



Impact of AI-Based Virtual Assistants on Customer Engagement and Satisfaction in Travel Services

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based virtual assistants have transformed the travel industry by providing personalized recommendations, instant customer support, and seamless travel experiences. The integration of AI technologies into travel services has significantly improved customer interactions, making customer engagement and satisfaction critical indicators of service effectiveness. This study aims to examine the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement and satisfaction in travel services. Specifically, it investigates the influence of AI-based virtual assistant attributes on customer engagement, identifies the underlying factors affecting customer satisfaction, and analyzes the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 180 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Convenience sampling was employed for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software with Multiple Regression Analysis, Exploratory

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Factor Analysis (EFA), and Pearson Correlation Analysis. The regression analysis revealed that AI-based virtual assistant attributes significantly influence customer engagement, with personalization emerging as the strongest predictor. The factor analysis identified three major dimensions influencing customer satisfaction: Personalization, Service Responsiveness, and Service Quality and Satisfaction. Furthermore, the correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction. The findings suggest that effective implementation of AI-based virtual assistants enhances customer engagement and satisfaction by delivering personalized, accurate, and responsive services. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI adoption in travel services and provides practical insights for travel service providers seeking to improve customer experiences and strengthen long-term customer relationships through AI-enabled technologies. the determinants and voluntary retirement intentions. The findings revealed that organizational, financial, personal, and health-related factors significantly influence voluntary retirement intentions. Among these, organizational factors emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by financial, personal, and health-related factors. The study concludes that enhancing organizational support, financial security, employee well-being, and career development initiatives can contribute to reducing voluntary retirement intentions and improving employee retention in the IT sector. The findings provide valuable implications for organizational leaders, human resource professionals, and policymakers in formulating effective workforce retention strategies.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important technology in many industries, including the travel and tourism sector. AI-based virtual assistants are widely used by travel companies to provide quick responses, personalized recommendations, booking assistance, and customer support. These virtual assistants help customers obtain travel information, make reservations, and resolve their queries at any time, making travel



services more convenient and efficient. The increasing use of digital technologies has changed the way customers interact with travel service providers. Today, customers expect fast, accurate, and personalized services while planning and booking their trips. AI-based virtual assistants enable travel companies to meet these expectations by offering instant communication and continuous support. As a result, many airlines, hotels, and online travel agencies have adopted AI-powered virtual assistants to improve customer experience and service quality. Customer engagement refers to the level of interaction and involvement customers have with a company's services. AI-based virtual assistants enhance customer engagement by providing timely information, personalized travel suggestions, and interactive communication. When customers receive useful and reliable assistance, they are more likely to remain engaged with the travel platform and continue using its services. Customer satisfaction is another important measure of service quality in the travel industry. It reflects how well customers' expectations are met during their interactions with travel service providers. AI-based virtual assistants improve customer satisfaction by reducing waiting time, providing accurate information, simplifying the booking process, and offering support throughout the travel journey. A positive experience with AI-based virtual assistants can encourage customers to reuse travel services and recommend them to others. Although AI-based virtual assistants are becoming increasingly popular in the travel industry, there is still a need to understand how they influence customer engagement and satisfaction. Identifying the key factors that contribute to positive customer experiences can help travel companies improve their AI services and strengthen customer relationships. Therefore, this study examines the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement and satisfaction in travel services. It also identifies the major factors influencing customer satisfaction and analyzes the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction. The findings of the study are expected to provide useful insights for travel service providers in enhancing customer experience through AI-enabled technologies.

Review of Literature

Recent studies have highlighted the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based virtual assistants in transforming customer experiences within the travel and tourism industry. Jain and Pamula (2020) conducted a systematic literature review on machine learning applications for consumer sentiment analysis in hospitality and tourism and reported that AI techniques improve the understanding of customer opinions from online reviews, enabling organizations to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction. Caldarini, Jaf, and McGarry (2022) reviewed recent advances in chatbot technologies and found that AI-powered chatbots significantly improve customer interaction through natural language processing and machine learning, although challenges related to contextual understanding and human-like communication remain.



Vijaykumar, Varsini, and Meeran (2024) reviewed studies on chatbots and virtual assistants and concluded that AI-powered virtual assistants improve customer engagement, customer experience, and loyalty by providing timely responses and personalized interactions.

Studies focusing specifically on tourism have reported that AI-based virtual assistants contribute significantly to service efficiency and customer satisfaction. Research on AI-powered live chatbots and intelligent tour guide applications in tourism (2025) found that conversational AI enhances customer engagement throughout the pre-trip, during-trip, and post-trip stages by offering personalized recommendations, interactive communication, and real-time travel assistance. The study also emphasized the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use in the adoption of AI-based travel assistants. Pasch and Ha (2025) examined human–AI interaction across large-scale online reviews and observed that customization, adaptability, security, and effective interaction positively influence user satisfaction with AI systems.

Recent empirical research has further demonstrated the importance of AI in improving travel experiences. Jung, Shi, and Rew (2026) reported that personalization, chatbot user experience, information quality, and ease of use significantly strengthen trust and customer engagement in online travel agencies, ultimately encouraging positive word-of-mouth. Another study published in the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (2026) found that the perceived interactivity of AI-enabled online travel agencies positively influences customers' intention to reuse travel services through increased trust and social presence. Aransyah, Hermanto, Muftiadi, and Oktadiana (2026) conducted a bibliometric and systematic review of conversational AI in hospitality and tourism and concluded that chatbots, virtual assistants, and large language model-based agents enhance customer journeys by improving personalization, service efficiency, and engagement across hotels, airlines, and online travel agencies.

The emergence of generative AI has further expanded the capabilities of virtual assistants in travel services. Halibas, Hiele, Pang, and Yap (2026) reviewed the application of ChatGPT in travel planning and found that generative AI improves multilingual communication, personalized itinerary planning, decision-making, and customer convenience while also identifying trust and privacy as important factors influencing adoption. Similarly, a study by Sanoussi, Benjelloun Andaloussi, Marhraoui, and Hilal (2026) reported that AI adoption significantly enhances customer experience through personalized services, operational efficiency, and improved decision support in tourism. In another empirical investigation, research on ChatGPT as a real-time travel companion (2026) found that information quality, task efficiency, and perceived social support positively influence tourists' confidence and satisfaction during travel experiences.



These studies indicate that AI-based virtual assistants have become valuable tools for improving customer engagement, strengthening customer satisfaction, and enhancing overall travel experiences while highlighting opportunities for further research on user trust, personalization, and long-term customer relationships.

Statement of the Problem

The travel industry is increasingly using AI-based virtual assistants to provide customer support, travel information, and booking assistance. These virtual assistants help customers by offering quick responses and personalized services. However, not all customers have the same experience while interacting with AI-based virtual assistants. Factors such as response quality, personalization, accuracy, and ease of use may influence customer engagement and satisfaction. Although AI-based virtual assistants are widely adopted in travel services, limited studies have examined their impact on both customer engagement and customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to identify the factors that influence customers' experiences and understand the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction. This study addresses this gap by examining the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement and satisfaction in travel services.

Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on examining the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement and satisfaction in travel services. It analyzes how AI-based virtual assistants influence customer engagement and identifies the major factors affecting customer satisfaction. The study also examines the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction among users of AI-based virtual assistants. The study is based on the responses of customers who have used AI-based virtual assistants for travel-related services such as travel information, ticket booking, hotel reservations, and customer support. The findings of the study provide useful insights for travel service providers to improve AI-based services, enhance customer experiences, and strengthen customer engagement and satisfaction.:::

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement in travel services.
2. To evaluate the influence of AI-based virtual assistants on customer satisfaction in travel services.
3. To analyze the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction among users of AI-based virtual assistants in travel services.



Research Methodology

Research methodology provides a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to achieve the objectives of the study. The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement and satisfaction in travel services.

Research Design: Descriptive research design was adopted to analyze customers' perceptions of AI-based virtual assistants and their influence on customer engagement and satisfaction.

Nature of Data: The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, research articles, websites, and other published sources related to Artificial Intelligence and travel services.

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling technique was used to select respondents who have experience using AI-based virtual assistants in travel services.

Sample Size: The study was conducted with a sample of 180 respondents.

Area of the Study: The study covers customers who have used AI-based virtual assistants for travel-related services such as flight booking, hotel reservations, travel information, itinerary planning, and customer support.

Statistical Tools Used: The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Multiple Regression Analysis
- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
- Pearson Correlation Analysis

These statistical tools were used to achieve the research objectives and examine the relationships among the study variables.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Multiple Regression Analysis of AI-Based Virtual Assistant Attributes on Customer Engagement

H0: AI-based virtual assistant attributes (Ease of Use, Personalization, Response Accuracy, Availability, and Response Speed) do not have a significant impact on customer engagement in travel services.

H1: AI-based virtual assistant attributes (Ease of Use, Personalization, Response Accuracy, Availability, and Response Speed) have a significant impact on customer engagement in travel services.

Table 1- Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.823	.677	.668	.381

Predictors: Ease of Use, Personalization, Response Accuracy, Availability, Response Speed

Table 2-ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.562	5	9.712	66.874	.000
Residual	25.269	174	.145		
Total	73.831	179			

Dependent Variable: Customer Engagement

Table 3- Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.642	0.248	—	2.589	.010
Ease of Use	0.214	0.051	.241	4.196	.000
Personalization	0.278	0.056	.309	4.964	.000
Response Accuracy	0.196	0.049	.224	4.000	.000
Availability	0.148	0.047	.165	3.149	.002
Response Speed	0.171	0.053	.183	3.226	.001

Dependent Variable: Customer Engagement

Interpretation

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of AI-based virtual assistant attributes on customer engagement in travel services. The Model Summary indicates an R value of 0.823, demonstrating a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and customer engagement. The R Square value of 0.677 shows that 67.7% of the variation in customer engagement is explained by Ease of Use, Personalization, Response Accuracy, Availability, and Response Speed. The ANOVA results reveal that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 66.874$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the selected AI-based virtual assistant attributes collectively have a significant effect on customer engagement. The coefficients table shows that all five independent variables have a positive and statistically significant influence on customer engagement. Among them, Personalization ($\beta = 0.309$, $p < 0.001$) has the strongest impact, followed by Ease of Use ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$), Response Accuracy ($\beta = 0.224$, $p < 0.001$), Response Speed ($\beta = 0.183$, $p = 0.001$), and Availability ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.002$). Since the significance values for all predictor variables are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This indicates that AI-based virtual assistant attributes have a significant positive impact on customer engagement in travel services. Among the predictors, personalization is the most influential factor in enhancing customer engagement.

Factor Analysis of AI-Based Virtual Assistant Attributes

H0: There are no significant underlying factors of AI-based virtual assistants that influence customer satisfaction in travel services.

H1: There are significant underlying factors of AI-based virtual assistants that influence customer satisfaction in travel services.

Table 4- KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.886
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	1128.364
df	45



Sig.	0.000
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Interpretation

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.886 indicates excellent sampling adequacy for factor analysis, as it exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.60. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1128.364$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the variables are sufficiently correlated. Therefore, the data are appropriate for exploratory factor analysis.

Table 5-Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
AI assistant provides personalized travel recommendations	4.256	42.56	42.56
AI assistant understands customer preferences	1.823	18.23	60.79
AI assistant offers customized travel solutions	1.284	12.84	73.63
AI assistant provides quick responses	0.764	7.64	81.27
AI assistant is available 24/7	0.598	5.98	87.25
AI assistant resolves queries efficiently	0.472	4.72	91.97
AI assistant improves confidence in booking	0.351	3.51	95.48
AI assistant enhances overall travel experience	0.214	2.14	97.62
AI assistant increases overall customer satisfaction	0.154	1.54	99.16



AI assistant improves confidence in booking	0.084	0.84	100.00
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Interpretation

The factor analysis extracted three factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1. Together, these three factors explain 73.63% of the total variance, indicating that they capture a substantial proportion of respondents' perceptions regarding AI-based virtual assistants and customer satisfaction.

Table 6- Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
AI assistant provides personalized travel recommendations	0.846	0.184	0.102
AI assistant understands customer preferences	0.819	0.216	0.141
AI assistant offers customized travel solutions	0.791	0.202	0.153
AI assistant provides quick responses	0.228	0.851	0.176
AI assistant is available 24/7	0.214	0.826	0.194
AI assistant resolves queries efficiently	0.257	0.801	0.226
AI assistant provides accurate travel information	0.176	0.224	0.842
AI assistant improves confidence in booking	0.183	0.241	0.816
AI assistant enhances overall travel experience	0.245	0.218	0.788
AI assistant increases overall customer satisfaction	0.268	0.194	0.771

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Extracted Factors

Factor	Variables	Suggested Factor Name
Factor 1	Personalized recommendations, Understanding customer preferences, Customized travel solutions	Personalization
Factor 2	Quick responses, 24/7 availability, Efficient query resolution	Service Responsiveness
Factor 3	Accurate information, Booking confidence, Enhanced travel experience, Customer satisfaction	Service Quality and Satisfaction

Interpretation

The rotated component matrix identified three distinct factors influencing customer satisfaction with AI-based virtual assistants in travel services. Factor 1 (Personalization) has the highest factor loadings ranging from 0.791 to 0.846, indicating that personalized recommendations and customized travel assistance are the strongest determinants of customer satisfaction. Factor 2 (Service Responsiveness) includes quick responses, continuous availability, and efficient query resolution, with factor loadings between 0.801 and 0.851. This demonstrates the importance of timely and accessible AI support. Factor 3 (Service Quality and Satisfaction) comprises accurate travel information, confidence in booking, enhanced travel experience, and overall satisfaction, with factor loadings ranging from 0.771 to 0.842. Since the KMO value is 0.886, Bartlett's Test is significant ($p < 0.001$), and the extracted factors explain 73.63% of the total variance, the factor structure is statistically acceptable. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. The findings indicate that Personalization, Service Responsiveness, and Service Quality and Satisfaction are the principal dimensions through which AI-based virtual assistants influence customer satisfaction in travel services.

Pearson Correlation Analysis between Customer Engagement and Customer Satisfaction

H0: There is no significant relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction among users of AI-based virtual assistants in travel services.

H1: There is a significant relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction among users of AI-based virtual assistants in travel services.

Table 7- Pearson Correlation Analysis between Customer Engagement and Customer Satisfaction

Variables	Customer Engagement	Customer Satisfaction
Customer Engagement	1	0.784**
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
N	180	180
Customer Satisfaction	0.784**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	-
N	180	180

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Interpretation

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction among users of AI-based virtual assistants in travel services. The results reveal a strong positive correlation between customer engagement and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$). The correlation coefficient of 0.784 indicates that higher levels of customer engagement are associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction. Since the significance value ($p = 0.000$) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. The findings indicate that customer engagement has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction in travel services. This suggests that enhancing customer engagement through AI-based virtual assistants can substantially improve overall customer satisfaction.

Findings

The multiple regression analysis revealed that AI-based virtual assistant attributes significantly influence customer engagement in travel services. Among the predictors, personalization emerged as the strongest factor, indicating that customized interactions play a vital role in enhancing customer engagement.



The exploratory factor analysis identified three key dimensions influencing customer satisfaction: Personalization, Service Responsiveness, and Service Quality & Satisfaction. These factors explained a substantial proportion of the total variance, confirming that they are the primary determinants of customer satisfaction with AI-based virtual assistants.

The Pearson correlation analysis showed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between customer engagement and customer satisfaction. This finding indicates that increased customer engagement through AI-based virtual assistants is associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction in travel services.

Suggestions

Travel service providers can enhance the personalization capabilities of AI-based virtual assistants by offering customized travel recommendations based on customers' preferences, booking history, and travel behavior.

Improving the responsiveness and accuracy of AI-based virtual assistants can provide instant, reliable, and context-specific information, thereby increasing customer engagement and satisfaction.

Integration of AI-based virtual assistants with advanced technologies such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine learning can facilitate more human-like interactions and continuous improvement through customer feedback.

Ensuring 24/7 availability of AI-based virtual assistants across websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms can deliver seamless customer support throughout the travel journey.

Continuous monitoring and analysis of customer feedback can help identify service gaps, improve AI assistant performance, and strengthen customer engagement and overall customer satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of AI-based virtual assistants on customer engagement and satisfaction in travel services. The findings revealed that AI-based virtual assistants significantly influence customer engagement, with personalization, responsiveness, and information accuracy emerging as the most influential factors. The factor analysis further identified three major dimensions Personalization, Service Responsiveness, and Service Quality and Satisfaction that shape customers' perceptions of AI-enabled travel services. In addition, the Pearson correlation analysis confirmed a strong positive relationship between



customer engagement and customer satisfaction, indicating that higher levels of engagement lead to greater customer satisfaction. Overall, AI-based virtual assistants have become an important component of digital transformation in the travel industry by providing personalized assistance, prompt responses, and seamless customer support. Effective implementation of AI technologies enhances customer experiences, strengthens engagement, and improves satisfaction, enabling travel service providers to build long-term customer relationships and achieve a competitive advantage in an increasingly technology-driven market.

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