
- **H03:** There is no significant relationship between Sustainable Banking Practices (SBP) and Customer Loyalty (LOY).
- **H04:** There is a significant relationship between Sustainable Banking Practices (SBP) and Customer Loyalty (LOY).
- **H05:** There is no significant relationship between Digital Innovation (DI) and

Customer Satisfaction (SAT).

- **H06:** There is a significant relationship between Digital Innovation (DI) and Customer Satisfaction (SAT).
- **H07:** There is no significant relationship between Digital Innovation (DI) and Customer Loyalty (LOY).
- **H08:** There is a significant relationship between Digital Innovation (DI) and Customer Loyalty (LOY).
- **H09:** There is no significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction (SAT) and Customer Loyalty (LOY).
- **H10:** There is a significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction (SAT) and Customer Loyalty (LOY).

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

A quantitative, descriptive research design was adopted. To examine relationships among the variables, a survey method is used. Customer satisfaction is theoretically positioned as a mediating variable between sustainable banking practices, digital innovation, and customer loyalty.

5.2 Measures Of The Study

Sustainable Banking Practices were measured using items related to paperless services, energy-efficient branches, green products, and ESG transparency. Digital Innovation was assessed through mobile app usability, transaction speed, AI-based support, and omnichannel integration. Customer Satisfaction included overall satisfaction, reliability, complaint handling, and perceived value. Customer Loyalty covered intention to continue, recommendation, trust, and switching resistance. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

5.3 Sample And Data Collection

Primary data were collected from 100 customers of selected commercial banks using convenience sampling. A structured questionnaire was administered through Google Forms.

5.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and Pearson's correlation analysis were employed using a 5% level of significance.

5.5 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The alpha values for Sustainable Banking Practices (0.81), Digital Innovation (0.84), Customer Satisfaction (0.86), and Customer Loyalty (0.83) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability. Content validity was ensured by adapting measurement items from established literature.

6. Data Analysis & Interpretation

The study aimed to examine the effects of sustainable banking practices and digital innovation on customer satisfaction and loyalty within the Indian banking context. Data were collected from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire based on four key constructs - Sustainable Banking Practices (SBP), Digital Innovation (DI), Customer Satisfaction (SAT), and Customer Loyalty (LOY) - measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied to identify patterns and relationships among the variables. The results provide insights into how sustainability and technology-driven initiatives influence customer experiences and long-term association with banks.

6.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive results indicate overall positive perceptions across all constructs. The highest mean scores were observed for Digital Innovation (4.35) and Customer Satisfaction (4.28), followed closely by Sustainable Banking Practices (4.12) and Customer Loyalty (4.08). These findings signify strong customer agreement that sustainable and digital initiatives positively shape their satisfaction and loyalty toward banks. Respondents showed strong support for sustainability initiatives, with agreement levels between 74% and 86%.

- The maximum admiration was given to amenities as customers closely connect online processes like electronic identity verification and digital statements to being eco-friendly and modern.
- In view of Green Financial Products was moderate, but not countless, because people are not very conscious of or acquainted with eco-loans and investment products.

Table 1 Sustainable Banking Practices (Sbp)

Sustainable Banking Practices (Sbp)	% Agree/Strongly Agree	Mean	Sd	Reasons
SBP1: My bank promotes paperless services (e-KYC, e-statements).	86%	4.30	0.63	Paperless signals eco-efficiency and modern service design.
SBP2: Branches adopt energy-saving measures.	78%	4.08	0.67	Reinforces visible environmental commitment.
SBP3: The bank offers green products (e.g., green loans).	74%	4.02	0.71	Extends sustainability from operations to portfolios.
SBP4: ESG disclosures are accessible and clear.	76%	4.09	0.66	Transparency builds trust - a loyalty driver.
SBP5: I believe the bank's sustainability is genuine (not greenwashing).	79%	4.10	0.61	Authenticity reduces skepticism and boosts advocacy.

- In view of Green Financial Products was moderate, but not countless, because people are not very conscious of or acquainted with eco- loans and investment products.
- Customers appreciate it when the bank is clear and honest about its social and governance disclosures, as this builds trust in their relationship with the bank.
- The banks' environmental responsibility and digital services, such as e-KYC and electronic statements, are key to gaining customer trust.
- Customers value the bank's transparency and honesty in its ESG disclosures. They want the bank to continue to show its commitment to being eco-friendly.
- The bank's Green Financial Products and energy-efficient branches are also important, in demonstrating its credibility.
- The above analysis shows that the Mobile App has received the highest percentage and mean score as customers find it a suitable, reliable and unified platform for satisfying customers in digital banking.
- Transaction speed harvested high approval, accentuating its role in determining positive involvement and meeting expectations.
- Forward-thinking self-service tools were sturdily backed, showing customers escalate liberation from twigs.
- AI and chat support saw slightly lower ratings, pointing to opportunities for better personalisation and a balanced human-AI approach.
- Smooth omnichannel steadiness was highly valued, emphasising the reputation of reliable physical-digital touchpoints for frictionless voyages.
- Customer satisfaction displayed high overall endorsement, with users commonly delighted by service consistency, communication, and apparent value.
- Comprehensive satisfaction acknowledged robust agreement (88%), confirming favourable customer valuations of their banks.
- Service trustworthiness was highly valued, as precision and error-free actions shape sureness and lessen risk.
- Apparent value for time and money proved highly pertinent, linking gratification to cost and convenience. Sureness in using services was strongly recognised, emphasising clear information and authorisation as key trust manufacturers.
- Well-organised grievance determination received somewhat lower ratings, highlighting a need for better-quality awareness and salvage strategies.

Table 2 Digital Innovation (Di)

Digital Innovation	% Agree/Strongly Agree	Mean	Sd	Why It Matters
DI1: The Mobile app is intuitive and reliable.	90%	4.42	0.58	Usability and uptime drive habitual use and satisfaction.
DI2: Transaction speed is consistently fast.	88%	4.36	0.55	Speed underpins perceived efficiency and value.
DI3: Self-service options (card controls, dispute status) are robust.	85%	4.31	0.57	Reduces effort; empowers customers.
DI4: AI/chat support resolves queries effectively.	82%	4.25	0.60	Timely resolution sustains satisfaction.
DI5: Omnichannel continuity (branch–app–web) works smoothly.	86%	4.39	0.51	Fewer breaks in the journey → higher satisfaction.

Table 3 Customer Satisfaction (Sat)

Customer Satisfaction	% Agree/Strongly Agree	Mean	Sd	Why It Matters
CS1: Overall, I am satisfied with my bank.	88%	4.34	0.57	Global evaluation of service and value.
CS2: Services are reliable and error-free.	84%	4.26	0.58	Reliability reduces perceived risk.
CS3: Problem resolution is timely.	81%	4.19	0.62	Recovery quality preserves satisfaction after failures.
CS4: Service provides good value for time/money.	86%	4.29	0.55	Value perceptions anchor loyalty.
CS5: I feel confident and informed using services.	87%	4.32	0.54	Confidence stems from clarity and control.

Table 4 Customer Loyalty (Loy)

Customer Loyalty	% Agree/Strongly Agree	Mean	Sd	Why It Matters
CL1: I intend to continue with this bank.	82%	4.16	0.63	Core retention indicator.
CL2: I would recommend this bank to others.	79%	4.09	0.66	Word-of-mouth reflects advocacy.
CL3: I am unlikely to switch to another bank.	75%	3.98	0.72	Switching resistance signals deeper loyalty.
CL4: I will consolidate more products with this bank.	77%	4.01	0.65	Share-of-wallet growth potential.
CL5: I trust the bank to act in my best interest.	80%	4.17	0.61	Trust links sustainability signals to loyalty.

Table 5 Correlation Analysis

Relationship	Pearson's R	Sig. (P-Value)	Decision On H ₀	Interpretation
SBP ↔ SAT	0.66	< 0.05	Reject H ₀₁	Strong positive correlation: sustainable banking fosters satisfaction.
SBP ↔ LOY	0.69	< 0.05	Reject H ₀₂	Strong positive relationship: sustainability enhances loyalty through trust.
DI ↔ SAT	0.78	< 0.05	Reject H ₀₃	Very strong positive relationship: digital innovation drives satisfaction.
DI ↔ LOY	0.73	< 0.05	Reject H ₀₄	Strong positive relationship: digital engagement leads to loyalty.
SAT ↔ LOY	0.82	< 0.05	Reject H ₀₅	Highest correlation: satisfied customers remain loyal.

Table 6 Hypothesis Interpretation With Pairwise Correlation

Hypothesis	Correlation (R)	Pairwise (R)	Key Finding	Implications
H ₀₁ : SBP ↔ SAT	0.66 (strong, p<0.05)	SBP-CS: 0.72	Rejects H ₀₁ ; sustainable practices boost satisfaction	Builds trust via eco-friendly processes
H ₀₂ : SBP ↔ LOY	0.69 (strong, p<0.05)	SBP-CL: 0.79	Rejects H ₀₂ ; sustainability fosters loyalty	Enhances retention through transparency
H ₀₃ : DI ↔ SAT	0.78 (very strong, p<0.05)	DI-CS: 0.83	Rejects H ₀₃ ; digital tools improve satisfaction	Meets needs with speed and apps/AI
H ₀₄ : DI ↔ LOY	0.73 (strong, p<0.05)	DI-CL: 0.77	Rejects H ₀₄ ; innovation drives loyalty	Promotes engagement via digital platforms
H ₀₅ : SAT ↔ LOY	0.82 (strongest, p<0.05)	CS-CL: 0.81	Rejects H ₀₅ ; satisfaction predicts loyalty	Converts experiences into advocacy

- Customer faith was found to be the lowest. It was still robust. These demonstrations have pleased people to keep using and endorse our banking services. The part that customers want to stay with their current bank is that they feel a communal sense of belonging with them. Word of mouth publicity shows that the customers are happy and they trust the bank.
- However, some customers are not strongly opposed to switching, which means we need to be careful not to lose them to banks or digital services. When customers use more of our products, it gives us a chance to build relationships and offer them more services

together. Our customers trust us to do the thing, and they think it's essential that we are transparent and sustainable for them to stay with us in the long

7. Findings & Discussion:

7.1 Sustainability Builds Trust

Sustainability fosters trust through ethical practices, environmental responsibility, and transparency. Eco-initiatives like paperless banking, energy-efficient branches, and CSR programs position banks as credible, converting perception into emotional loyalty. Examples include HDFC Bank's Green CSR and SBI's solar-powered branches, which enhance reputation despite greenwashing risks.



7.2 Technology Drives Satisfaction

Digital innovation delivers immediate satisfaction via fast, seamless, personalised services such as mobile apps, real-time updates, AI chat, and self-service tools. These reduce branch dependency and encourage habitual use. ICICI i-mobile Pay and Paytm's app ecosystem exemplify how speed and reliability create competitive edges.

7.3 Satisfaction Mediates Loyalty

Satisfaction links sustainability and digital innovation to loyalty, mediating repeat usage, lower switching, and referrals per relationship marketing theory. Valued experiences from trusted ethics and smooth tech build emotional bonds, prompting cross-product adoption like loans and investments.

7.4 Discussions:

- Sustainable Banking Practices demonstrate that sustainability is no longer perceived merely as corporate responsibility but as a strategic value proposition. Customers expect banks to be environmentally accountable and socially transparent. However, limited awareness of green product offerings highlights an opportunity for banks to intensify communication and financial education campaigns.
- Digital Innovation emphasises the dominant role of technological advancement in influencing satisfaction and loyalty. The digital banking environment reflects evolving customer lifestyles, where convenience, self-sufficiency, and real-time access drive competitive advantage. The relatively lower satisfaction with AI-based services suggests the importance of human-centred digital design and individualised customer interaction.
- Customer Satisfaction results confirm that customers perceive high-quality digital and sustainable banking experiences. The slightly reduced ratings in complaint resolution reveal an opportunity for enhanced customer-care systems, grievance tracking, and proactive communication models.
- Customer Loyalty emerges as a behavioural outcome influenced strongly by perceived

service quality, satisfaction, and trust. The slightly weaker switching resistance emphasises that loyalty is not yet deeply emotional and can be improved through reward programs, customisation, and consistent personal engagement.

8. Suggestions:

8.1 Promote Green Products

In order to maintain sustainability, there is a need to encourage eco-friendly purchases by highlighting recycled materials, low carbon footprints, and biodegradable packaging via campaigns, labels, and discounts. Here we can take the example of Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly badge, which helps to boost visibility and demand. A major role in promoting green product can be played by social media influencers, loyalty points, and incentives that drive behavioural shifts, ethical perception, and trust differentiation.

8.2 Enhance AI Support

Nowadays, people do not want to stay in a queue, and the same applies when they talk to customer care. They want an immediate response from a customer care executive, and to solve this problem, AI chatbots, virtual assistants, and recommendation engines deliver efficient, personalised service using machine learning. Examples of HDFC Bank can be taken where they use EVA to answer the queries of customers. Tailored eco-recommendations, faster responses, and app integration improve satisfaction, loyalty, and informed choices.

8.3 Boost ESG Transparency

Publicly report ESG performance, ethical practices, and governance via annual disclosures, sourcing traceability, carbon calculators, and dashboards. Tata Steel details emissions cuts, recycling, and safety metrics. This builds stakeholder trust, counters greenwashing, attracts sustainable investors, and enhances reputation and loyalty.

8.4 Align Sustainability with Digital

Embed eco-considerations in tech via energy-optimized platforms, resource tracking, and paperless operations. IKEA's circular-economy app enables furniture repair, resale, and refurbishment. Cloud analytics, e-billing, and virtual tools cut emissions, costs, and waste while elevating brand value and



impact.

8.5 Track Satisfaction Continuously

Use surveys, NPS, feedback forms, and AI sentiment analysis for ongoing evaluation of service and sustainability. Starbucks monitors reusable cup programs and quality digitally. Quick responses to concerns refine initiatives, spur green innovation, and align with values to foster loyalty and relationships.

Conclusion:

This research investigated the associations between Sustainable Banking Practices and Digital Innovation, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Loyalty in the Indian banking industry. All variables are statistically significant and positively related, indicating that the need through its sustainability initiatives and digital transformation is important for customer outcomes. Digital innovation showed the strongest association with customer satisfaction, indicating that technology-enabled services such as mobile banking, automated platforms, and digital payments play a crucial role in improving service quality and convenience. Customer satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor of loyalty, confirming its central role in fostering long-term relationships, repeat usage, and positive word-of-mouth. Sustainable banking practices were also found to significantly influence customer loyalty, suggesting that ethical governance, transparency, environmental responsibility, and financial inclusion strengthen trust and customer retention. Overall, the study empirically validates the proposed framework within the Indian banking context and demonstrates that integrating digital strategies with sustainability-focused practices is essential for improving customer satisfaction and loyalty. The contribution of the study is primarily empirical and contextual, offering practical insights rather than advancing new theory.

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