

# How Does India Travel?

Decoding the decision-making  
process for Indian travellers





# Table of contents

1



**Executive summary**

04

2



**How India spends on travel**

07

3



**Customer journey**

25

4



**Business implications**

57

# Executive summary

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## How India spends on travel

**The Indian travel and tourism industry has achieved scale.** Indian travellers took approximately 2 billion domestic and international trips in 2018, spending nearly \$94 billion on transportation, lodging and consumption during their travels. The travel and tourism industry is the seventh-highest contributor to GDP and has increased from 6.7% in 2013 to 9.4%, nearing developed market levels such as the UK's 10.5%. The market is expected to grow by 13% CAGR to \$136 billion in 2021.

**Nearly \$24 billion in incremental bookings will be made online by 2021,** as the share of online travel bookings increases from 25% in 2018 to 35% in 2021 and as Internet penetration increases from 33% in 2018 to 50% in 2021.

India has the second-highest active Internet user base (390 million in 2018) and mobile data use is equivalent to that in South Korea. The supply side changes enabled by digital technologies (high platform penetration) and new business models like the sharing economy, and standardisation and aggregation of capacity, mean that the relevance of online channels is expected to gain share. To reap the benefits of increasing online spending, companies need to facilitate new user adoption and increase penetration in the existing base across the purchase journey.

## Customer journey

**Online channels influence customer decision making across the purchase journey. They are equally or more relevant than offline channels, depending on the phase of the journey.** More than 86% of consumers with Internet access were influenced by online channels in the three research-heavy phases: interest, research and experience. Provider and price comparison websites and online search are the dominant online channels. Offline channels in these phases have similar influence. However, online use dominates the critical booking and sharing phases. Nearly 60% of customers book transport and lodging online and more than half of consumer share feedback online, where social media is dominant.

**Customer behaviour online varies significantly as a result of their underlying needs. Businesses have an opportunity to selectively and differentially target customers** with customised messaging and the right mix of spending across channels. There are five cohorts of travellers in India across business travel—\$37 billion spent in 2018—and leisure travel—\$57 billion spent. The main differences in cohort behaviour:

- Frequent flyer (\$17 billion): Nearly 70% book online. They make their choices based on convenience (timing, location), availability and preference for brands, and past experience. They value a hassle-free post-booking experience.
- Budget business traveller (\$20 billion): 86% research online and 60% book online. They base their decisions on cost, availability and consultation within their personal business network to identify options and share feedback.

- 
- Experience-oriented traveller (\$22 billion): About 70% book online. They research extensively online and offline for “authentic” experiences and convenience of options. They display high loyalty to their preferred airline and hotel brands and actively shares experiences.
  - Budget group traveller (\$29 billion): 90% research online and 55% book online. There are typically multiple decision-makers in the process and the final decisions are based on minimising cost; actively shares experiences through word-of-mouth and online channels.
  - Occasional traveller visiting friends and relatives (\$6 billion): 92% conduct research but around 60% book online. They maximize family convenience within a budget and believe online terms and conditions are restrictive.

### **Challenges remain in meeting the expectations of these travellers.**

- **Activating new users: Customers perceive online channels to be geared towards premium cohorts** (frequent flyer and experience-oriented traveller). The mass cohorts, with \$55 billion in spending, are underpenetrated. Of the 160 million non-transacting active Internet users in India, only 5% of online travellers are from Tier-2 or Tier-3 cities. There is a 20 percentage point difference between the booking rates of premium cohorts and mass cohorts. The latter is also dissatisfied with online channels (~33% satisfied) vs. premium cohorts (~42%).
- **Penetrating existing users: Existing users state a marked distrust in use of online channels to make bookings**, especially around payment and pricing terms and booking experience compared with offline channels. Consequently, their online usage drops between the research (>86% online influence) and booking phases (~40% offline bookings).

## **Business implications**

### **Adapting to the needs of online consumers will take time. There are five major shifts from businesses in their approach to the market.**

- Alleviate consumer concerns by improving the booking and payment experience to build a trusted brand and increase adoption.
- Address the customer perception issues—succeed at mass customisation to drive higher share in the segment.
- Use consumer tech to penetrate mass segments (standardise, enable sharing); reach non-transactors (build offline presence); and create new user access.
- Find innovative and frugal ways to package the experience to increase both adoption and retention. For example, 60% of leisure travel in India happens by rail, but there are limited bundling options.
- Create a robust digital backend to adapt to customer needs across the purchase journey.

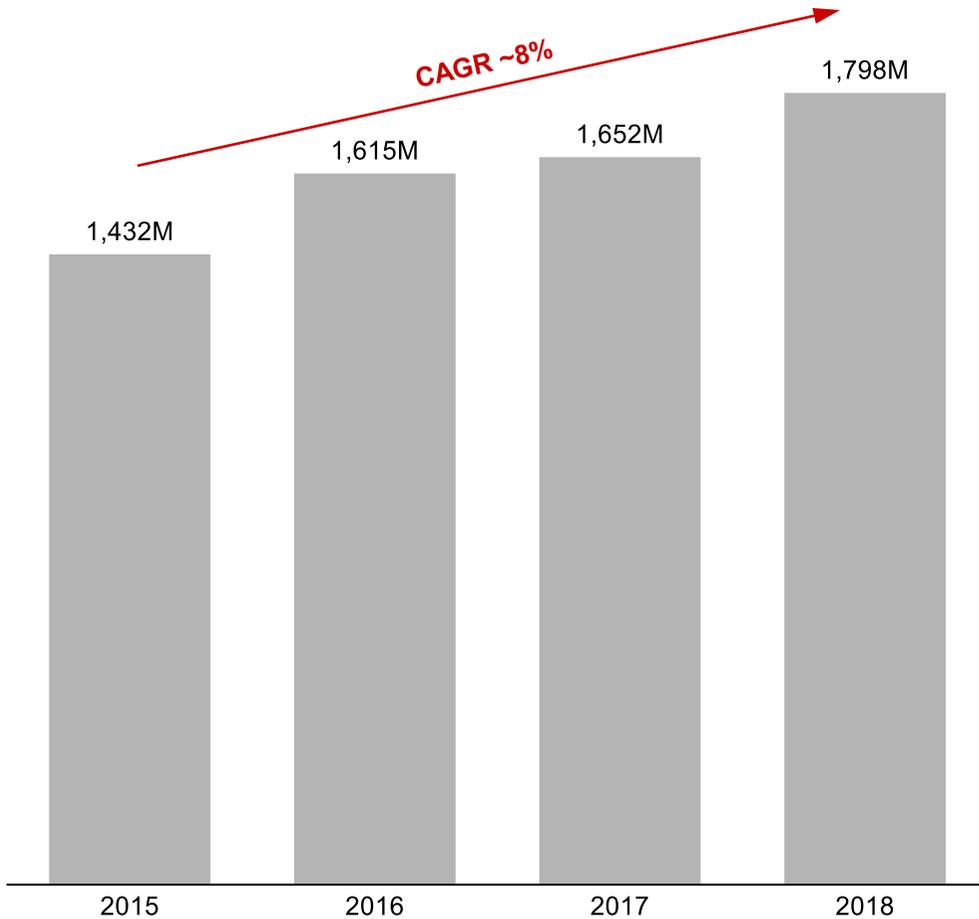


# How India spends on travel

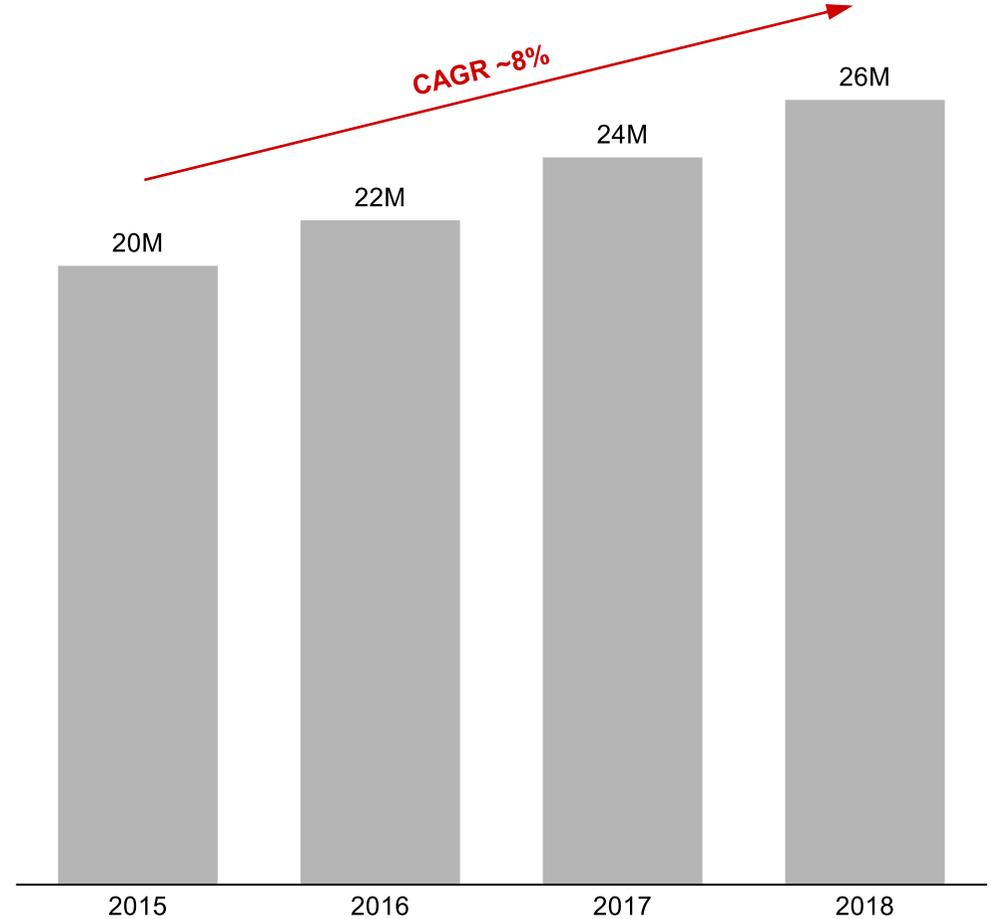


In 2018, Indians took roughly 1.8 billion trips, with both domestic and international travel growing 8% over the last three years

### Domestic trips by Indian travellers



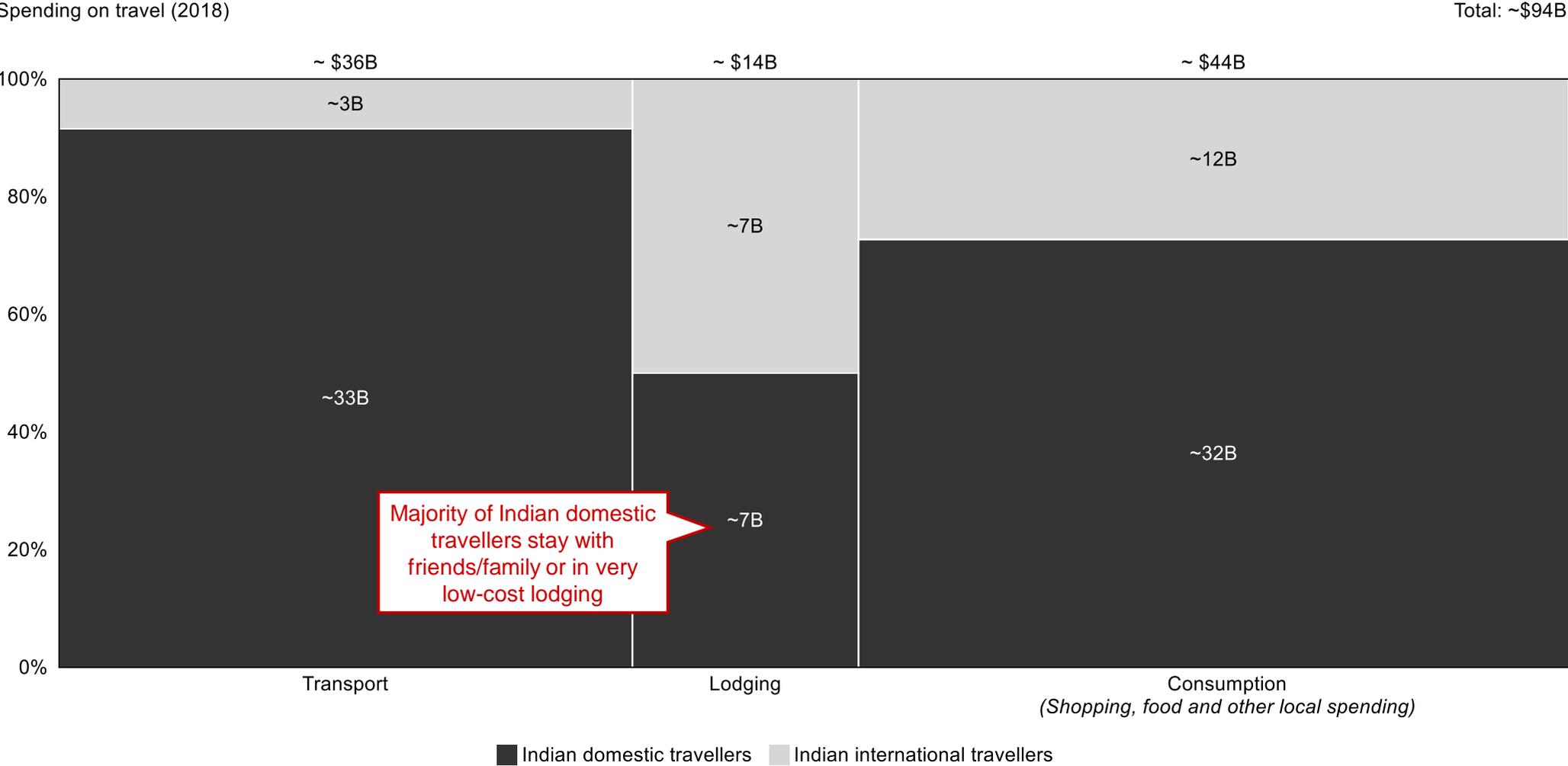
### International trips by Indian travellers



← Calendar year →

# Last year, Indian travellers spent about \$94 billion, with transport and consumption dominating the spending

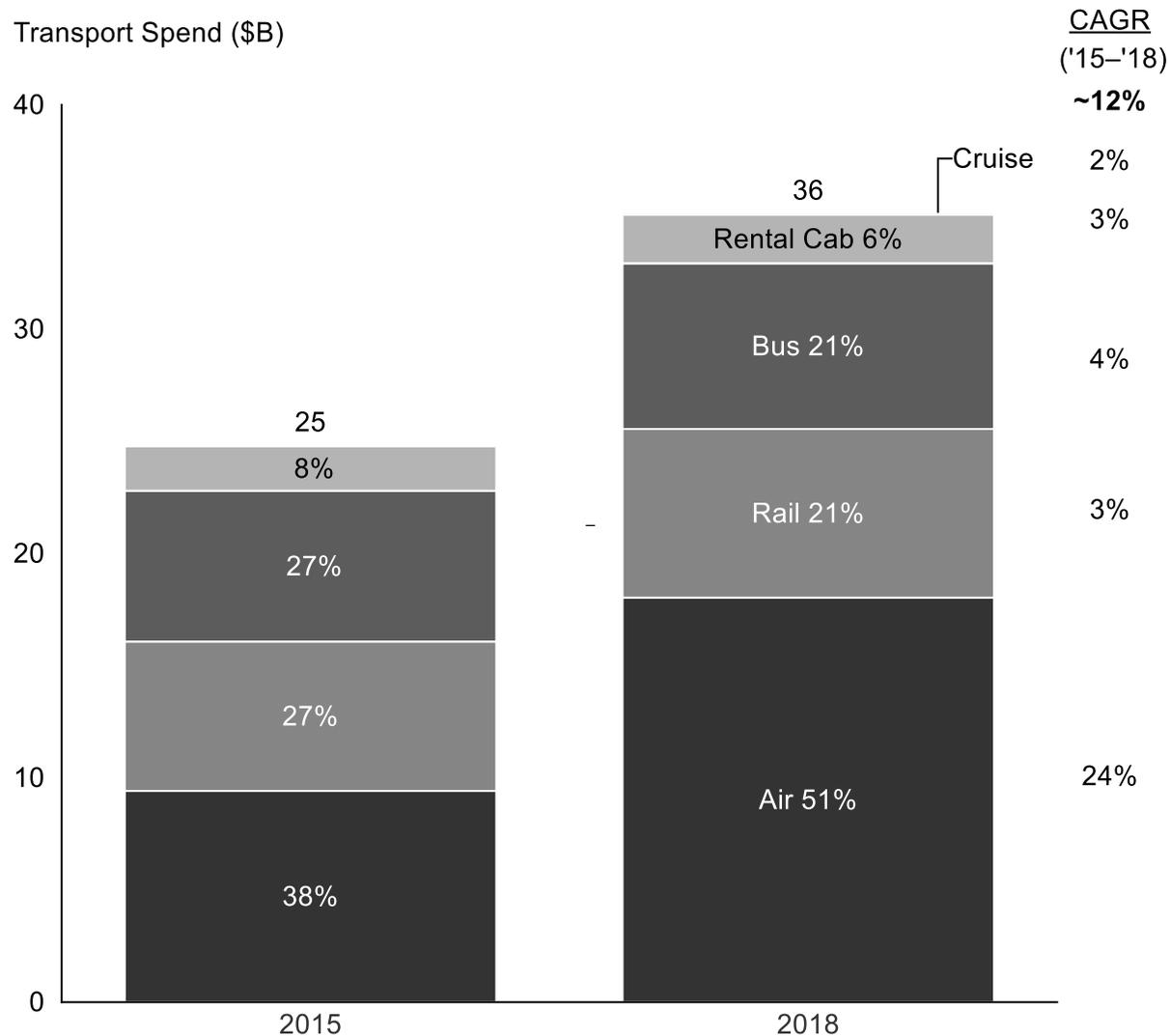
## Indian tourist spending



Sources: Bain analysis; Euromonitor

# Airlines dominated the transport spending despite operational pressures

## Indian travellers transport spending by category

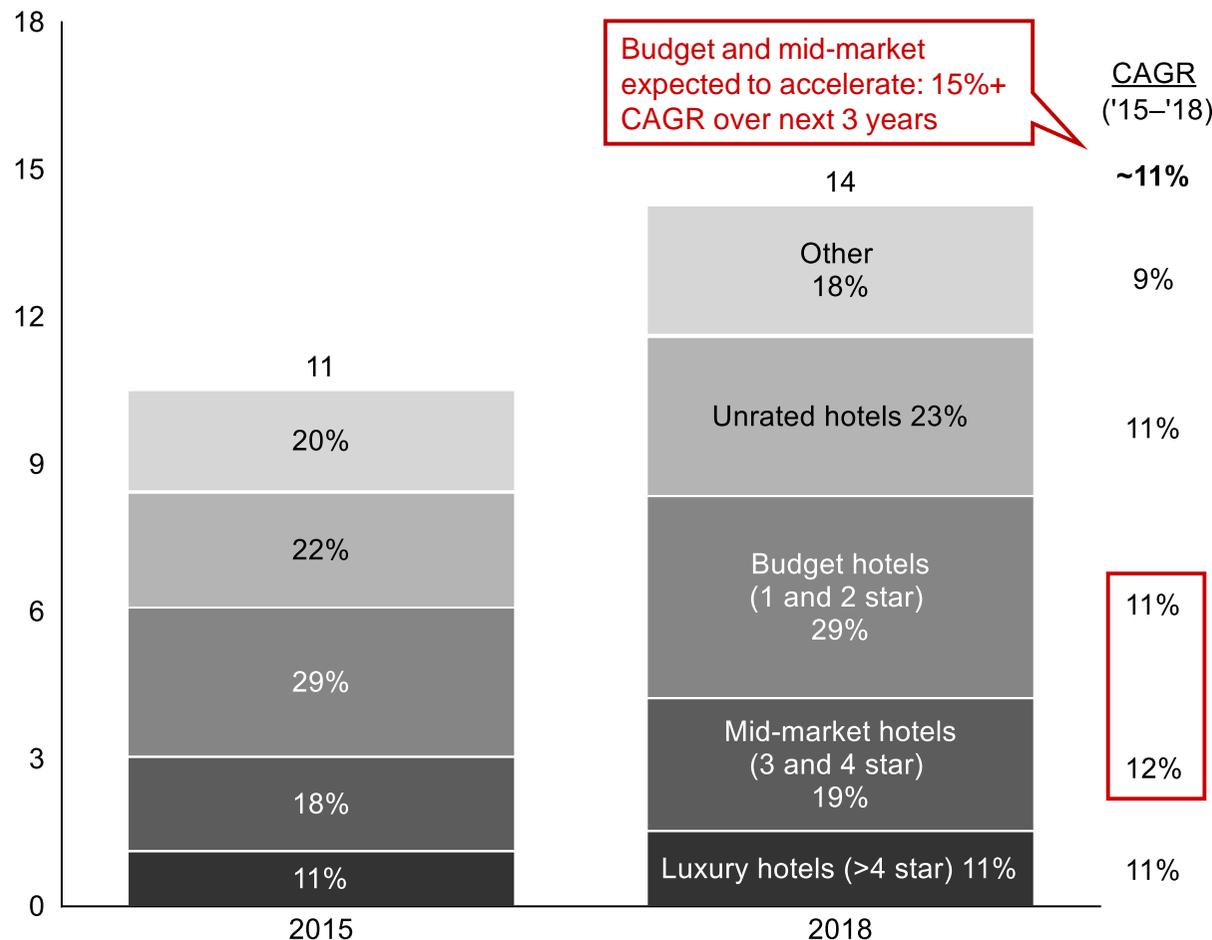


- The Indian airline industry is one of the fastest-growing in the world
  - Improved connectivity (~10 new airports in last 4 years)
  - Affordability (nominal prices declined 18% in 2017–18)
- Bus price hike due to GST, falling passenger footfalls and preference for self-drive hampered growth in bus travel
  - Government initiatives (JnNURM, GEF funding, smart cities) to fuel growth
- Railways growth stagnant; lost share to airlines for long-distance travel (>500 kms) and to road for shorter distance travel
- Rental cabs market stagnant
  - Traction in on-demand mobile taxi services, ride-sharing and car-pooling services

# Mid-market and budget hotels make up about half of the market and will fuel future growth

## India travellers lodging spending by category

Lodging spending (\$B)



### Unrated, budget or mid-market hotels

- Hotels from mid-market to unrated, enabled by low-cost online bookings and proliferation of aggregators
- Expected to grow roughly 1.5x faster than trips (11%–12% CAGR for lodging vs. 8% for number of trips) due to more bookings for lodgings per trip
  - Increasing trend of booking paid accommodation (vs. stay with friends/family)

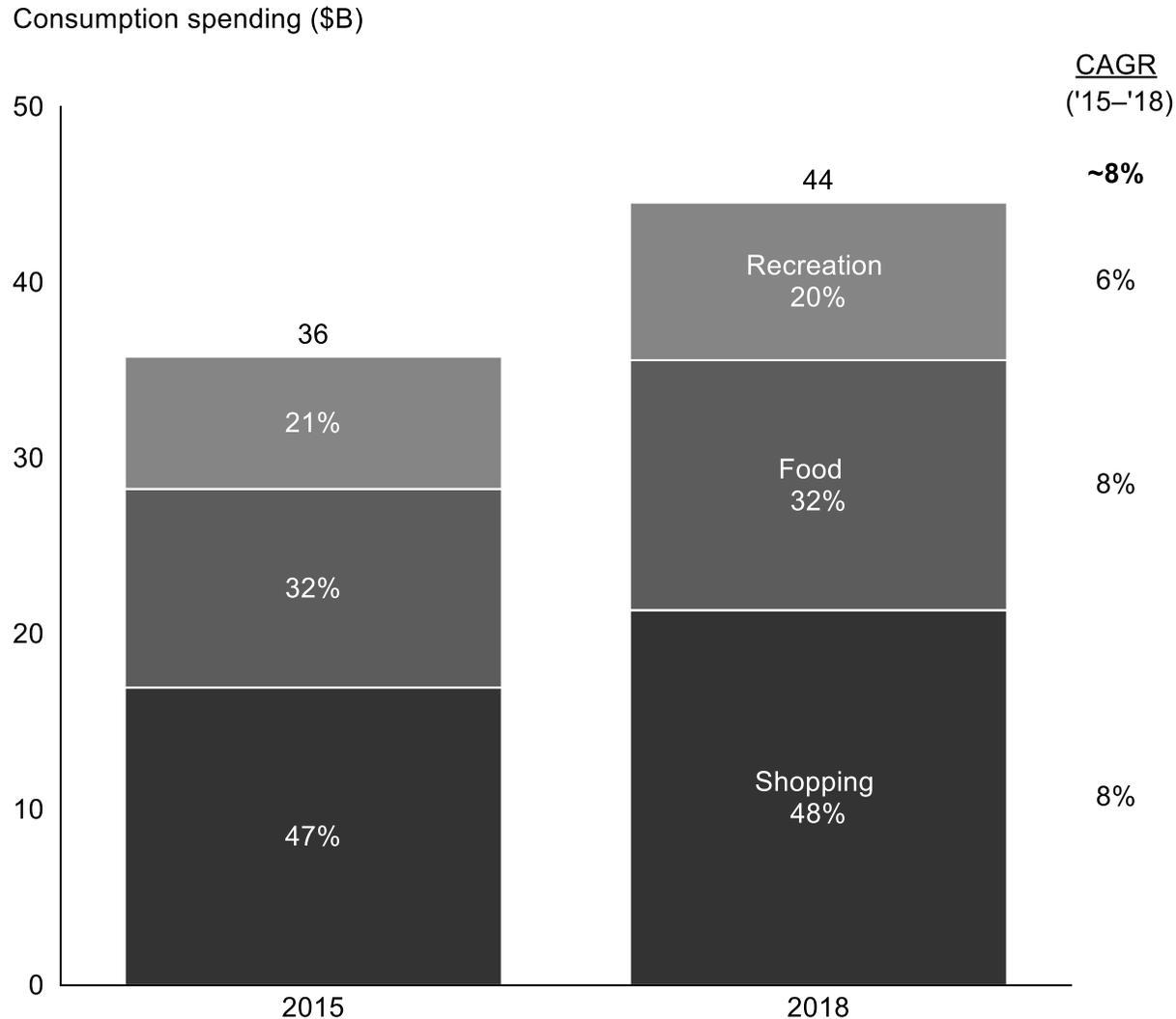
### Luxury hotels

- Lodging spending at luxury hotels expected to grow at 11%; demand higher but supply constrained
  - We see an increasing trend of domestic travellers booking luxury hotels for leisure trips
  - The share of business generated by domestic tourists is 50% for luxury hotels, up from 30% in the last 3 years

\*Other includes Airbnb, lodges, dharamshalas, etc.  
Sources: Bain analysis; Euromonitor

# Consumption accounts for a sizeable portion of the travel industry, but spending is largely fragmented and offline

## India travellers consumption spending, by category



### Shopping spending

- Domestic tourists do the majority of the shopping

### Food spending

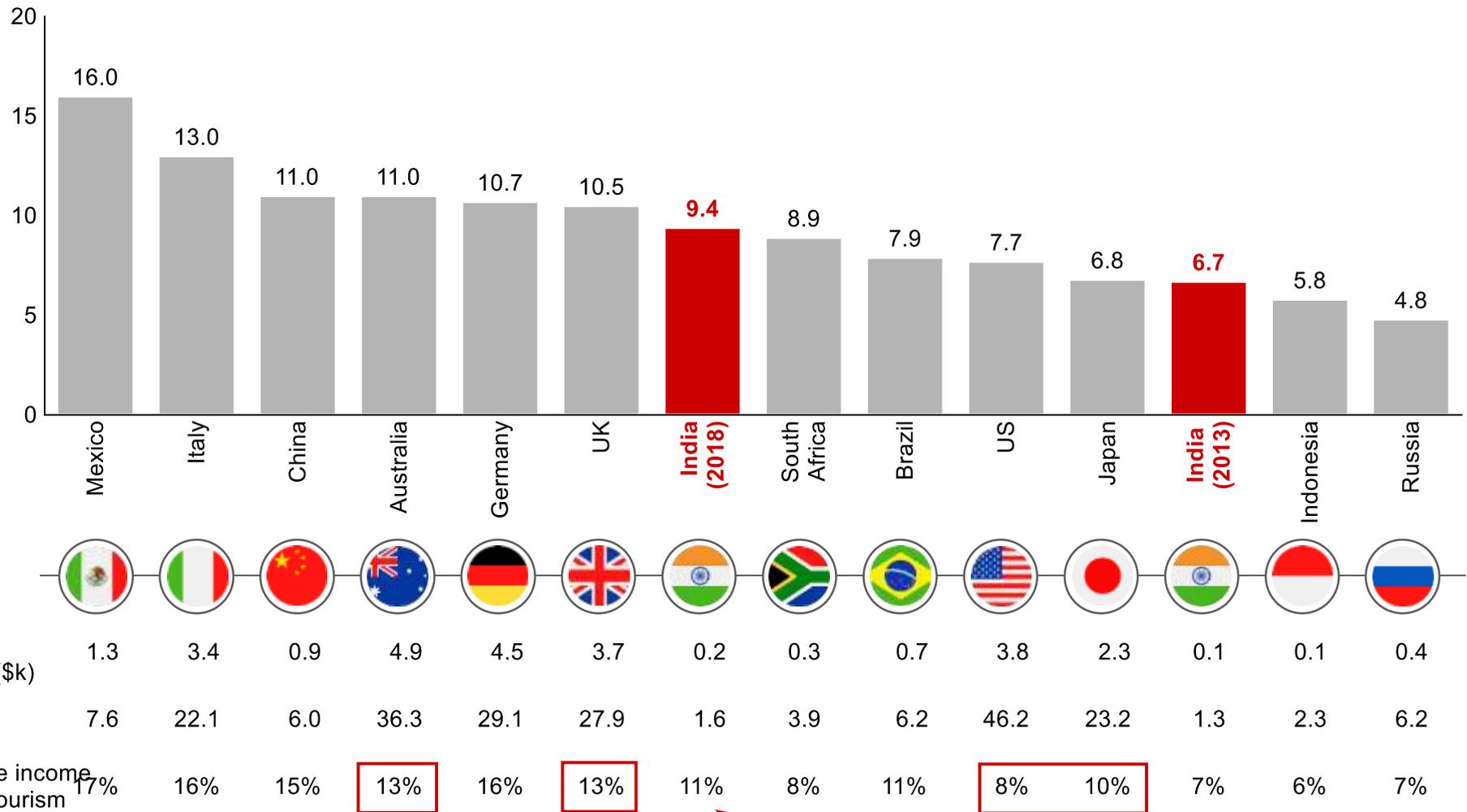
- The majority of leisure domestic travellers visit friends and family so there is limited spending on food
- Food spending by international travellers currently accounts for 35% of total spending and is growing more than 10% a year

### Recreation spending

- Recreation spending is a result of the demand by an emerging segment of experience-oriented travellers for local experiences and activities

# Tourism's contribution to GDP is increasing; the proportion of disposable income spent on tourism has reached developed market levels

Travel and tourism as percent of GDP—including indirect and induced effects (2017)



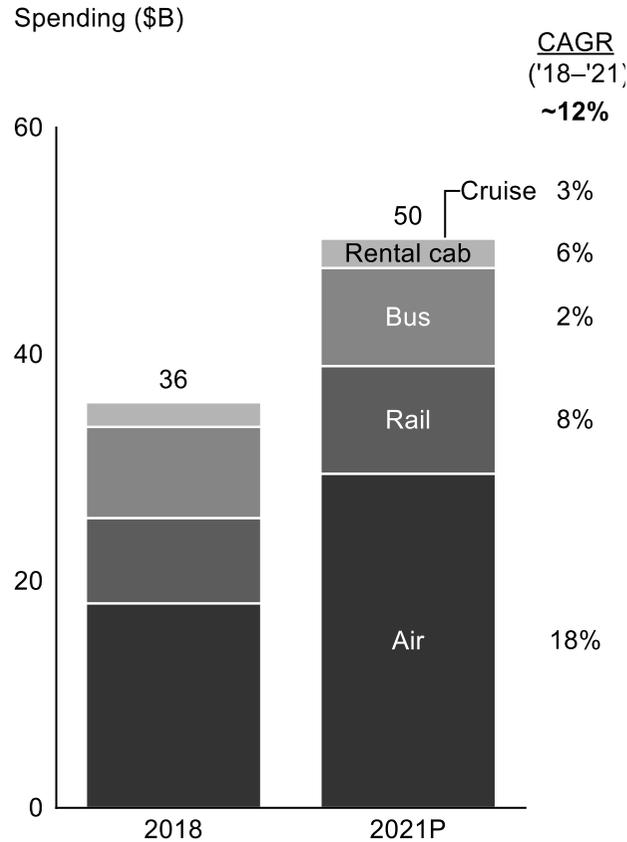
Comparable to developed economies such as Japan, US, UK and Australia

Note: Impact of travel as a % of GDP includes direct, indirect and induced impact (Indirect contribution – investment spending, impact of purchases from suppliers Induced contribution: contribution spending and direct and indirect employees)

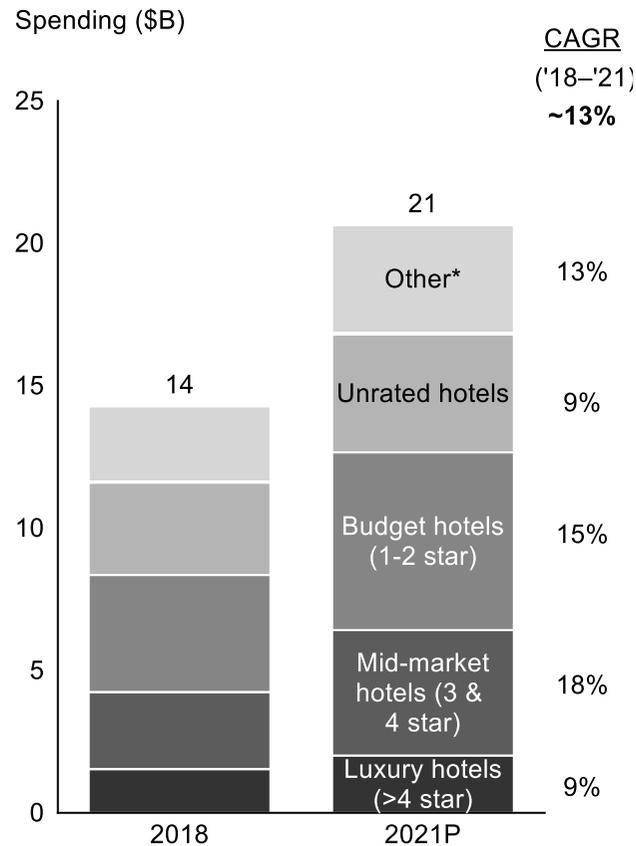
Sources: Bain Analysis; WTTC 'Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2018 India'; Euromonitor

# Indian travellers will spend \$136 billion in three years, with \$42 billion available in incremental spending for various travel firms to tap into

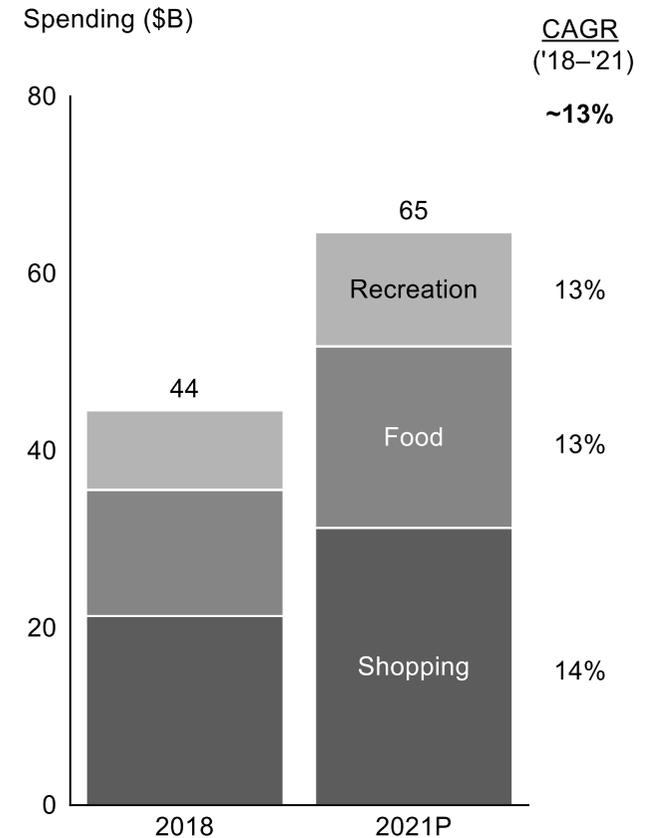
## Transport



## Lodging



## Consumption



✓ Air travel is anticipated to slow vs. historical growth as airports are expected to be close to full capacity, heavy railways investment

✓ Mid-market and budget hotels accelerating faster due to standardisation of quality expectations coupled with faster ROI

\*Other includes Airbnb, lodges, dharamshalas, etc.

Sources: Bain analysis; Euromonitor; Phocuswright, 'India Online Travel Overview, Tenth Edition, 2017'

# Five structural trends are creating fundamental shifts in the travel and tourism market in India

## Trends in India's travel and tourism

### Digital disruption

- Access: Internet penetration doubling to 33% between 2014–18; urban Internet penetration at 55%
- Use: Mobile data usage increased to 9 GB per user/month; more than Japan, comparable to South Korea

### New destinations

- New locations (e.g. northeast) seeing strong tourism growth (84% CAGR for Sikkim, 39% for Karnataka)

### Government initiatives and funding

- Concerted push by government to improve regional air connectivity (UDAN scheme) and boost tourism (Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD)

### Infrastructural enhancement

- Infrastructural upgrade of new airports, expansion of road network (NH expansion) and trains

### Private funding

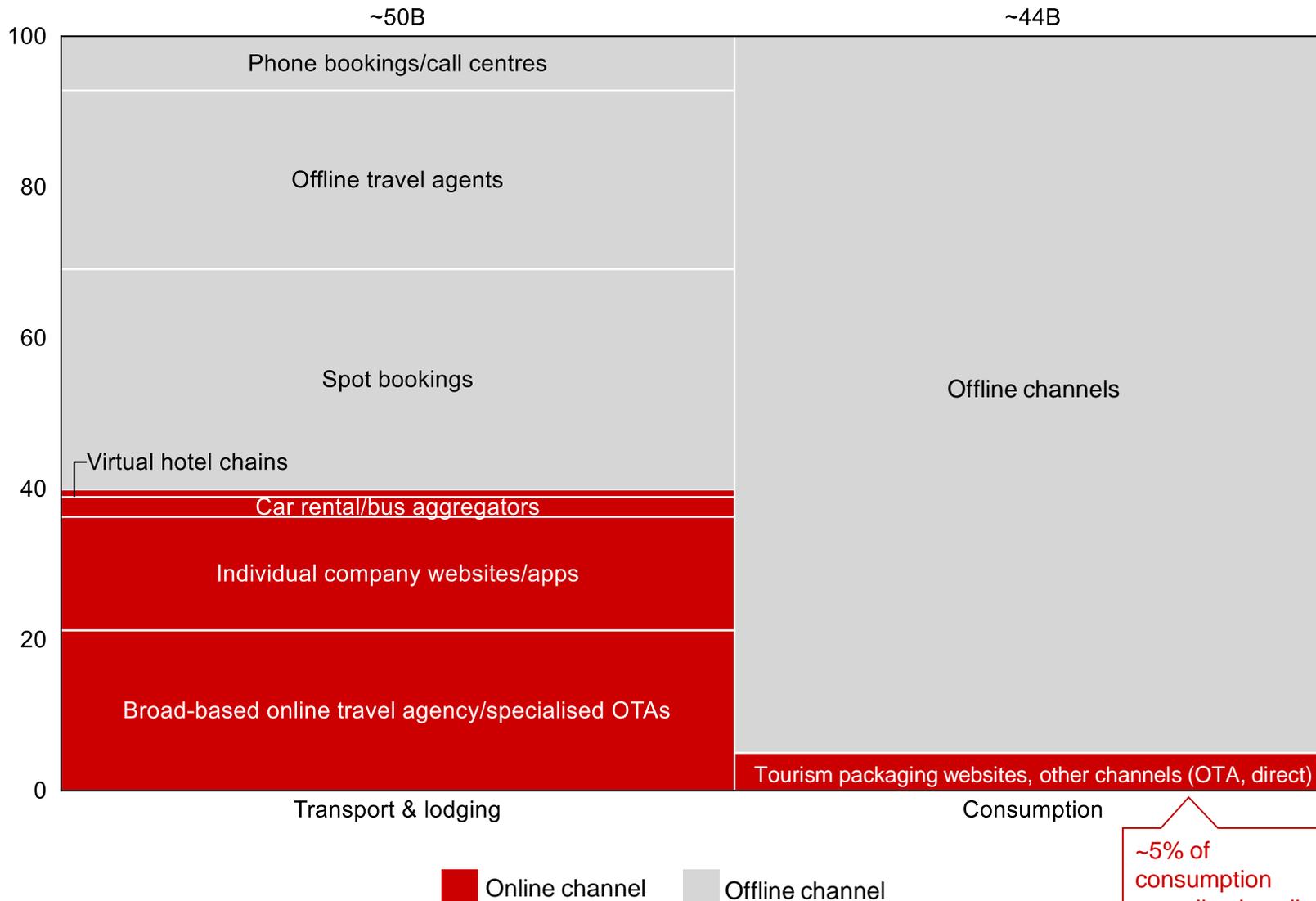
- Steady capital infusion, especially from private investors (Indian & foreign) in tech-enabled players

## Market shifts

- Opportunity in underserved segments:
  - Active Internet users, with no/limited transactions (160M NCCS A/B/C)
  - Mass budget constrained segments
- Emergence of tech-enabled entrants: Private investment supporting digital players with new operating models
- Accessibility of previously supply-constrained locations through increased demand
- Expansion of offerings: Packaged and curated offerings, new destinations

# A significant portion of transport and lodging dollars are spent online, but the online share of spending goes down when consumption is included

India's travel spending by channel (%)



- 40% of \$50 billion total transport and lodging spending of is online
- Consumption spending (\$44 billion) is largely offline, with about 5% online
- Inclusive of consumption spend, nearly 25% of the total Indian travel spending is online

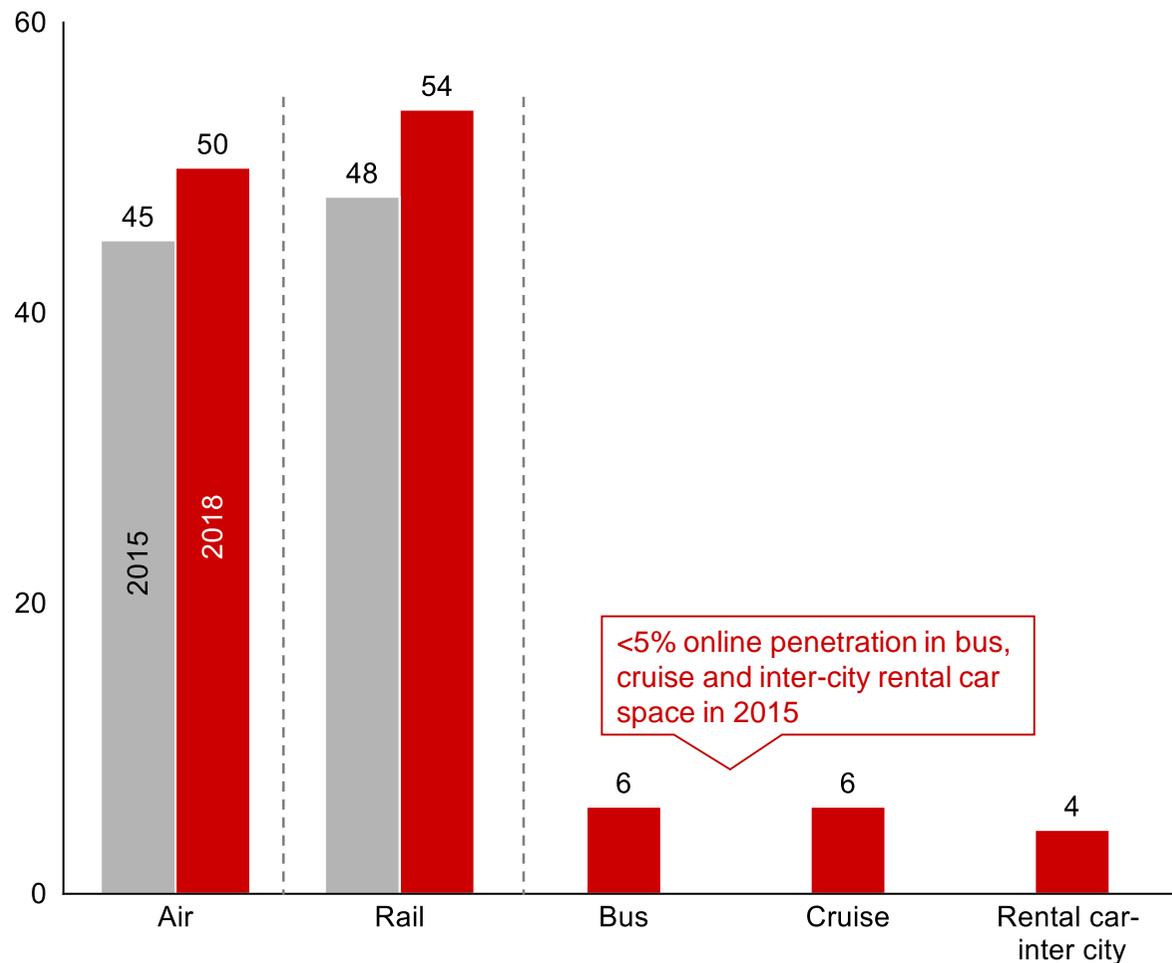
~5% of consumption spending is online

Note: OTA is Online Travel Aggregator  
Sources: Bain analysis; Euromonitor;

# Online booking penetration for air and rail transport is significant, with further scope in bus and rental car bookings

## Online penetration by transport segments

Percentage of transport spending through online bookings

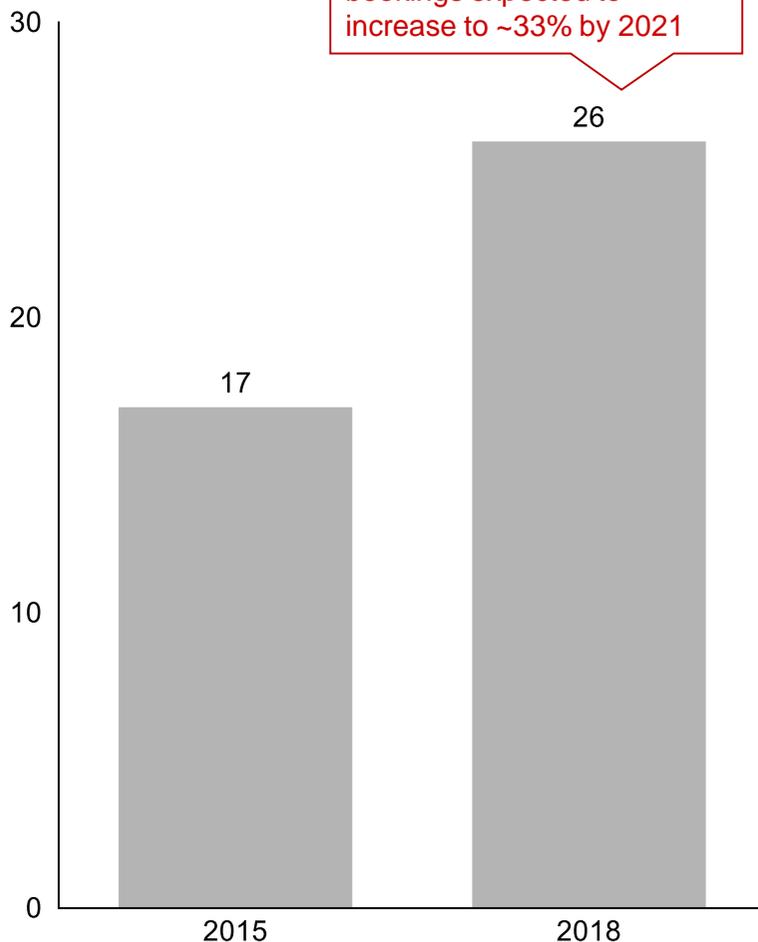


- Online bookings on IRCTC offer easier train and seat selection options given limited inventory of seats (102% occupancy)
- Online flight bookings prevalent due to high penetration of platforms (consolidated market) and easy ability to compare prices/options across carriers
- Online penetration is low for bus and rental cabs because of easy spot bookings (70% occupancy)
- High fragmentation and lower penetration of online platforms for interstate travel, especially for non-luxury segment

# Online lodging bookings are increasing rapidly

## Online penetration in lodging

Percent of lodging spending through online bookings

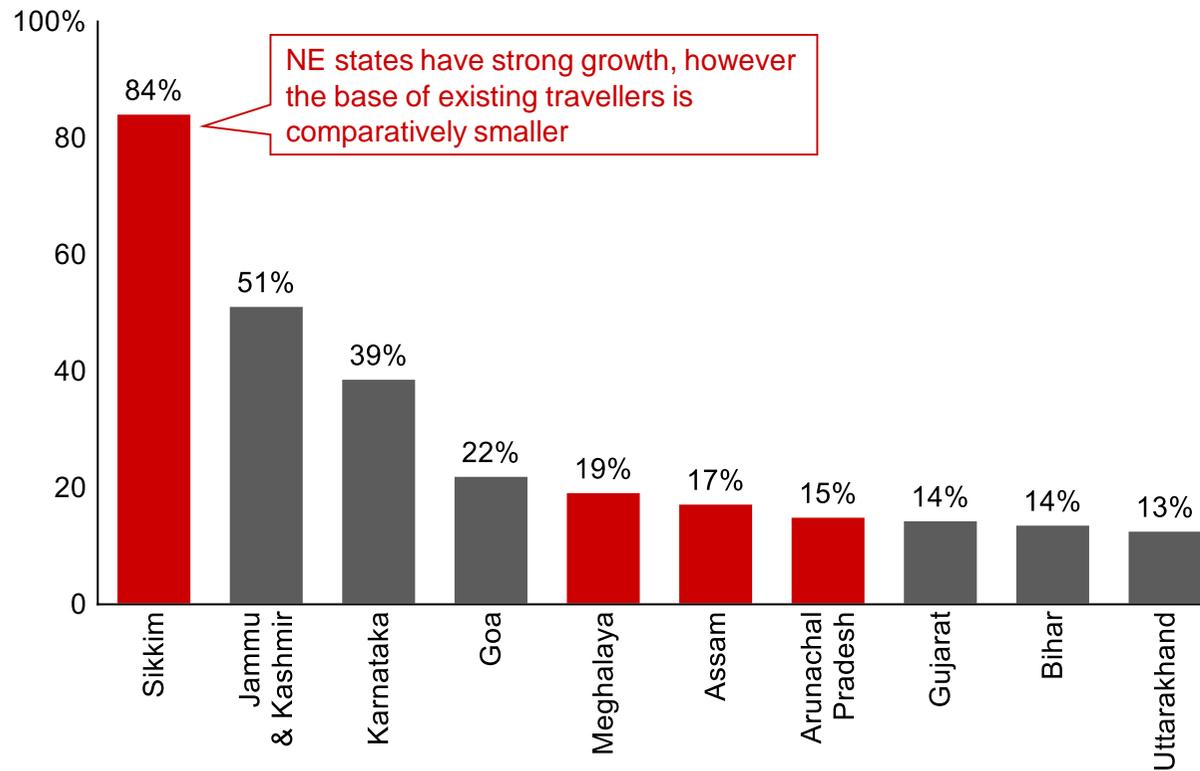


- Online booking (26% of spending): Proportion of online bookings has been increasing rapidly and is expected to reach 33% of all hotel bookings by 2021 due to a proliferation of online aggregators
  - Excess capacity utilisation: Aggregation of fragmented and unorganised supply
  - Implemented by verification and training of providers and standardising service
  - Building a brand under which the services are offered; to add authenticity to the service and to establish trust in quality of services
- Walk-ins (28% of spending): Walk-ins retain the flexibility of last-minute changes to the travel plan and avoid cancellation or modification charges
- Phone booking (23% of spending): Customising hotel bookings for additional services is more difficult online
- Other (23%): Booking through travel agents and spot booking enables proper vetting of hotel rooms and other services

# Government initiatives are boosting tourism in upcoming new destinations such as Northeast states

## Growth in tourist visits in India by state

Top 10 states by growth in the number of tourists (2016–17)



Number of tourists 2017 (millions)

1.4 14.2 180.0 6.9 1.0 6.1 0.4 48.3 32.4 34.4

Note: NE states are Northeast states of India  
Sources: Bain analysis; India tourism statistics 2015, 2016, 2017

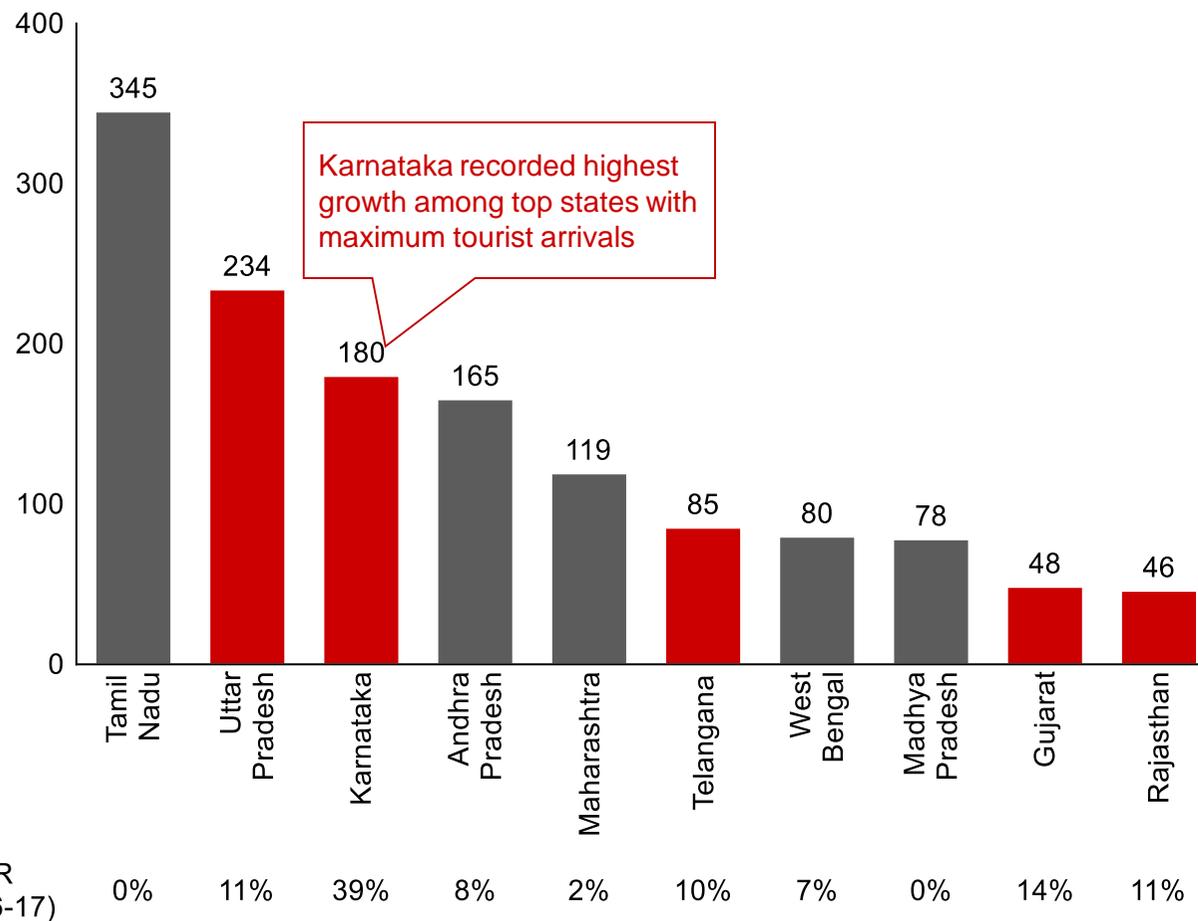
## Government initiatives to promote tourism

- Two major government schemes underway for creation of tourism infrastructure
  - Swadesh Darshan for integrated development of theme-based Tourist Circuits
  - PRASAD for development of tourism infrastructure in the country including historical places and heritage cities
- Special assistance by central government to NE states
  - Development of new airport in Sikkim and new hub at Shillong airport to improve connectivity

# Traditional tourist destinations are maintaining robust growth

## Tourist footfall in India by state

Top 10 states by number of tourists in 2017 (millions)

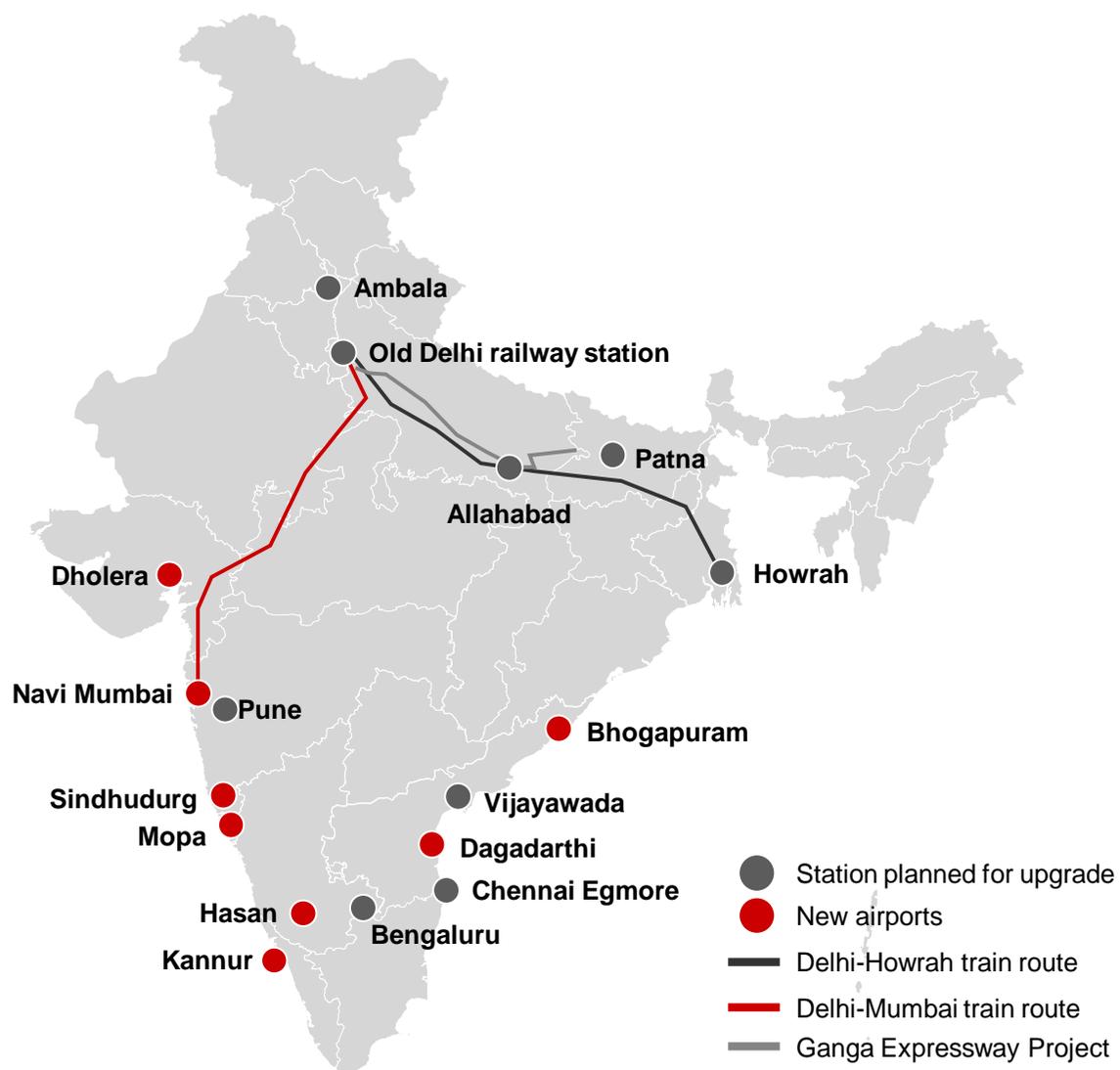


## Government initiatives to promote tourism

- High tourist footfall in Tamil Nadu driven by places of religious significance (~33,000 temples)
  - Suggested road infrastructure improvement of ~1400 km
- Uttar Pradesh government launched:
  - One Stop Travel Solution portal for easy booking facility for tourists
  - Specific initiatives to elevate visitor experiences during Kumbh
- Karnataka Tourism Trade Act 2015 will lead to further investments
  - INR 11,000 crore of investments attracted as of June 2016
  - Development of tourist destinations under PPP models

# Significant infrastructure enhancement is in progress and is expected to boost domestic tourism

## Strategic infrastructure enhancement projects across air, rail and road transport



### Air

- Launch of dedicated airline service to Northeast states
- Central government scheme to improve regional connectivity (UDAAN) underway
- Approved development of 19 greenfield airports across the country

### Railway network

- 18,000 INR Cr semi high-speed rail project for Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah routes
- Modernisation for the busiest stations in the country (Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, etc.)

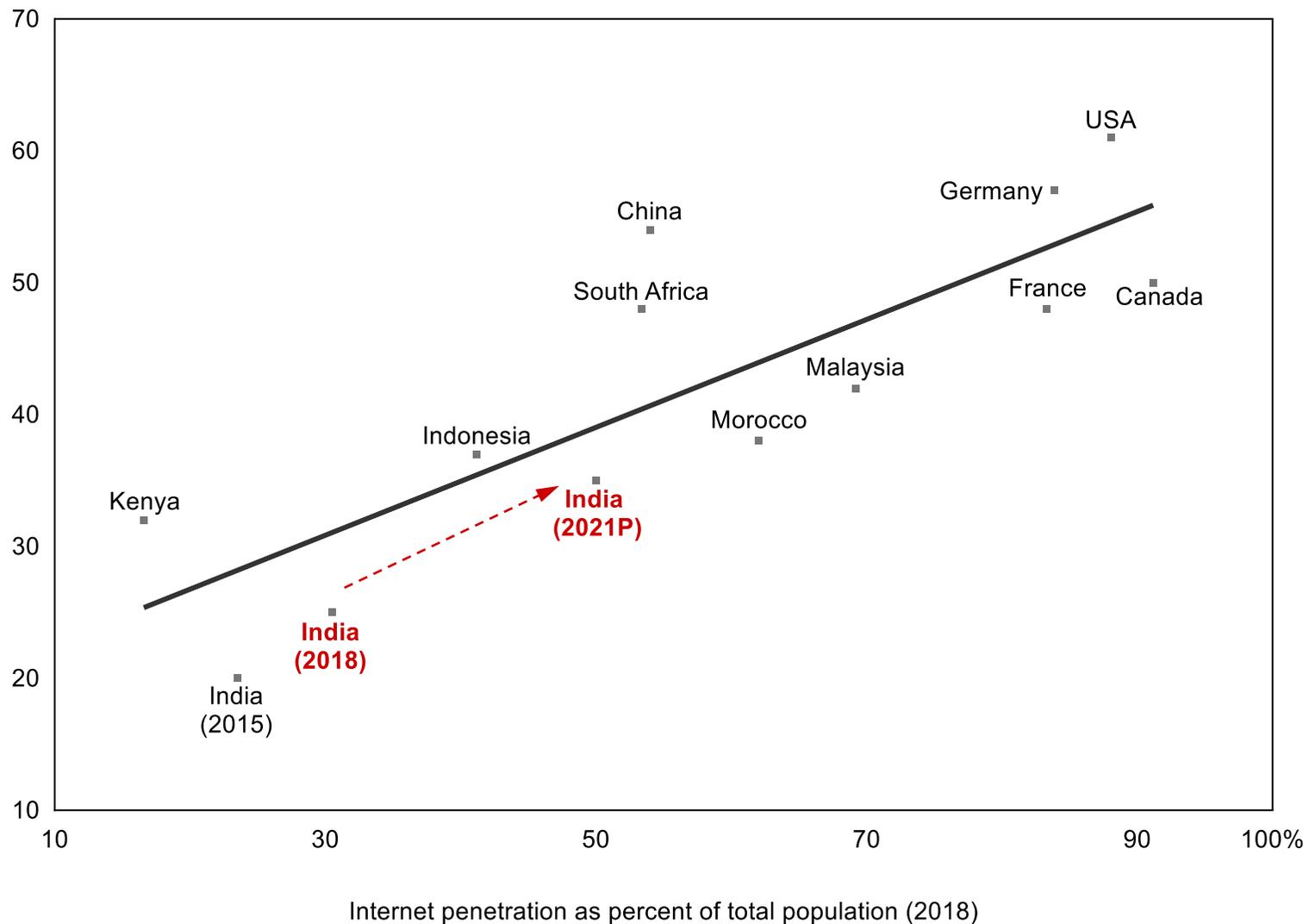
### Road network

- New Ganga Expressway—6-lane, 600 km will connect the northern states
- Bharatmala Pariyojana:
  - 80,000+ km of committed new highways
  - Additional 250 districts (from current 300) connected by minimum 4-lane highways

# We expect to see \$24 billion of incremental online bookings by 2021, led by increased online travel spending and internet penetration

Online travel spending as a percent of total travel spending (2018)

$R^2 = 0.69$



- Online bookings in India are projected to go from 25%–35% as Internet penetration rises from 33% to 50%
- As \$94 billion in travel spending grows to \$136 billion, \$24 billion (or 57%) of the incremental bookings will be online

Note: Total travel spending in India includes transport & lodging (~40% online) and consumption spend which is largely offline  
 Sources: Bain, Google, Omidyar report 'Unlocking Digital for Bharat: \$50 Billion Opportunity'; World Bank data; Emarketer; Euromonitor

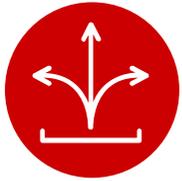
# India is at a critical stage in its travel journey, enabled by online channels with substantial growth potential for online use and transactions

## Given where we are today ...

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- Nearly 33% of overall Internet penetration, with rapid growth and substantial room for more growth



- Moderate spending on travel online at 25% (of total bookings and consumption spending), with substantial room to grow



- Nearly \$40 billion growth in the market expected, with \$24 billion in incremental online bookings over the next 3 years

## ... what is needed to drive the next wave of growth?

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- How to enable more users to adopt online channels for travel bookings?



- What will it take to further enable online commerce across existing and new users?



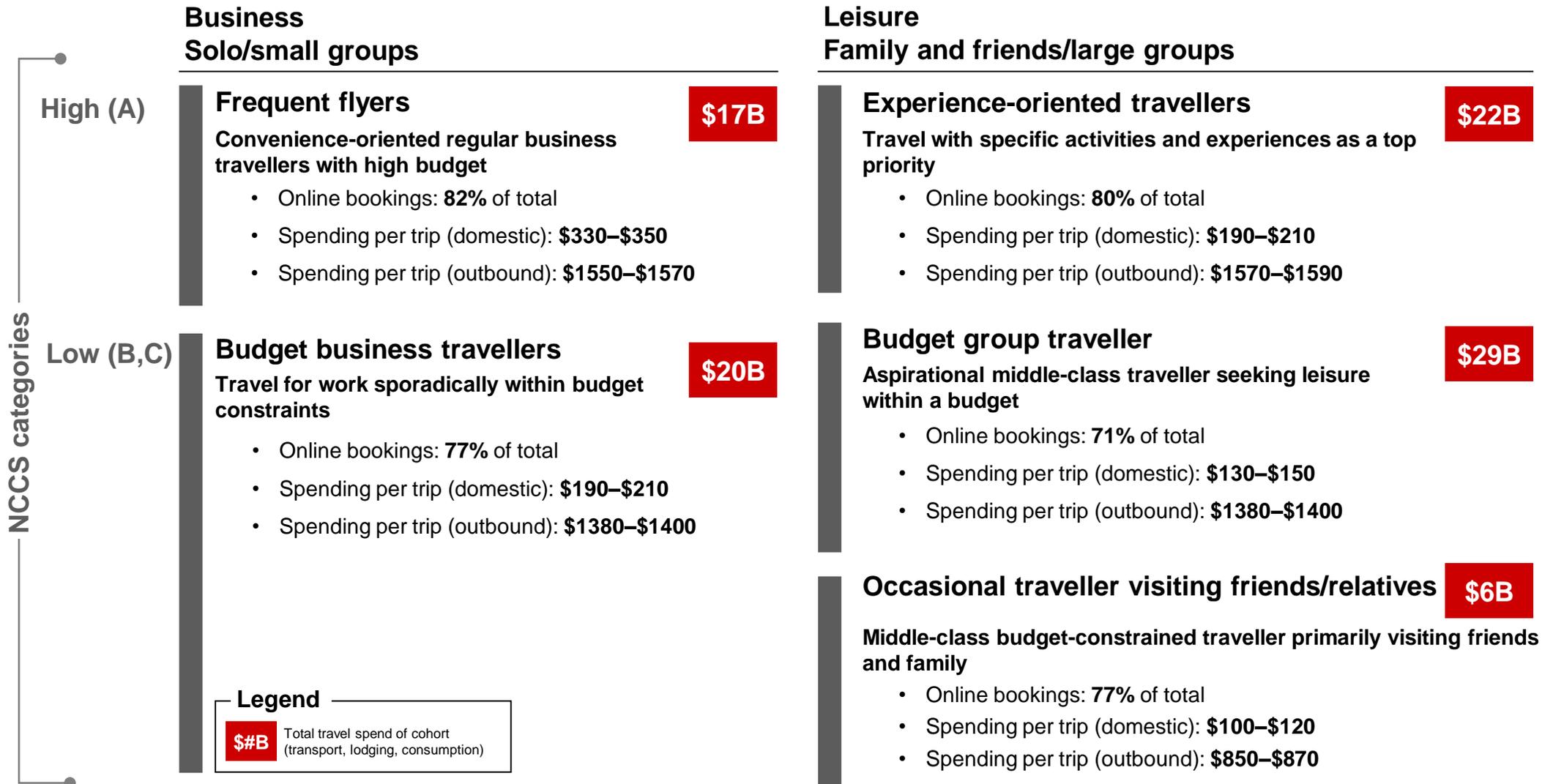
- Learning and implications for businesses



A person wearing a dark hoodie and a backpack is walking away from the camera on a road. The scene is backlit by a bright sun, creating a strong lens flare and a warm, golden glow. The road has a white line on the right side. The overall mood is contemplative and forward-moving.

# Customer journey

# Travellers in India fit into five broad cohorts



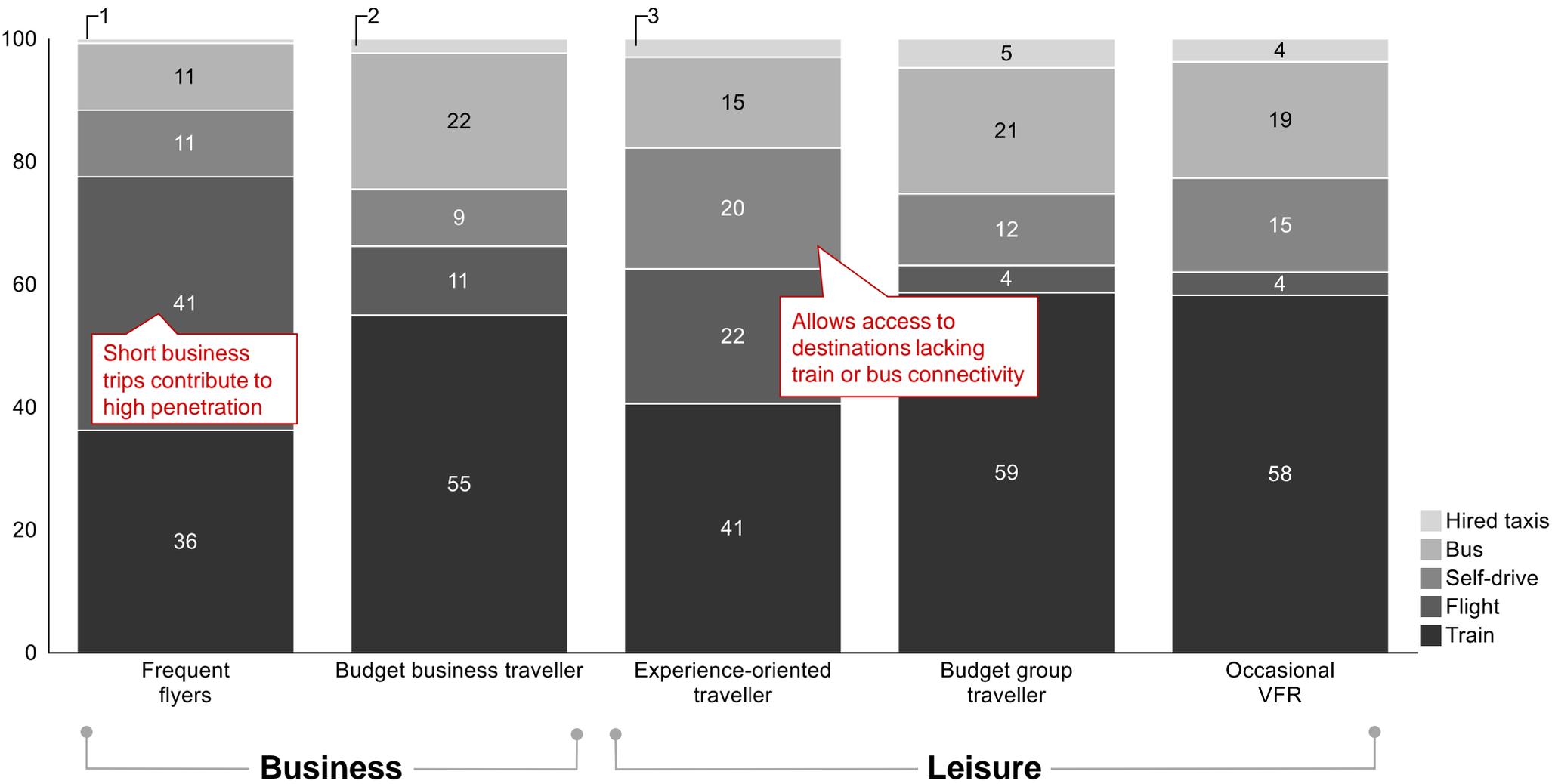
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Note: NCCS is New Consumer Classification System; online bookings: % of survey responders who booked at least one of transport/hotels/activities online; smaller segments such as solo travellers, honeymooners, other niche segments not included; spending per trip is spending per trip per person

Sources: Bain analysis; Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), frequent flyers (n=138), budget business traveller (n=302), experience-oriented traveller (n=739), budget group traveller (n=1,946), occasional traveller VFR (n=534)

# Ground transportation is the dominant mode of travel: Train travel leads, but one-third of leisure travellers prefer the bus or driving themselves

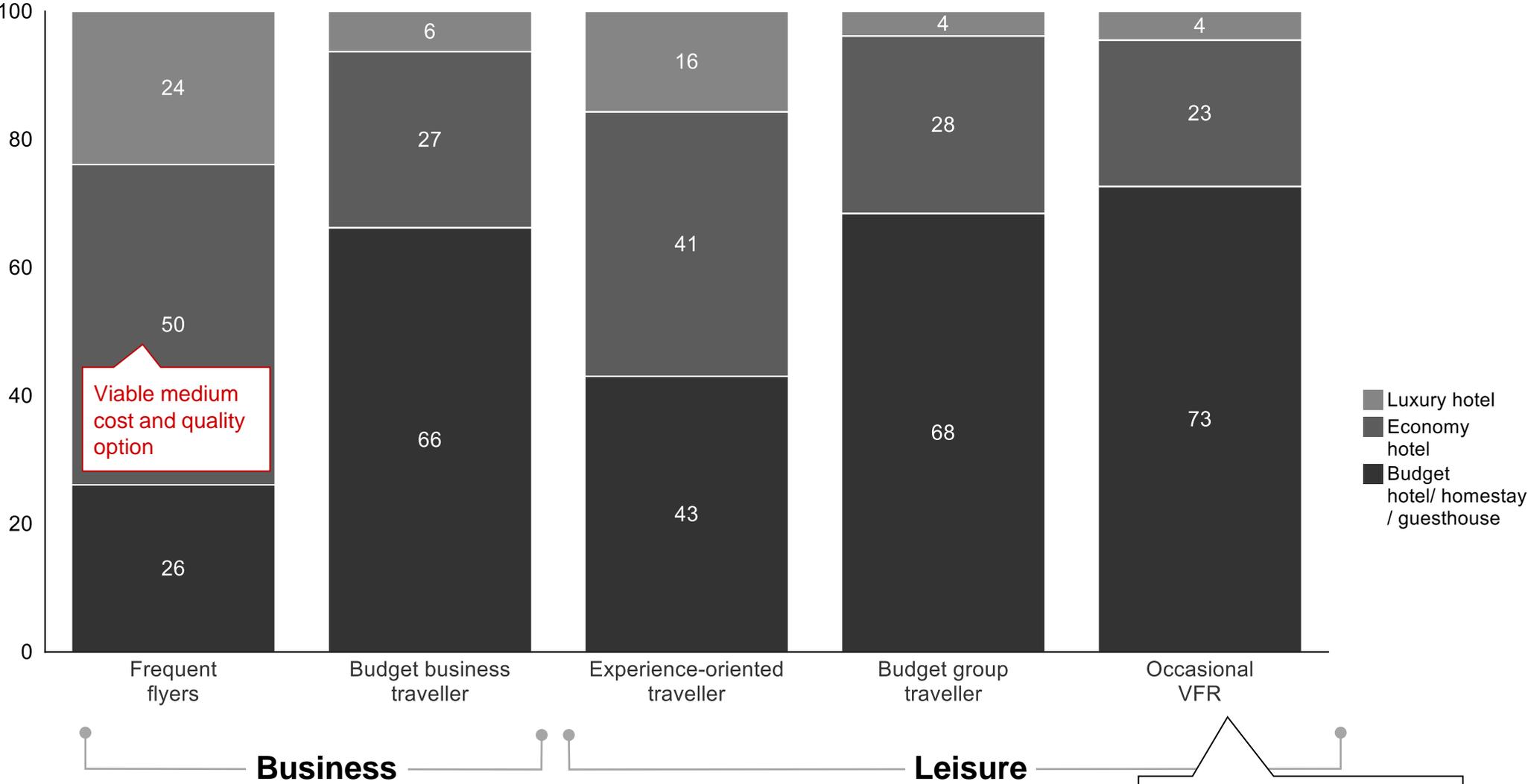
Most frequent mode of transport by traveller cohort (%)



Notes: VFR is visiting friends and relatives; representative of population with Internet usage at least once a week; survey question: How did you reach your destination city/place?  
 Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

# Budget hotels preferred lodging option for most cohorts due to affordable pricing and good-quality branded hotel aggregators

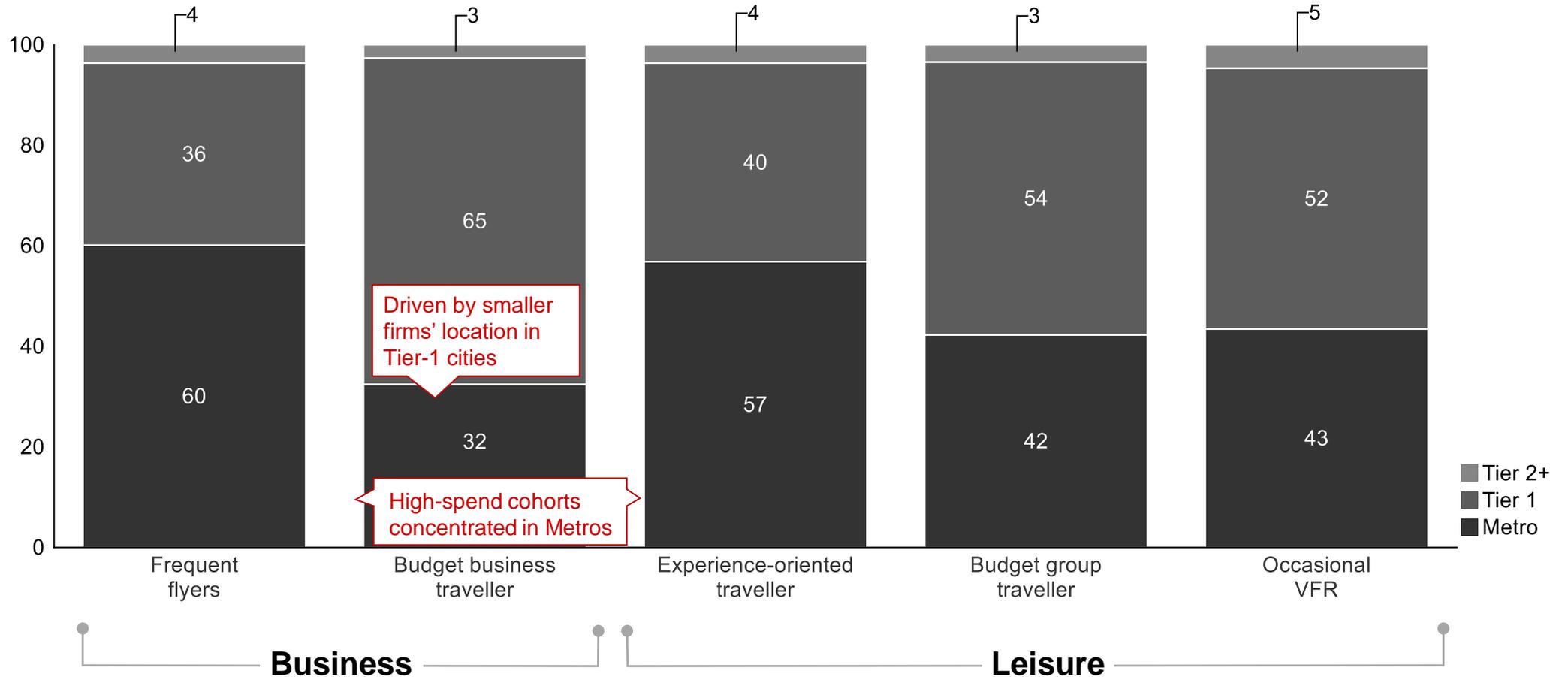
Most recent lodging type by traveller cohort (%)



Notes: For online consumers only; luxury hotels are 5-star hotels and luxury resorts; economy hotels are 4-star and 3-star hotels; budget hotels are 2-star hotels and below; survey question: Keeping your most recent trip in mind, where did you stay during that trip?  
 Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

# Customers who spend the most on online travel live in the top 100 cities

City of residence by traveller cohort (%)



## Metro

Population 5 million-plus (Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune)

## Tier 1

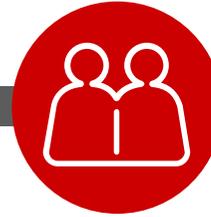
Population 0.5–5 million (e.g. Ludhiana, Jaipur, Guwahati, Patna, Cochin, Jalandhar, Visakhapatnam)

## Tier 2+

Population below 0.5 million

Notes: Tiering of cities into metro, tier 1 and tier 2 based on HRA paid as per 7<sup>th</sup> pay commission; for online consumers only; city of residence identified basis respondents taking the survey  
 Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

# Customer cohorts definition: Frequent flyers



## Who are they?

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- Primarily professionals in senior-level executive positions/business (self-employed)
- Frequently travel 4+ times every year; 60% metro residents
- High orientation towards convenience (flight timings, hotel locations and hassle-free travel); willing to pay a premium (75% stay in 3-star and above hotels)

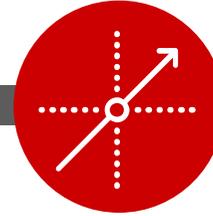
# Frequent flyers: Typical travel journey and trends



## Typical travel journey

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- Travel booking process is managed by individuals (~85% have complete process control); ~70% research availability and reviews online
- Decision driven primarily by convenience, prior experience and preference for specific brands of airline, hotels
- Need hassle-free experience after booking, including reliable service to address travel issues and last-minute changes



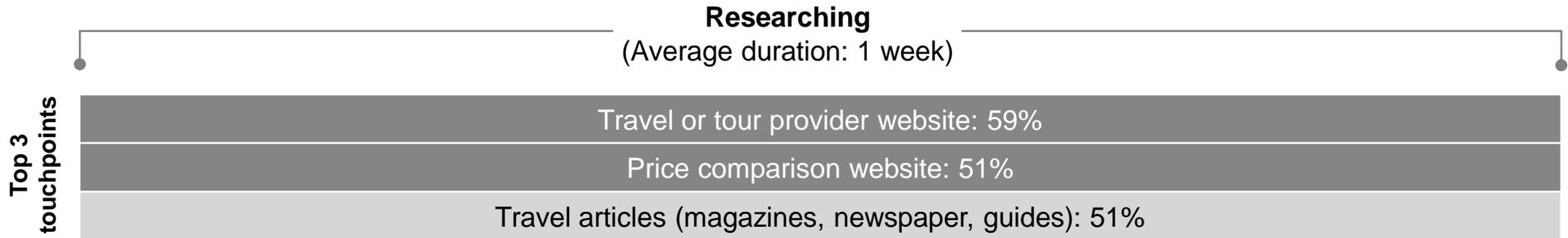
## Trends

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- Increasing adoption of loyalty programmes by credit card, hotel, airline companies by employees
- Employers looking for customisable digital solutions (e.g., weather warnings, integrated cab booking service)
- High-quality post-booking service key criteria for selecting agents (e.g., free cancellation, rescheduling)

# Customer journey: Frequent flyers research online and make decisions on the basis of business needs and availability of flights and hotels

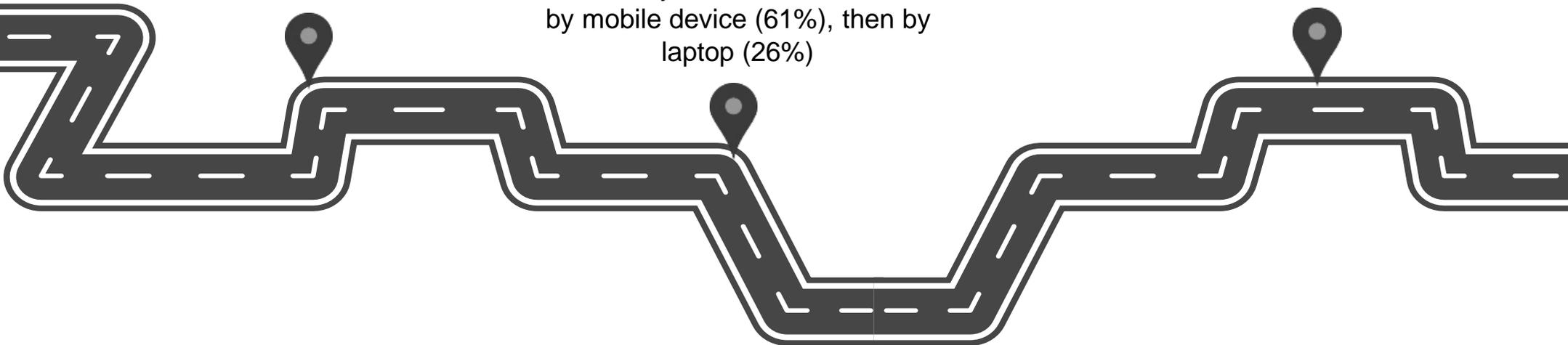
## FREQUENT FLYERS



Need for travel and destination is **typically decided by the firm or business needs**

**Relies more on travel provider websites online (59%) and price comparison websites (51%)** for airline and hotel reviews and availability; tends to search first by mobile device (61%), then by laptop (26%)

Evaluates flight and hotel options **based on availability (~70%)**, while also attaching high importance to safety (57%)



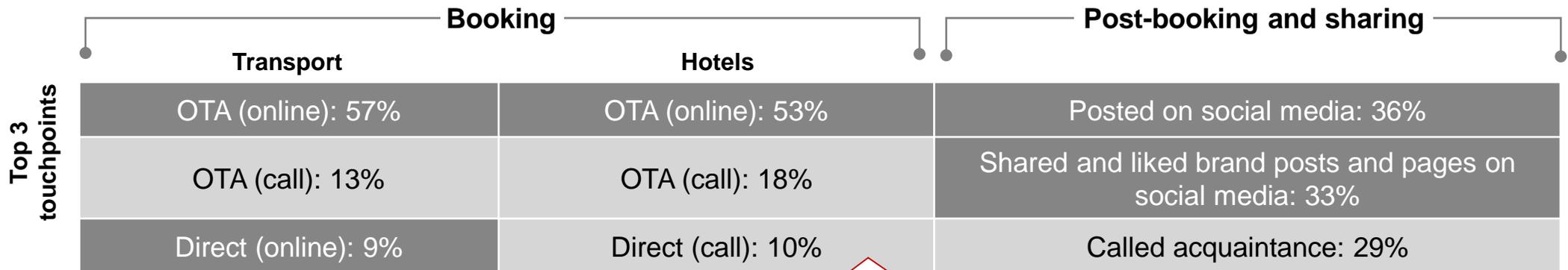
Key highlights in red

### Legend

Online mode
  Offline mode
 #% of survey respondents from cohort

# Frequent flyers prioritise convenience and prior preferences for brands while showing high propensity to book and share online

## FREQUENT FLYERS



### Makes decision based on convenience

(65%), prior experience (52%), and preference for specific brands of airline and hotels (52%); prefers online for the number of options

OTA online includes corporate travel desks booking online

Seeks guidance on **places to eat and drink** (26%), shopping options (17%) and places of interest (16%) during travel

### Shows high propensity to share negative feedback on social media

(36%) about the destination after the trip

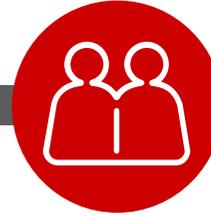
### Key highlights in red

Note: OTA is online travel aggregators  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), frequent flyers (n=138)

### Legend

■ Online mode    ■ Offline mode    #% of survey respondents from cohort

# Customer cohorts definition: Budget business travellers



## Who are they?

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- Primarily mid-level executives or small-business owners
- Travel 2–3 times a year; 65% are Tier-1 city residents
- Need to ensure value for money within company-defined budget constraints; 55% travel by train and 66% stay in economy hotels

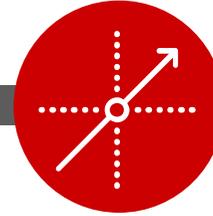
# Budget business travellers: Typical travel journey and trends



## Typical travel journey

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- Travel decision primarily made by the firm; about 50% research for reviews, prices and availability online
- Decision is based on cost and value for money; multiple firms manage costs through budget control and advance booking mandates
- Post-bookings, budget business travellers look to maximise local experience at destination (visit tourist locations or friends and family)



## Trends

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- Cost-control mechanisms with higher employee decision-making power (self-booking tool with approval metrics)
- Small and mediums enterprises (SMEs) are growing fast, and looking for customised, low-cost solutions despite low-volume travel
- Corporate guest houses are becoming popular because they minimise cost and improve experience

# Customer journey: Budget business travellers research online and offline but select their destination based on business needs

## BUDGET BUSINESS TRAVELLER

**Researching**  
(Average duration: 1 week)

Top 3 touchpoints

Personal and business network: 46%

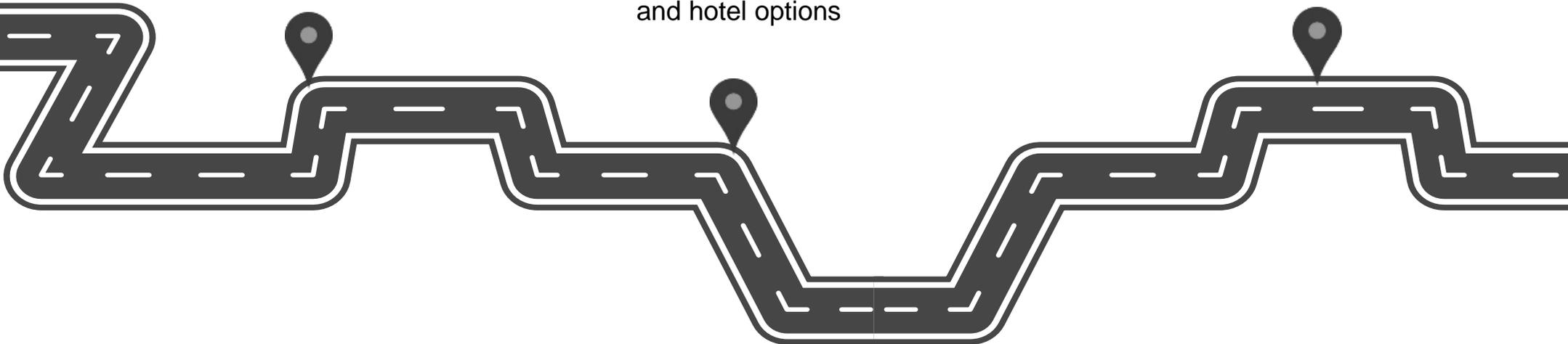
Travel articles (magazines, newspaper, guides): 43%

Travel or tour provider website: 37%

Need to travel and destination are **typically decided by the firm or business needs**

**Consults his or her personal and business network (46%), travel articles (43%) and travel provider websites (37%) to identify mode of travel and hotel options**

**Evaluates options based on price (57%) and availability of hotels (55%); takes interest in leisure activities at destination (47%)**



Key highlights in red

### Legend

■ Online mode

■ Offline mode

■ % of survey respondents from cohort

They make decisions based on cost and availability and show a tendency to share experiences with other travellers offline

**BUDGET BUSINESS TRAVELLER**

Top 3 touchpoints	Booking		Post-booking and sharing
	Transport	Hotels	
	OTA (online): 49%	OTA (online): 42%	Called acquaintance: 41%
	OTA (call): 16%	Direct (call): 17%	Texted acquaintance: 33%
	Direct (in-person): 14%	OTA (call): 14%	Posted on social media: 30%

**Makes booking decision based on cost of travel**

(60%); online bookers prefer using mobile phones (72%)

Seeks **guidance on shopping facilities**

(18%), tourist attractions(14%) and local transport options (13%) during travel

Displays high willingness to **share personal feedback with acquaintances** over call (41%) or text (33%)

Key highlights in red

Note: OTA is online travel aggregators  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), budget business travellers (n=302)

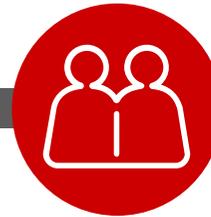
**Legend**

■ Online mode    ■ Offline mode    #% of survey respondents from cohort

# Customer cohorts definition: Budget group travellers



## Budget group travellers



### Who are they?

---

- Families and friends travelling in a group of two to five people (70%+)
- Majority (80%) take only two trips a year; 55% are from Tier-1 cities
- Value-oriented travellers, looking to optimise experience within a budget (~66% stay at budget hotels; ~45% prefer train travel)

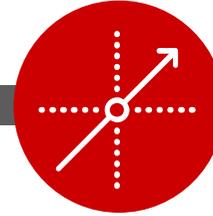
# Budget group travellers: Typical travel journey and trends



## Typical travel journey

---

- Multiple decision makers involved in ~35% of the cases; about half use their friend and family networks and travel agent websites for their initial research
- Decisions based on minimising costs; 43% use OTAs to compare prices and reviews of service providers
- Post-booking, they expect services as promised (on-time flights, etc.) and share experiences through word-of-mouth



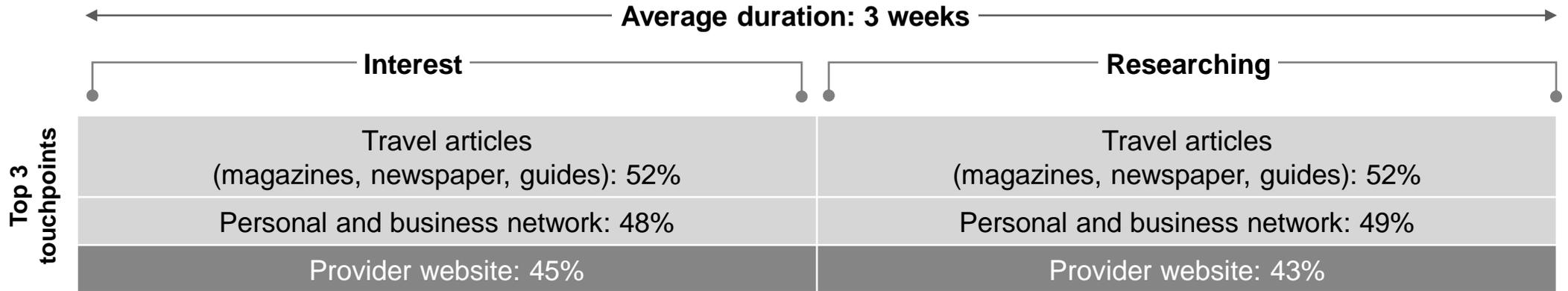
## Trends

---

- Increasing trend of low-budget international trips (SEA, Dubai), in larger groups (5–10), booked as complete packages
- Willing to use digital platforms but lack trust in booking reliability and cancellation policies

# Customer journey: Budget group travellers use travel articles and their personal network to select and research travel destination

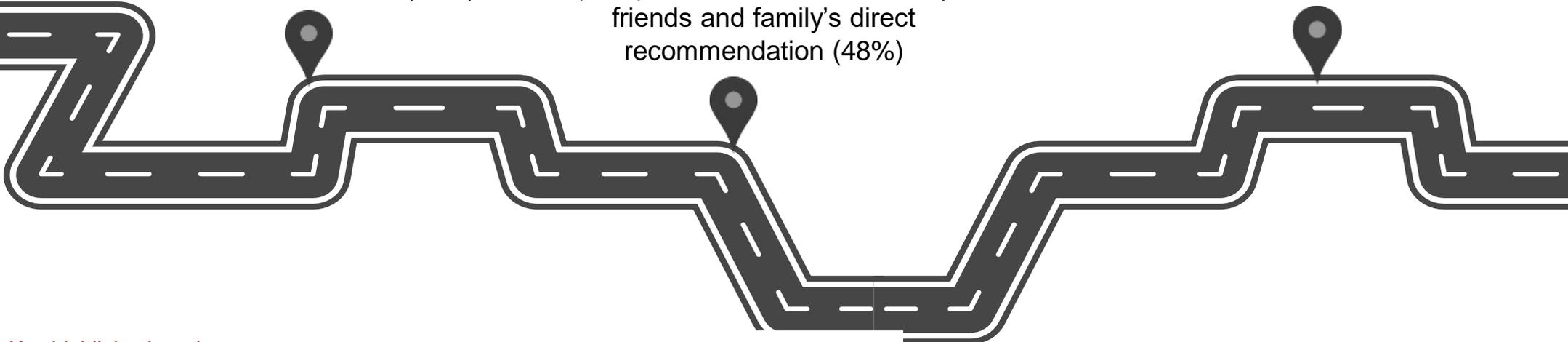
## BUDGET GROUP TRAVELLER



Relies on **travel magazines (52%) and personal and business network** to identify destinations; validates research through travel websites primarily from mobile devices (92%)

**Involves entire family in selecting the final destination (36%);** decision is influenced by friends and family's direct recommendation (48%)

Post-destination selection, conducts extensive online and offline research (~90%) to **identify suitable hotels and airlines, and check availability and prices**



Key highlights in red

### Legend

Online mode  
  Offline mode  
 #% of survey respondents from cohort

# Cost is the most important variable for their transport and lodging, and they are likely to share feedback online

## BUDGET GROUP TRAVELLER

Top 3 touchpoints	Booking		Post-booking and sharing
	Transport	Hotels	
	OTA (online): 43%	OTA (online): 35%	Called acquaintance: 41%
	In person: 20%	Direct (call): 21%	Posted on social media: 37%
	OTA (call): 16%	OTA (call): 15%	Texted acquaintance: 36%

### Cost is the most important factor

for transport mode and lodging selection; 45% prefer making booking offline because they believe they will get a better deal offline or lack familiarity with platforms

Looks for **more information on places to eat and drink** (29%) and places of interest (18%) from his or her mobile devices during the trip

Shows high propensity to share feedback through word-of-mouth (~40%), either over call or through text messages

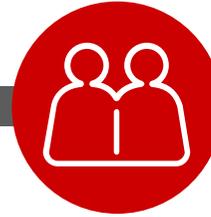
Key highlights in red

Note: OTA is online travel aggregator  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), budget group traveller (n=1,946)

### Legend

■ Online mode   ■ Offline mode   #% of survey respondents from cohort

# Experience-oriented travellers: Typical travel journey and trends



## Who are they?

---

- Young professionals and students travelling in groups of two to five (66%)
- Majority (63%) take 2–3 trips a year; primarily (57%) from metro cities
- Want to ensure best experience; comparatively low sensitivity to cost vs. other cohorts; the majority stay in 3–4 star hotels

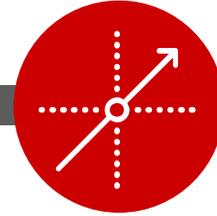
# Customer cohorts definition: Experience-oriented travellers



## Typical travel journey

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- Solo decision maker in 70% of cases; initial research online involves searching for specific hotels and activities
- Majority are convenience-oriented travellers; most seek hotel and destination reviews online, with most using social media platforms for research
- 66% display high loyalty towards content and booking platforms once trust is established; about 30% share experiences on social media post-trip



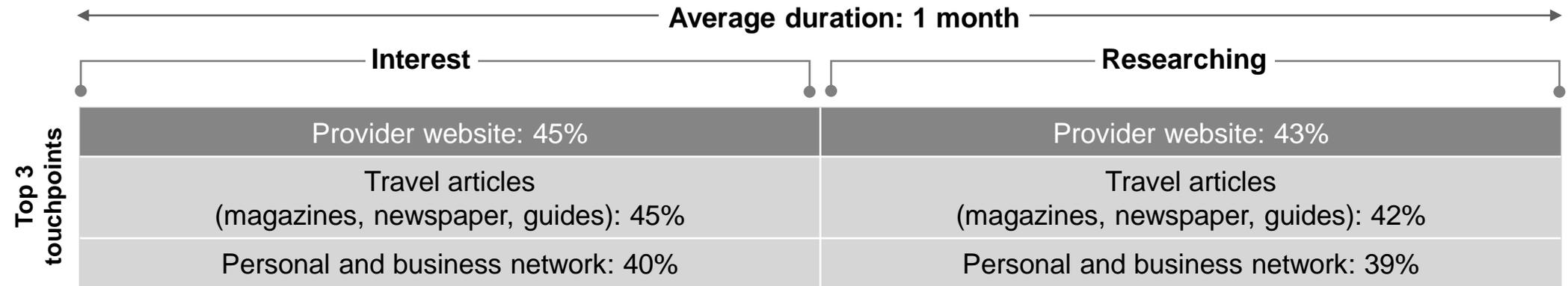
## Trends

---

- Increasing tendency to book experience packages to avoid hassle of research (especially in remote locations)
- Rely heavily on traveller reviews and travel blogs for identifying booking channels and hotels
- Frequency of solo trips and women-only trips are increasing; safety is the biggest concern

# Customer journey: Experience-oriented travellers look for 'authentic' experiences and are less likely to discuss with friends and family

## EXPERIENCE-ORIENTED TRAVELLER



Conducts rigorous initial research online and offline (90%), centred around **leisure activities** (42%) and **specific hotels** (44%); mobile is a device of choice

**Typically decides alone (70%)**; influenced by recommendations from friends and family trips (40%), pictures of others' trips on social media (29%) and ads on digital platforms (29%)

Conducts detailed planning online and offline: **checking reviews of hotel and airline availability** (42%) and **things to do at destination** (42%)

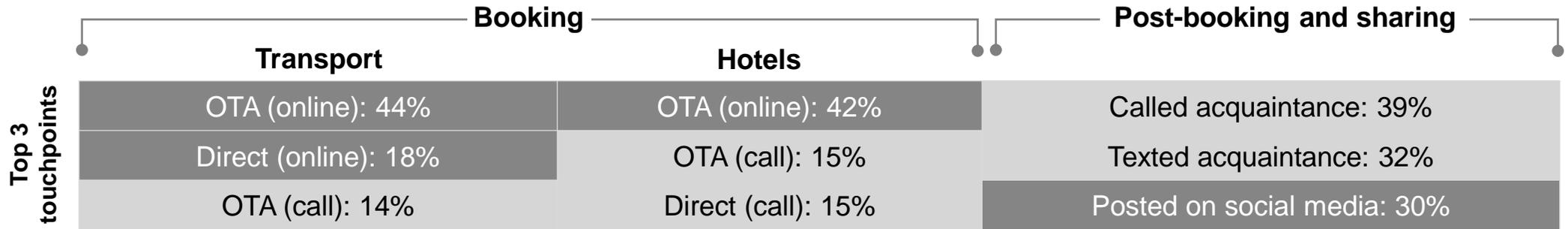
Key highlights in red

### Legend

Online mode
  Offline mode
 #% of survey respondents from cohort

# These travellers prioritise convenience and demonstrate high loyalty, leading to online booking preference

## EXPERIENCE-ORIENTED TRAVELLER



**Prioritises convenience** (71%) or preference for modes of transport (58%) to ensure pleasant travel experience; **high loyalty towards preferred online booking providers** (66%)

During the trip, seeks **information on places of interest** (20%) and shopping options (17%); mobile is the device of choice

Actively **shares feedback** of experiences **directly or through social media**

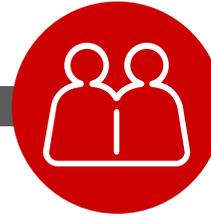
Key highlights in red

Note: OTA is online travel aggregator  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), experience-oriented traveller (n=739)

### Legend

■ Online mode   ■ Offline mode   #% of survey respondents from cohort

# Customer cohorts definition: Occasional traveller visiting friends and relatives



## Who are they?

- Typically travel with family (groups of two to five) to visit friends and family or for special events like weddings
- Majority take 1–2 trips a year to maintain familial ties and attend special occasions; primarily from Tier-1 cities
- Stay typically is 1–2 weeks; tends to stay either with family and friends or really low-cost accommodation

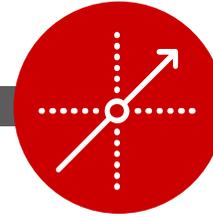
# Occasional traveller visiting friends and relatives: Typical travel journey and trends



## Typical travel journey

---

- 35% are multiple decision makers involved in trips with extended family and friends; budget is the primary consideration during research
- High focus on convenience despite budget considerations, as majority of travel is with family
- Display offline booking behaviour due to online terms and conditions and additional services in offline bookings



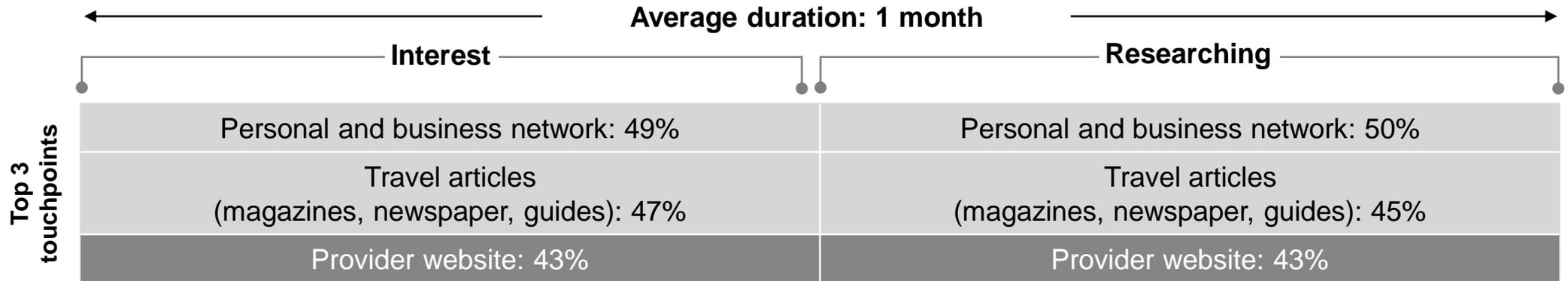
## Trends

---

- More international visiting-friends-and-relatives trips due to increasing diaspora abroad
- Senior citizens are a growing part of the visiting-friends-and-relatives segment, leading to a predominance of offline booking channels

# Customer journey: The occasional traveller selects a destination and researches via personal network, validating with online research

## OCCASIONAL VFR



**Consults his or her personal and business networks (49%) and travel articles (47%) to identify possible travel destinations**

**Emphasises validation from friends and family but also backs it up with online research (90%), mostly on mobile devices**

Post-destination selection, conducts detailed research around **availability of hotels and airlines (58%),** keeping in mind **safety of destination (50%)**

Key highlights in red

### Legend

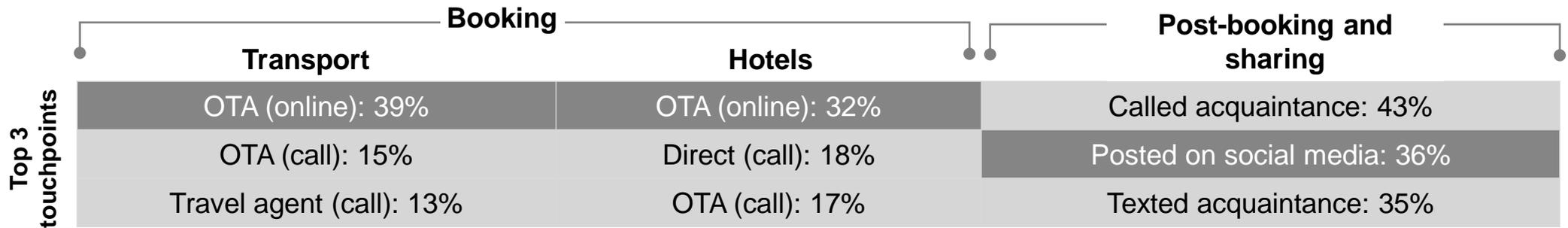
■ Online mode

■ Offline mode

##% of survey respondents from cohort

# The occasional traveller prioritises convenience for the family while optimising cost, and is more likely to book offline and share feedback

## OCCASIONAL VFR



Transport mode chosen based on cost (60%), while keeping family's convenience in mind (76%); offline booking prominent mode of booking (45%)

Seeks guidance on places to eat and drink (32%), places of interest (18%) and recreational activities with family and friends

Displays high willingness to share personal feedback with acquaintances, while also posting memories on social media (36%)

Key highlights in red

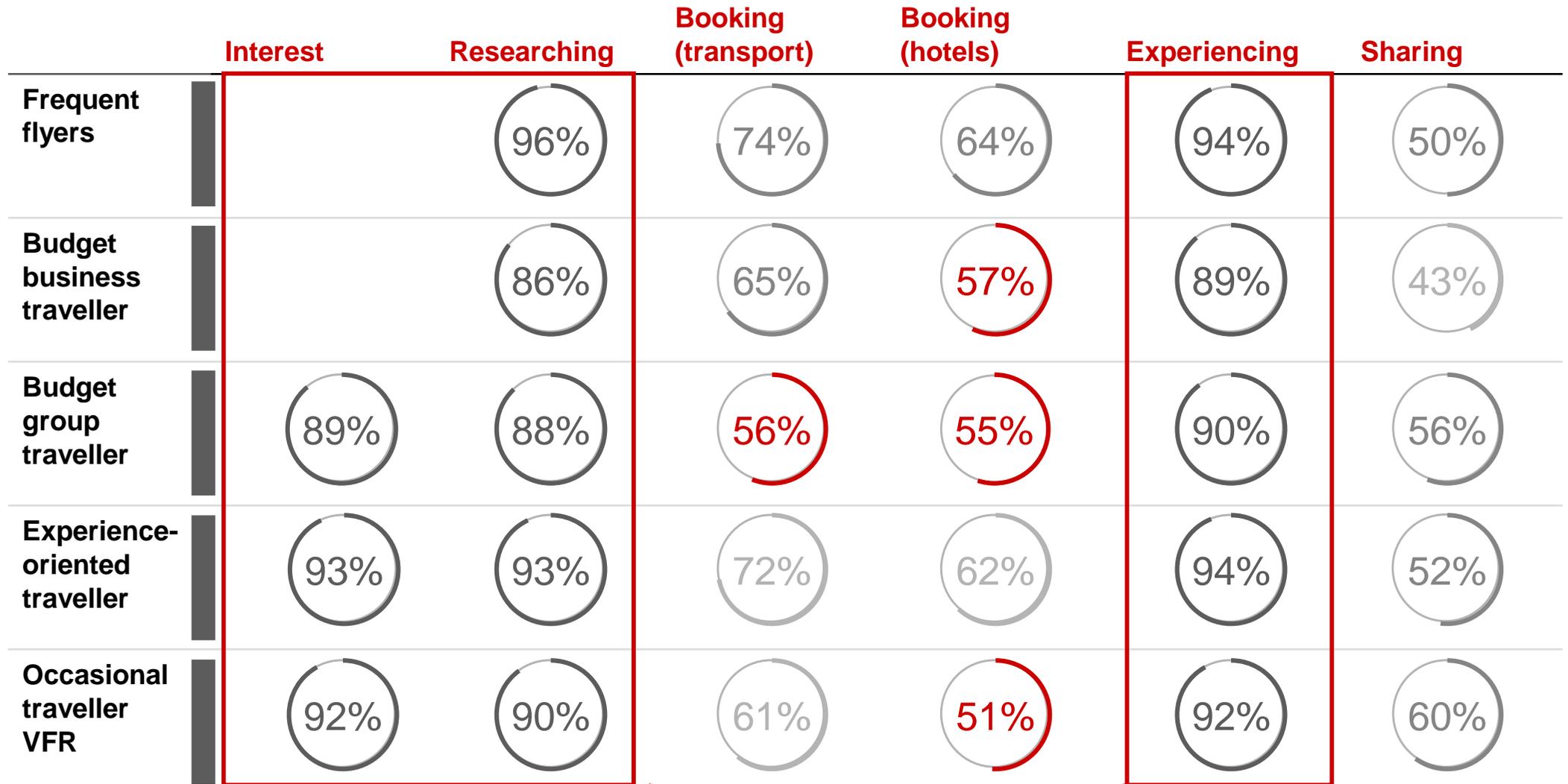
### Legend

■ Online mode    ■ Offline mode    #% of survey respondents from cohort

Note: OTA is online travel aggregator  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), occasional traveller VFR (n=534)

# Online channels influence pre-booking and experience stages (heavy on research), with 86% or higher penetration across cohorts

/ ONLINE CONSUMERS ONLY



Online use spikes in phases involving research

Online influence ##%

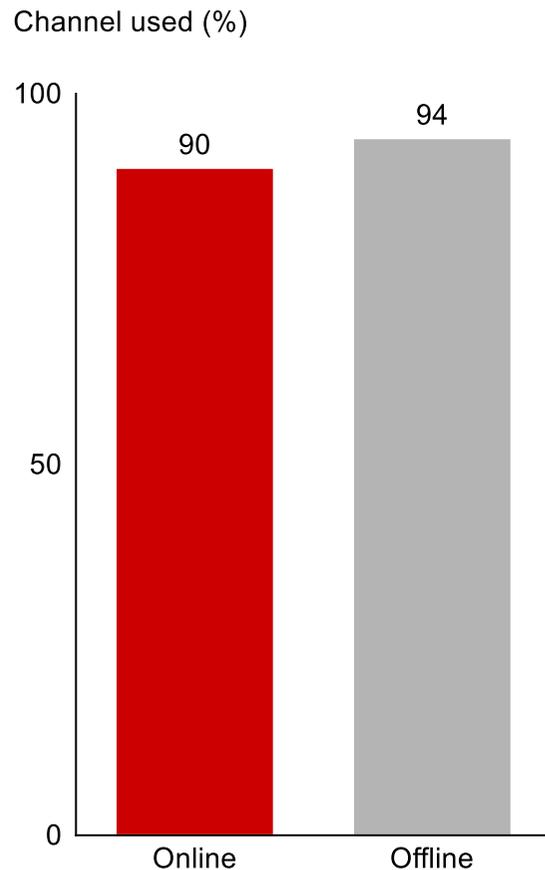
Notes: Survey questions: (1) Interest: What type of information did you look for initially, when you first started thinking about a trip and researched on it? Where did you find this information? (2) Researching: What type of information did you look for in this planning stage before you went for the final booking? Where did you find this information? (3) Booking: Which of the following do you generally prefer for booking your transport/hotels? (5) Experiencing: Which of the following did you do during your trip? (5) Sharing: Which of the following did you do after your trip?

Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

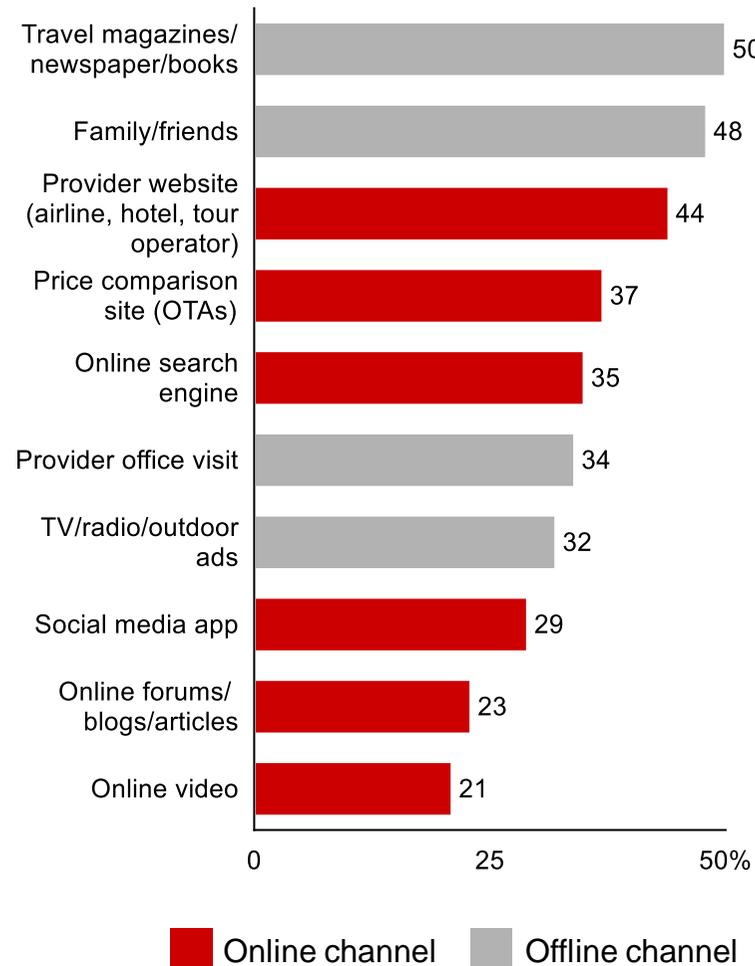
# Offline channels are still relevant with consumers who use both online and offline channels equally for their travel research in the interest stage

## INTEREST PHASE

### Channel usage for all cohorts



### Channels used



### Cohort-specific variations

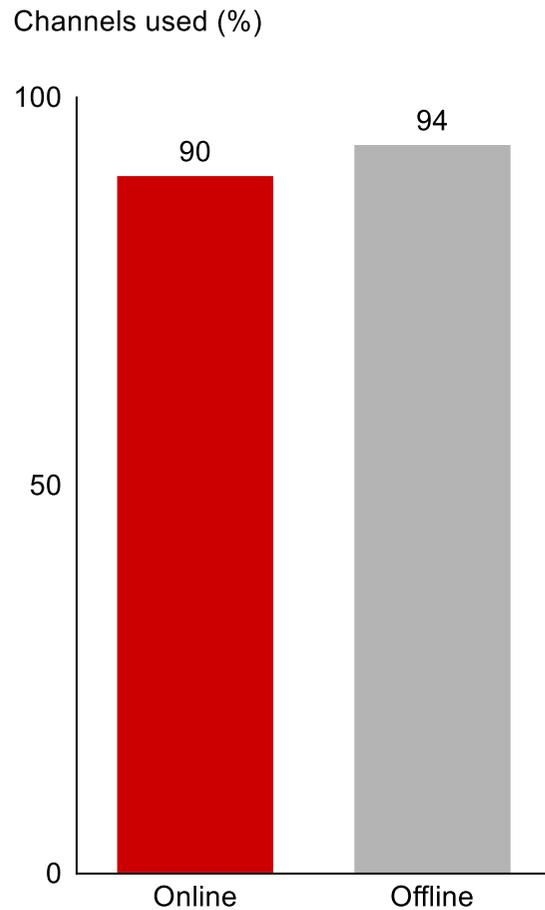
- Budget group traveller and occasional visiting-friends-and-relatives travellers skew more towards offline channels
- Experience-oriented travellers have the highest engagement online
- Travel needs of frequent flyers and budget business travellers typically are decided by their business or firm requirements

Notes: Survey question: What type of information did you look for initially, when you first started thinking about a trip and researched on it? Where did you find this information?; channel usage defined as % of survey responders who use any one of the online or offline channels during the interest phase; survey respondents can select multiple online and offline options  
 Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

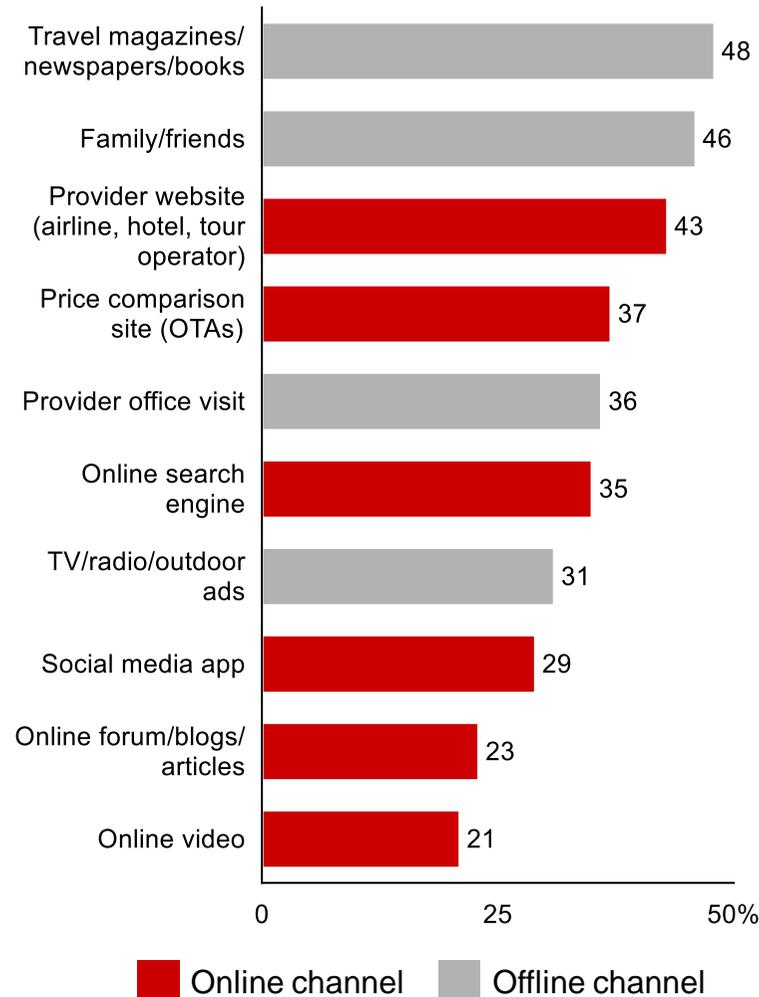
# Similar to the interest phase, both online and offline channels have significant influence during the research phase

## RESEARCHING PHASE

### Channel usage for all cohorts



### Channels used



### Cohort-specific variations

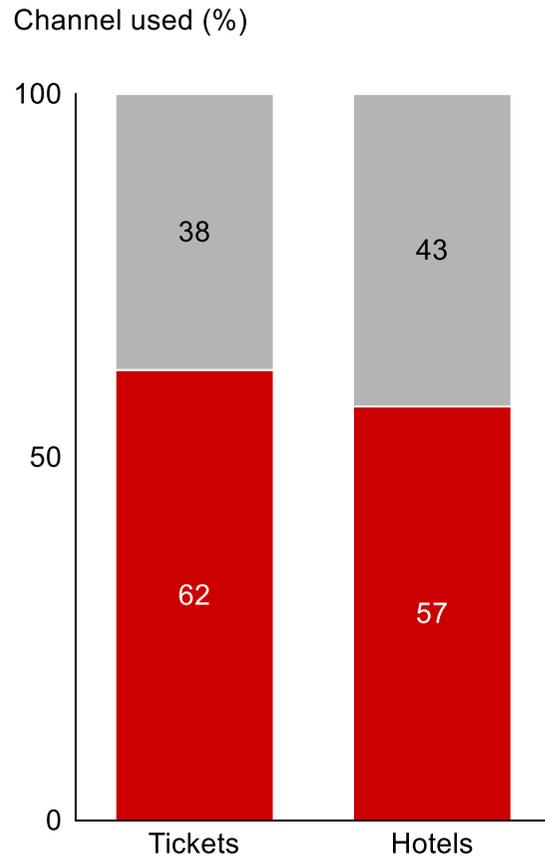
- Frequent flyers skew more towards online channels for researching during their trip planning
- Budget group travellers are the most likely to use offline channels to plan their trips
- Occasional visiting-friends-and-relatives travellers are influenced heavily by conversations with friends and family

Notes: Survey question: What type of information did you look for in this planning stage before you went for the final booking? Where did you find this information?; channel usage defined as % of survey responders who use any one of the online or offline channels during the planning phase; survey respondents can select multiple online and offline options  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

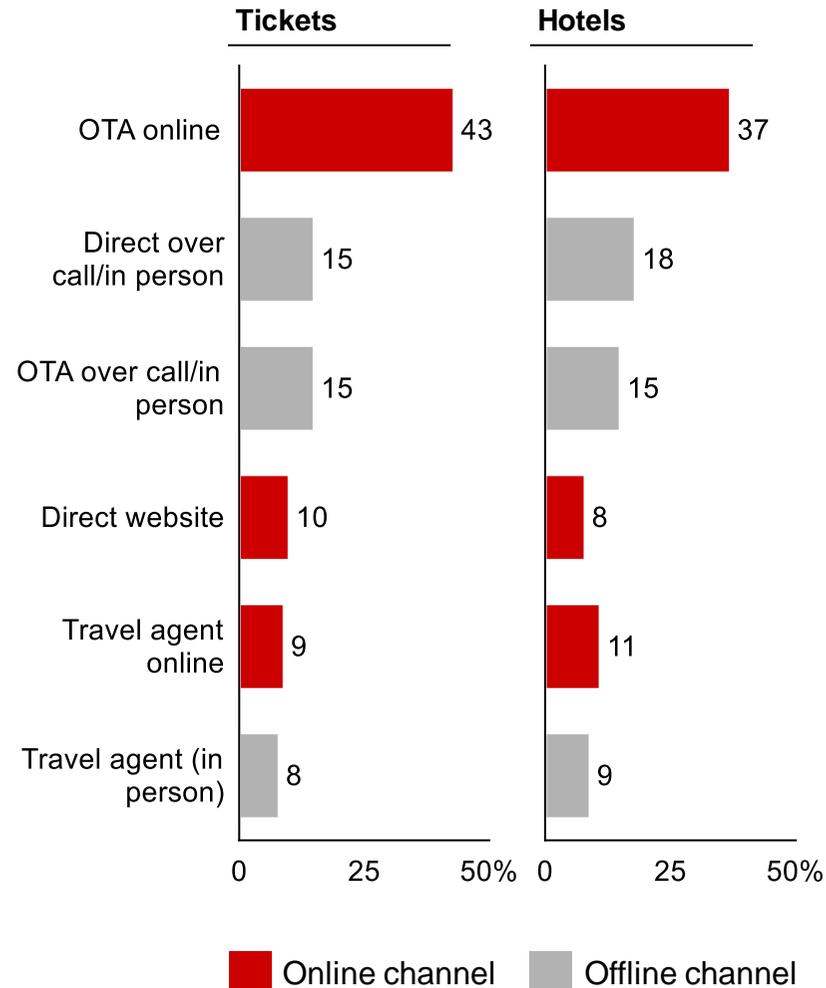
# Consumers, however, make a choice in the booking phase and the majority book online, although 40% still book offline

## BOOKING PHASE

### Channel usage for all cohorts



### Channels used



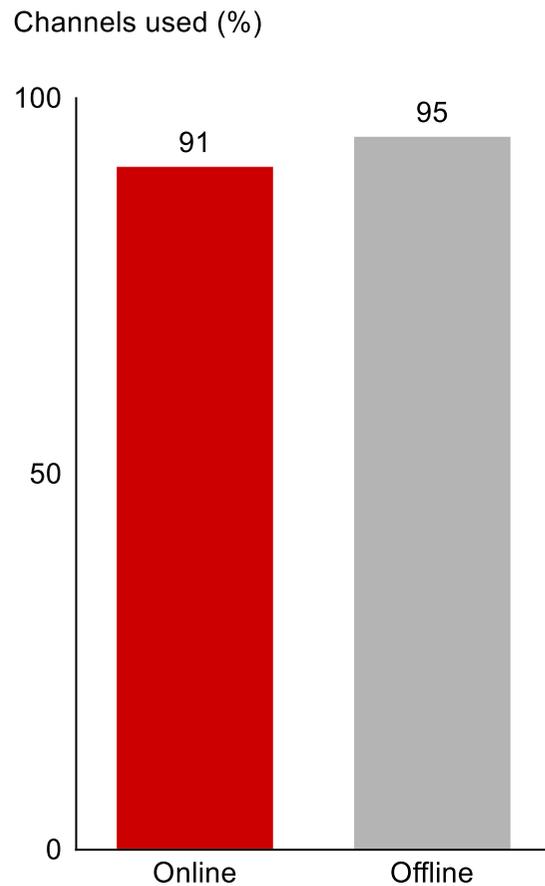
### Cohort-specific variations

- Frequent flyers are the highest users of OTA online channel for ticket and hotel bookings
- Occasional visiting-friends-and-relatives travellers most commonly use travel agents for ticket and hotel bookings
- Experience-oriented travellers book tickets directly online

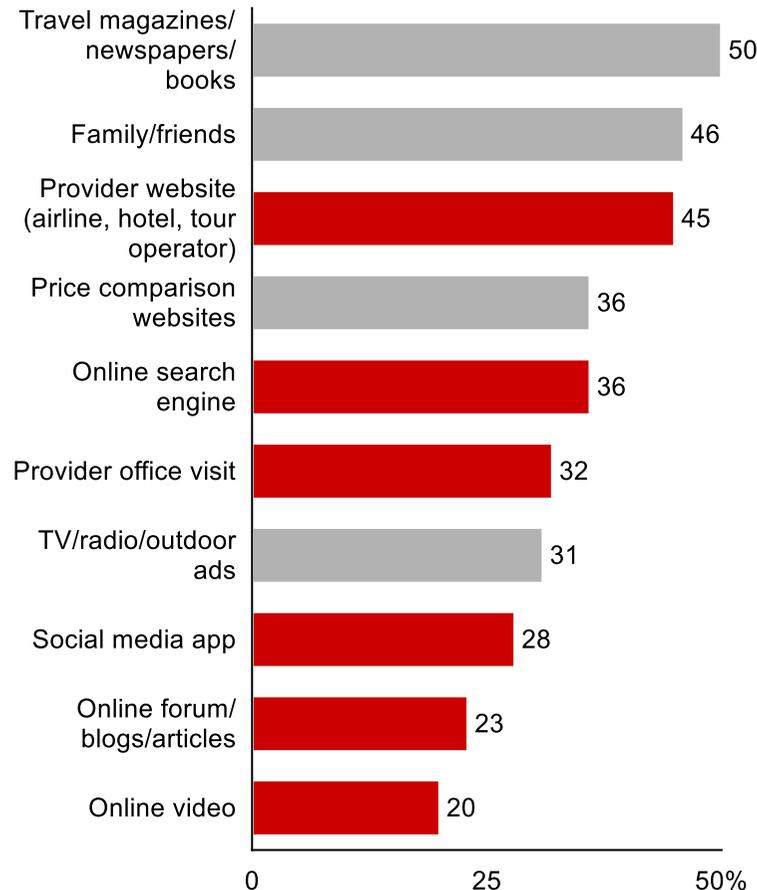
# During the trip, consumers use online and offline channels equally for information and recommendations

## EXPERIENCING PHASE

### Channel usage for all cohorts



### Channels used



■ Online channel ■ Offline channel

### Cohort-specific variations

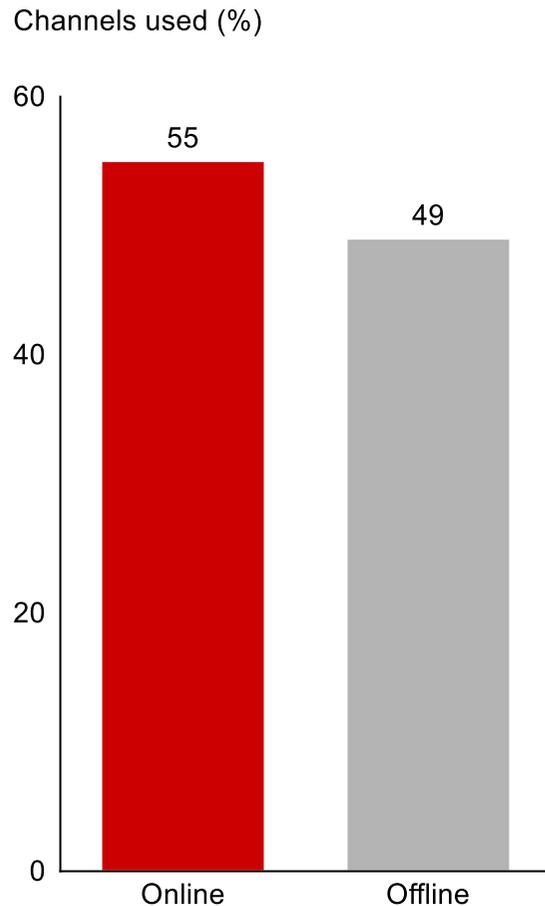
- Frequent flyers rely more on online channels to research information on places to eat and drink or places of interest during their trip
- Budget group travellers use offline channels to get information on places to eat and drink or places of interest during their trip
- Experience-oriented travellers use search engines significantly more than other cohorts for recommendations on places of interest during their trip

Notes: Survey question: Which of the following did you do during your trip?; channel usage defined as % of people who use any one of the online or offline channels during the experiencing phase; survey respondents can select multiple online and offline options  
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

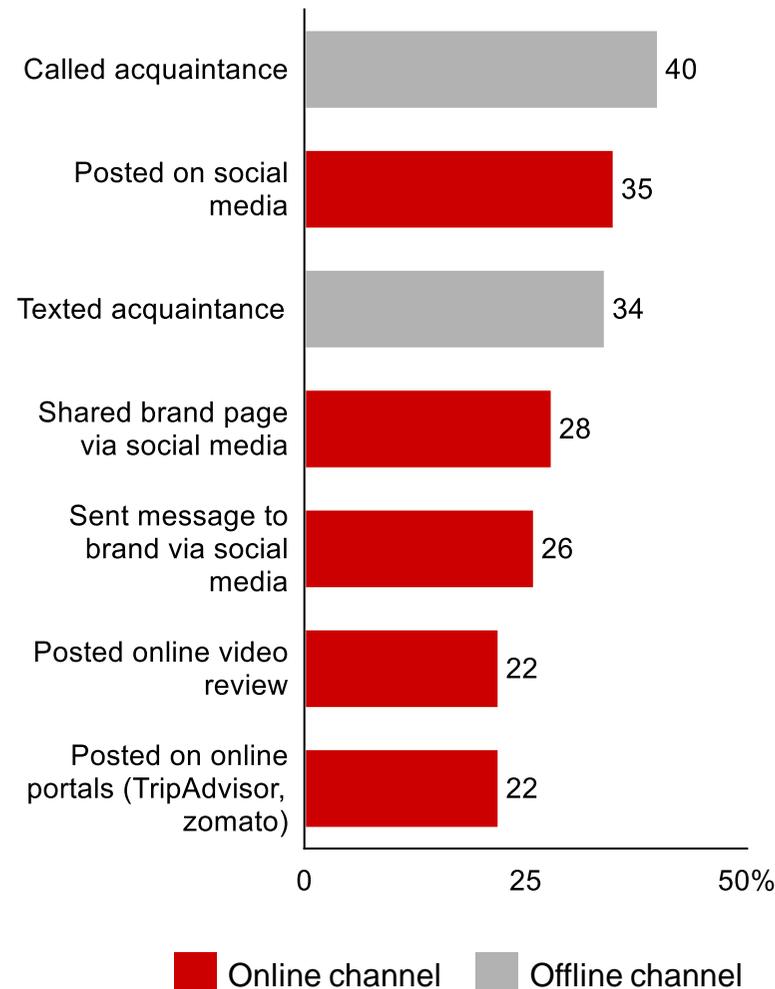
# At least half of online consumers share feedback about their travel through online and offline channels, with social media dominating

## SHARING PHASE

### Channel usage for all cohorts



### Channels used



### Cohort-specific variations

- Frequent flyers have the highest tendency to post on portals like TripAdvisor
- Experience-oriented travellers have the highest tendency to share their feedback on social media
- Occasional visiting-friends-and-relatives and budget group travellers have the highest tendency to share their feedback offline by calling and texting acquaintances

Notes: Survey question: Which of the following did you do after your trip?; channel usage defined as % of people who use any one of the online or offline channels during the sharing phase; survey respondents can select multiple online and offline options

Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)



# Business implications



# Overcoming four critical barriers can unlock the roughly \$24 billion in incremental online travel spending by 2021

Increase penetration to find new customers

Engage and retain current online customers

## Constrained supply in mass segments

1

Sizeable amount of active Internet users with no or limited transactions; **160 million** non-transactors

Low online booking among mass and budget-constrained segment; **20 percentage point** higher use of online channels in premium

Limited penetration in Tier-2/3 cities; **96%** online travellers come from metro/tier 1

## Unfavourable perception in mass segments

2

Lower satisfaction from online portals among 'mass' segments; **33%–35%** extremely satisfied among economy business, budget and occasional traveller visiting-friends-and-relative segment

vs.

**42%–48%** extremely satisfied among frequent flyers and experience-oriented travellers

## Drop in online use across the purchase journey

3

High use of online channel in interest and research phase across cohorts; **86%+** use of online channels

Significant drop in online use during actual booking; **50%–60%** use of online channels

## Lack of trust in online portals

4

Lack of trust in portal or payment system; **56%** of offline purchasers affected

Better pricing offline; **43%** of offline purchasers affected

Lack of personal touchpoints; **37%** of offline users affected

Cancellation policy; **31%** of offline users affected

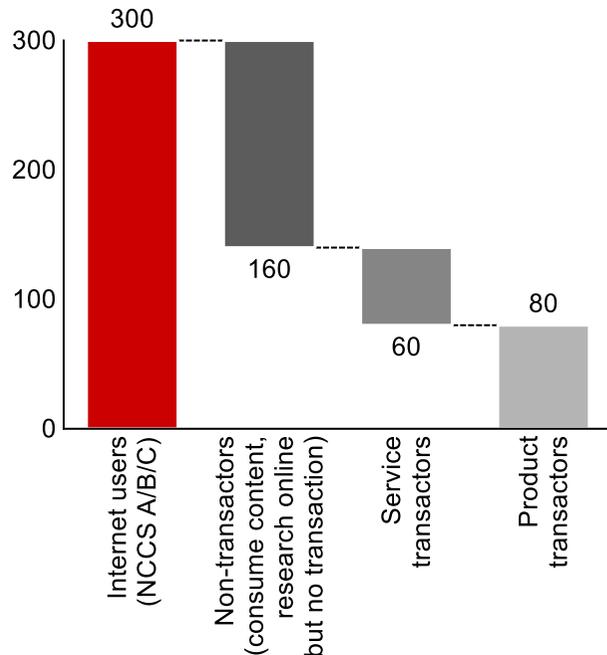
# There are three major areas in the mass segment to expand supply

1

## CONSTRAINED SUPPLY

### Tap into active Internet users with no or limited transaction

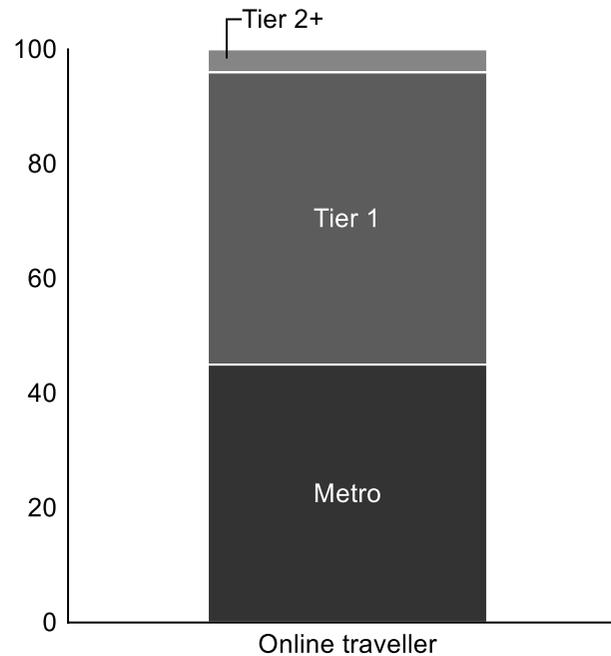
Number of users  
(in millions)



- Of the 160 million non-transactors
  - 30 million have transacted in the past but stopped
  - Balance of the 130 million research online but don't transact

### Deepen penetration in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities

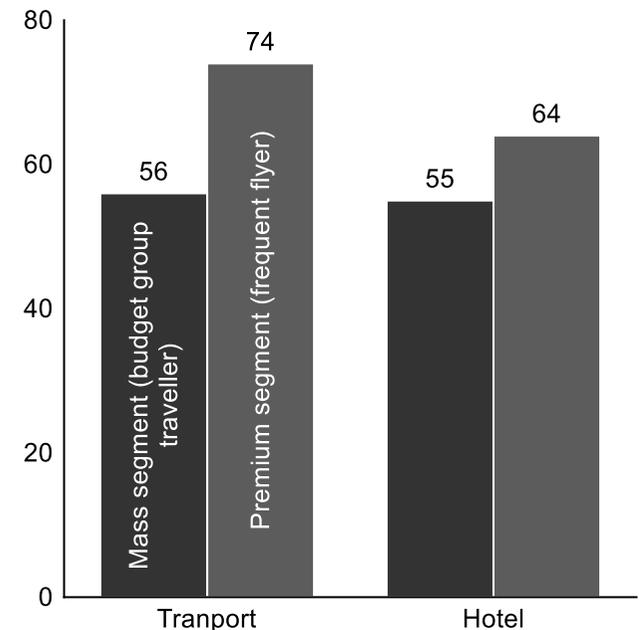
% of respondents



- Majority of online travellers are from metro and Tier-1 cities
  - Less than 5% come from Tier-2 cities

### Increase online booking among mass segment

% Online bookings



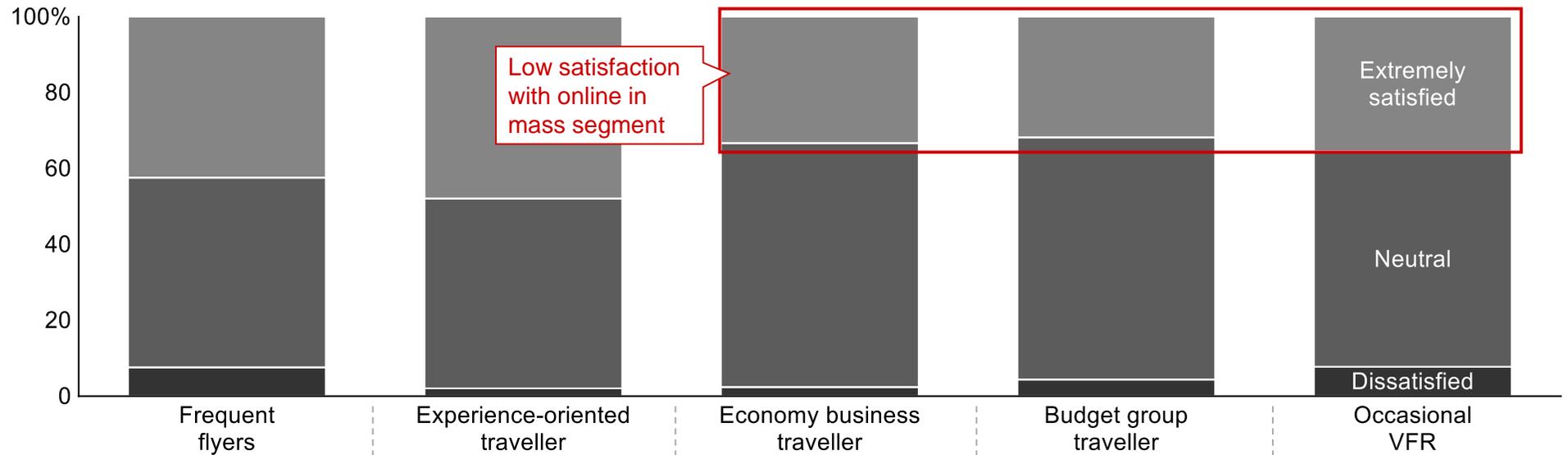
- ~20 percentage point gap in online channel use between the mass and premium segments in transport booking

# Customer perception that online market is geared towards the higher-spending traveller implies a need for mass customisation

## 2 UNFAVOURABLE MASS PERCEPTION



Satisfaction with online portals among online users



	Frequent flyers	Experience-oriented traveller	Economy business traveller	Budget group traveller	Occasional VFR
<b>Reasons for satisfaction</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instant information</li> <li>Availability of multiple options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ease of information access</li> <li>Reviews to aid decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheaper prices online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-stop shop for all travel modes (flight, train, bus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive information on hotels</li> </ul>
<b>Causes of dissatisfaction</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revealing personal or financial details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No direct human contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online fraud</li> <li>Pricing disparity across portals</li> <li>Additional services via direct contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offline deal availability</li> <li>Booking fail rates</li> <li>Platform friendliness (bulk bookings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upfront payment</li> <li>Online cancellation policies</li> <li>Dissatisfactory response from online portals</li> </ul>

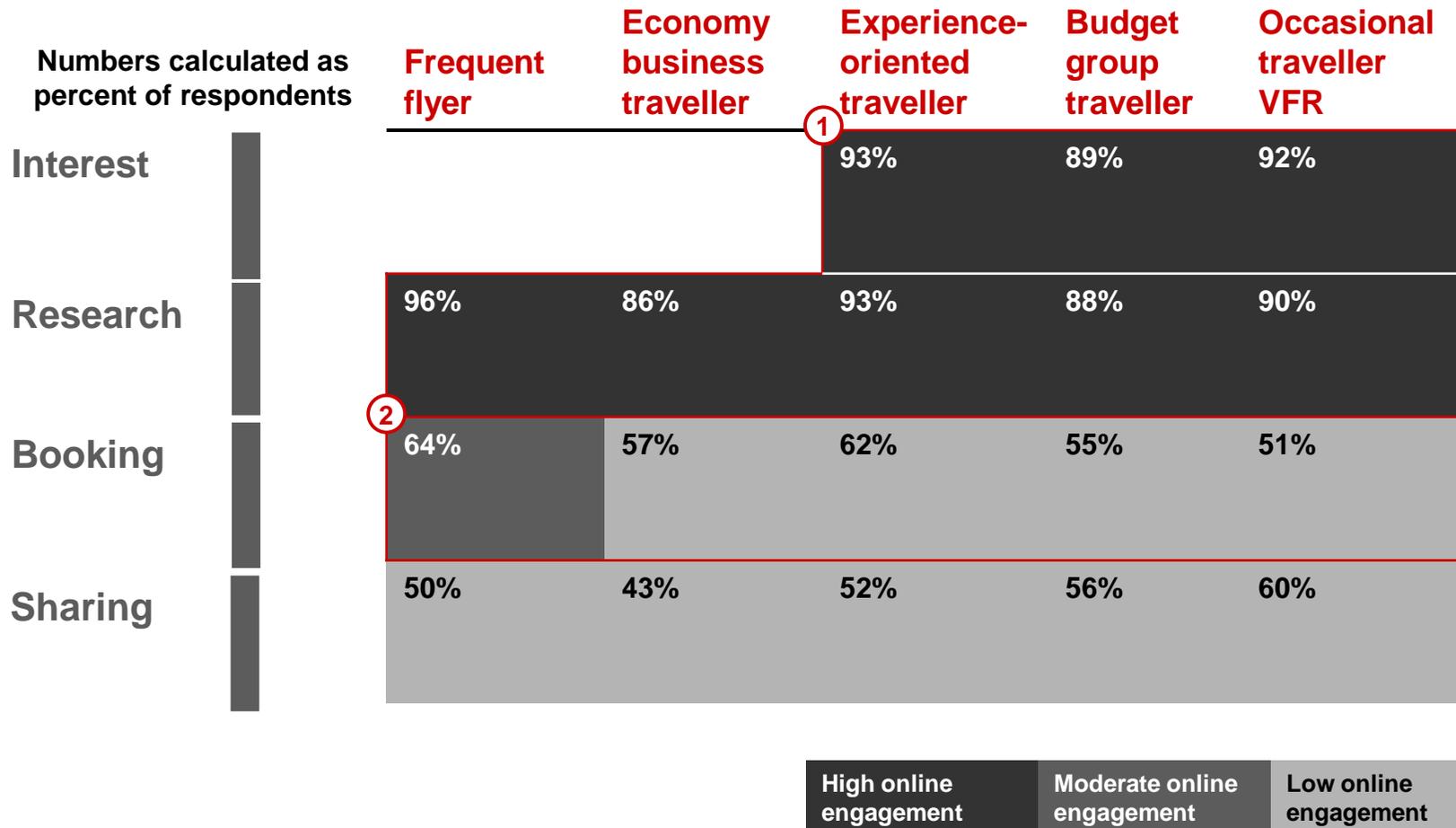
Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

# Online channel use drops significantly from the pre-booking to booking phase; customers need to be caught early and retained

3

## DROP IN ONLINE USE

### Online engagement across stages of customer journey



- ① Disproportionately high use of online channel in interest and research phase (>86%)
- ② However, significant drop occurs as customers progress towards booking (60% to 50%)

Note: Interest and research: % of respondents who use any one of the online channels during pre-booking phases; booking: hotel booking considered  
 Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659)

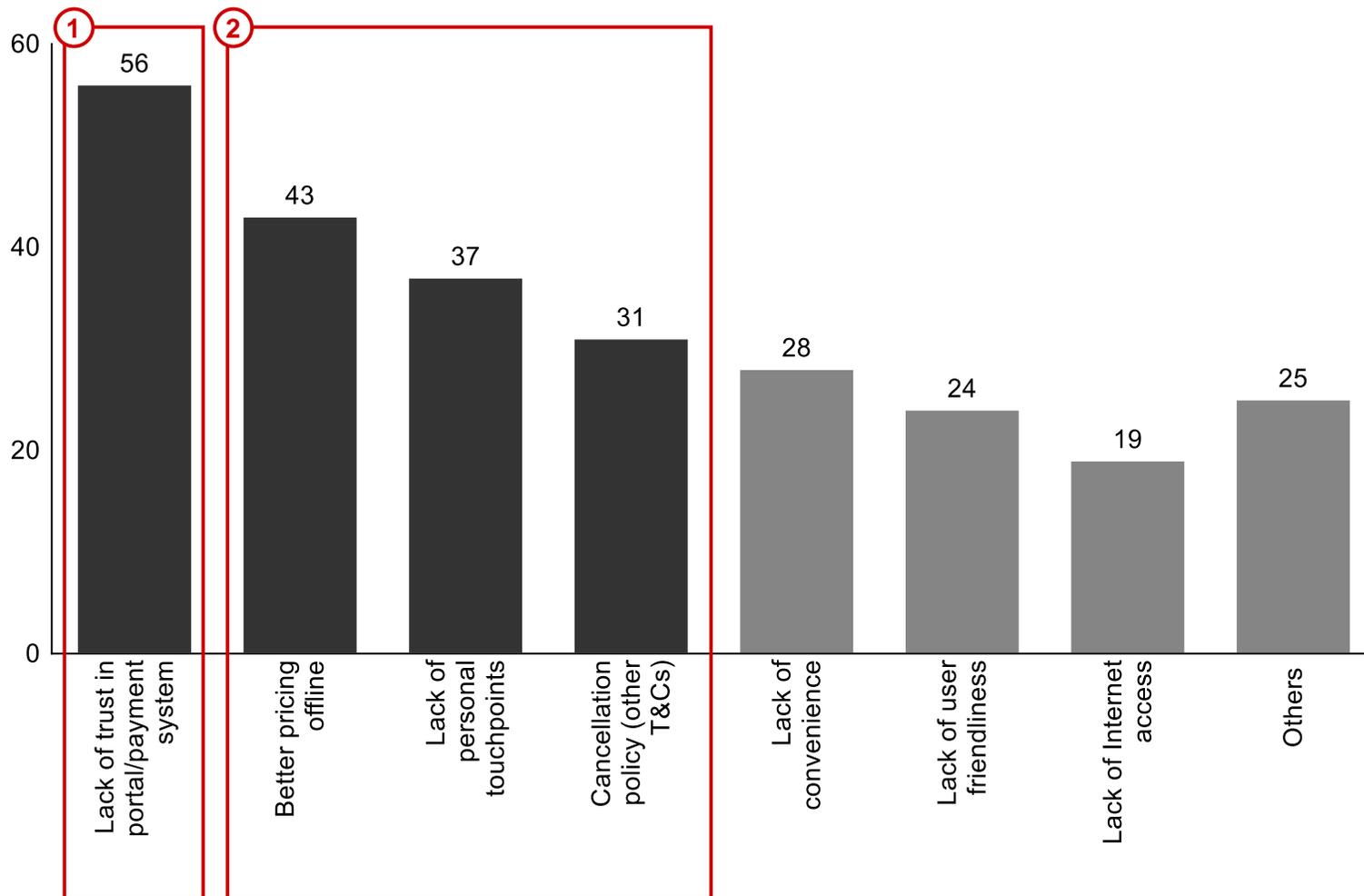
# Trust continues to be an issue with the online channel across cohorts, and so innovations that enhance trust in the brand are important

4

## LACK OF TRUST

### Reasons customers don't book online

Percent of respondents among offline users



- ① Lack of trust on payment gateways on online portals is the primary barrier to online bookings across all customer cohorts
- ② Unpleasant booking experience due to unattractive pricing, offline customer support, inflexible cancellation policy, etc., mentioned as the other reasons to not book online

# Businesses in the travel and tourism industry have five critical imperatives

Increase penetration to find new customers

Engage and retain current online users



**Constrained supply in mass segments**



**Unfavourable perception in mass segments**



**Drop in online use across purchase funnel**



**Lack of trust in using online portals**

- (A) Alleviate consumer concerns:** Improving adoption by building a trusted brand is crucial
- (B) Address customer-perception issues:** Provide mass customisation to increase share in the segment
- (C) Deepen supply reach:** Use lessons from Indian consumer tech to penetrate mass segments (standardise and enable sharing), reach non-transactors (build offline presence) and create access for new user base (Tier-2 and Tier-3 segments)
- (D) Create platform stickiness:** Rail and bus constitutes more than 70% of leisure travel with limited bundling; packaging centred around rail and bus travel can create platform adoption and customer retention
- (E) Invest in a digital backbone:** Adopt digital technologies to influence customers early in the journey and convert them; move from one-time engagement to ongoing relationships

# Booking experience: The right balance of standardisation and customisation will serve the mass market and bridge the trust gap

## ADDRESS CONSUMER CONCERNS AND PERCEPTIONS



### Offerings

- Standardised offering across hotels; promise of AC, free Wi-Fi, TV, clean bathrooms
- 150-point checklist and routine audits

- Detailed specs, specific embarking and disembarking locations and times
- Zero booking fees and minimum price guarantee
- **Specialised products available for large group bookings**

- Cheapest fare guarantee
- **Fee-based loyalty programme for free cancellation of flights and hotels**
- **Service-guaranteed hotels under specifically designed assurance programme**
- **Provides destination-oriented curated packages to appeal to experience seeking travellers**

### Personal touchpoints

- 24/7 customer-care assistance
- **Dedicated executives available via online and offline channels for specific hotels**

- 24/7 customer-care assistance
- **Dedicated group travel consultant to help guide through the process**

- 24/7 customer-care assistance

### Cancellation options

- **Free cancellation 24 hours prior to check-in time (depending on the number of rooms booked)**

- Cancellation policy mentioned upfront with listing

- Cancellation policy mentioned upfront with detailed listing

# Payments: A trusted, standard payment platform and customisable payment options will promote online use among mass segments

## ADDRESS CONSUMER CONCERNS AND PERCEPTIONS



### Payment setup

- Partner with leading mobile wallets to ease online payments

- Partner with leading mobile wallets to ease online payments
- Brand's own wallet to reduce transaction fail rates

- Partner with leading mobile wallets to ease online payments

### Payment options

- Flexibility to make booking without upfront payment or sharing credit card details

- 100% upfront payment required for booking confirmation

- Pay at checkout model available for multiple hotels across India
- Pay-later model launched for select customer sets—payment also feasible after specific duration post-stay

# Lessons from consumer tech: Pair standard services for specific segments with the sharing economy for mass-segment outreach

DEEPEN SUPPLY REACH

REACH MASS SEGMENTS

## Learning

**Standardise services and improve utilisation**

## Description

- **Standardise where the supply is unorganised and fragmented**
  - Implemented by verification and training of service providers and standardising service contracts
  - Offering services from one umbrella brand; adds authenticity to the service and establishes trust in quality

**Enable sharing economy**

- Developing business models to **increase availability of certain services by sharing underutilised assets, converting fixed assets to variable assets** like shared living, co-working, fashion, furniture

- Improved capacity utilization of inventory: Aggregation to improve capacity utilisation in high fixed-asset industries such as hotels, fitness centres, gyms, food delivery
- Aggregating across multiple suppliers to enhance reach
- Enhances the brand value with assured service levels to customers
- Increasing willingness among customers to share and rent to access better-quality high-priced products and facilities
- Increased preference to not be restricted by an owned asset and instead have access to better products and variety
- Clear economic benefit to both parties

# Consumer tech helps bridge trust barriers and enables decision making by providing physical access

DEEPEN SUPPLY REACH

BUILD OFFLINE PRESENCE

## Learning

**Serve high-involvement segments with offline presence**

## Description

- Online brands in **high involvement categories** increasing offline presence, **fostering online growth** by bridging the **trust barrier**
  - **Customer acquisition:** Omnichannel increases customer touchpoints, awareness and customer acquisition
  - **Brand reinforcement:** Multichannel approach allows brands to communicate and understand customers better
  - **Experiential purchasing** acts as differentiator in high-touch segments where customers prefer a pre-purchase trial (Physical, VR, AR)

- Importance of look and feel
  - In several categories, importance of look and feel and trials gets in the way of higher online penetration (apparel, furniture, cosmetics, jewellery)
  - To enable physical review, online players increasingly set up 'experience' or 'trial' stores; customers can also place online orders through kiosks at those
  - Players also providing online visualisation tools (eyewear)
- Lack of trust in online
  - Customers prefer to test certain product categories physically; usually in cases involving personal application or having a bearing on health and wellness
  - Players setting up physical stores to bridge the trust barrier (fashion, jewellery, cosmetics)

# Lessons from consumer tech: Players are developing business models to meet the needs of the segments that have been underserved

DEEPEN SUPPLY REACH

EXPAND USER BASE

## Learning

## Description

### Provide access to the underserved

- **Online players are expanding into Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities with**
  - Multilingual support
  - Improved access via apps that work on slow networks (lite version)
  - Increased feet-on-street to support sales growth, given that a large proportion is expected to be first-time users

### Localise content

- **Players providing customised, relevant content for users who are increasingly in front of screens**
  - Information (news)
  - Leisure and entertainment (audio, video, gaming)
  - Communication (chat apps)

- Potential to unlock a sizeable customer base, given the strong uptick in Internet penetration in recent years

- Increased geographical coverage led to a need for localised, geography-based online content
- Increased online media adoption across age groups and sections of the society created a need for online content in vernacular languages

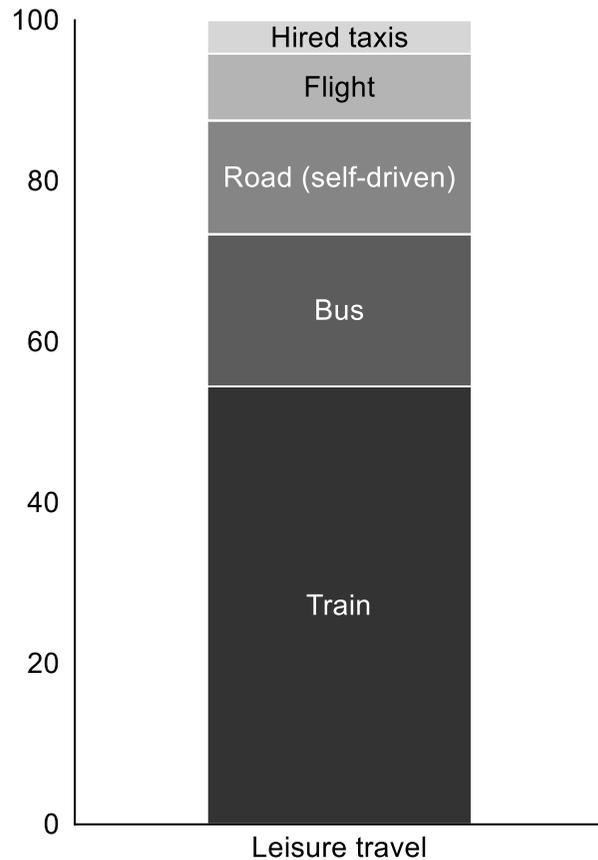
# Road and rail is untapped opportunity for more than 70% of leisure travel; limited bundling and customer-focused packaging will increase adoption

CREATE PLATFORM STICKINESS

/ ONLINE CONSUMERS ONLY

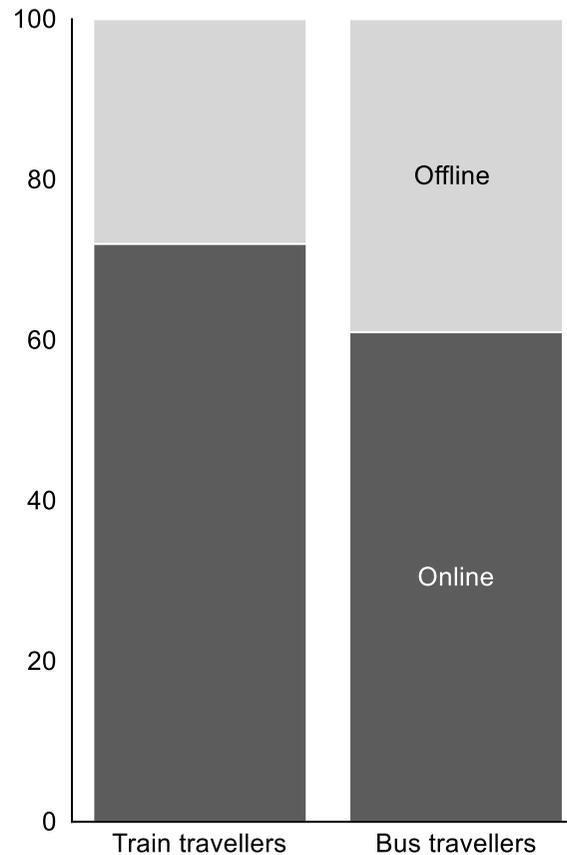
## Mode of leisure travel

Travel mode (%)

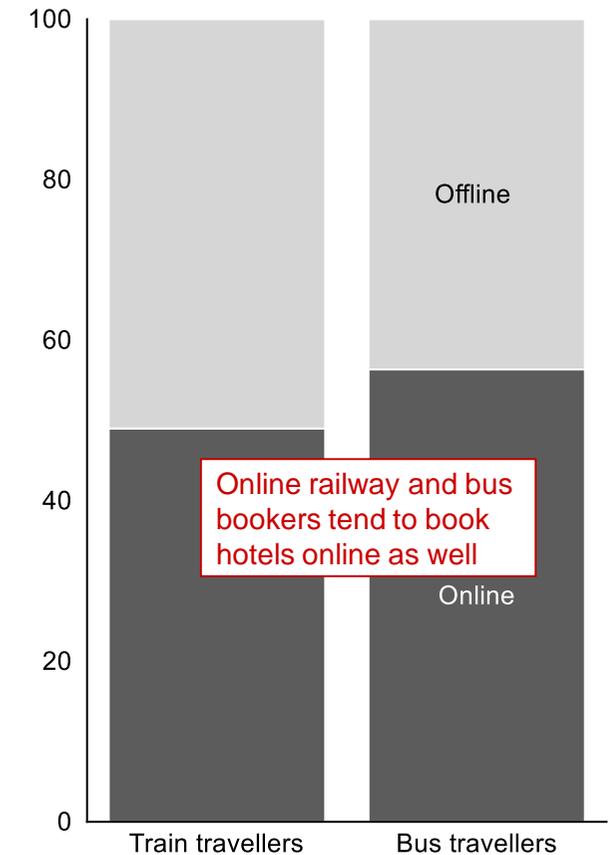


## Ticket and hotel booking behaviour of rail and bus travellers

Transport booking mode (%)



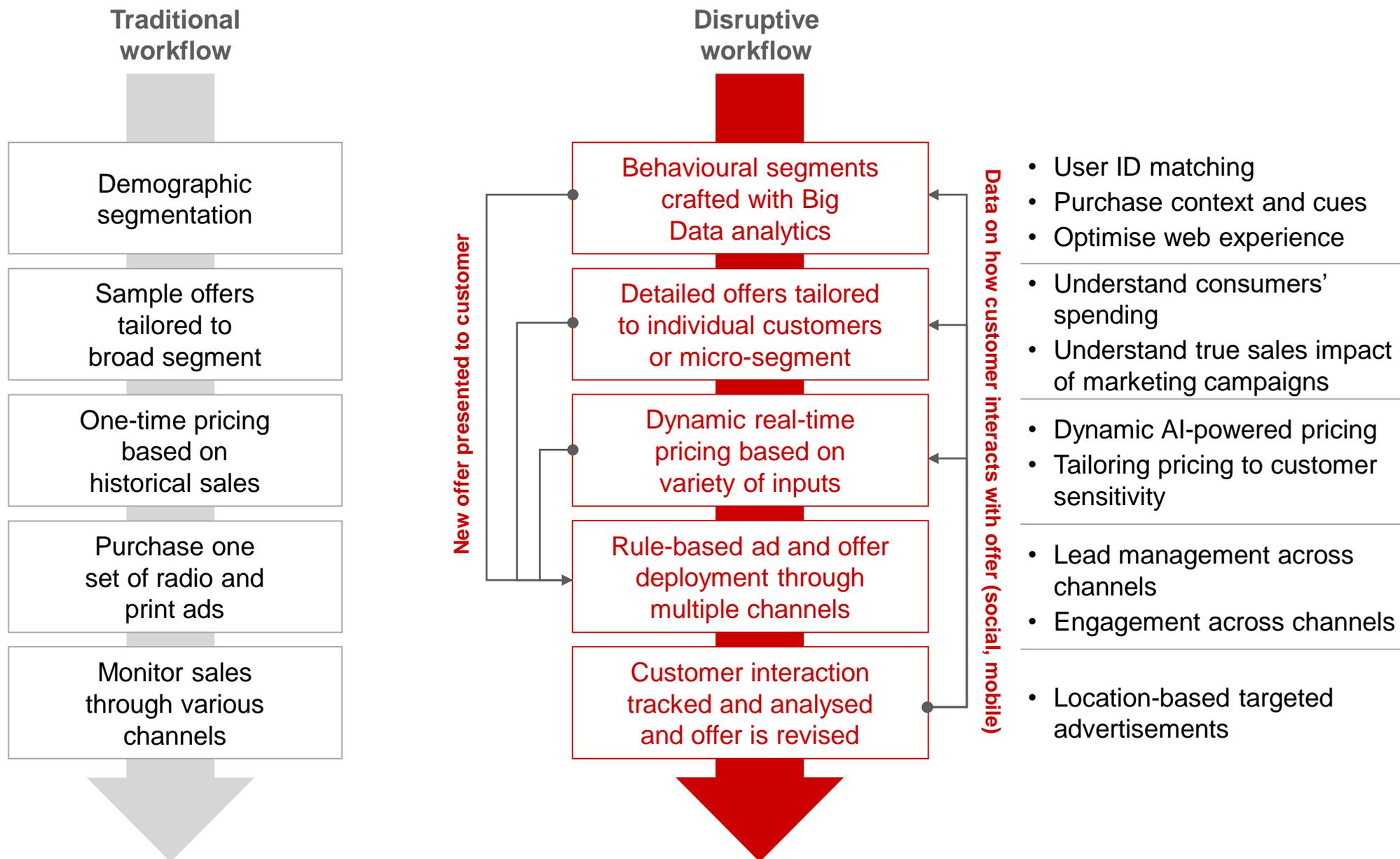
Hotel bookings of online transport bookers (%)



Note: Survey respondents were screened for booking a paid accommodation and overnight stay; questions: How did you reach your destination city/place? How did you make bookings for your trip? How many days did you spend on this trip? Keeping your most recent trip in mind, where did you stay during that trip? How did you make bookings for that trip?  
 Source: Kantar IMRB travel survey (n=3,659), rail travellers (n=1,878), bus travellers (n=691)

# Influencing customers early and converting them requires digital technologies and a shift from one-time engagement to ongoing relationships

## INVEST IN DIGITAL BACKBONE



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