

To Understand Customers Perception towards Hotel Amenities, Services Quality and Online Reviews while Booking Hotels

Surabhi Mitra^{1*} and Prajakta Ravindra Khamkar²

¹Assistant Professor, School of Hotel Management, Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Pune, Maharashtra, India. Email: surabhi.mittra@adypu.edu.in

²Student, School of Hotel Management, Ajeenkya DY Patil University, Pune, Maharashtra, India. Email: prajakta.khamkar@adypu.edu.in

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: It is well known fact that hospitality is contributing substantially to the economic growth of any country. Tourism industry is an important component for the same which includes number of sectors such as lodging, catering, transportation, visitors, attraction, entertainment, etc. Customers are the major stakeholders towards the hospitality industry. The purpose of this study is to understand the significance of amenities, service quality and role of online reviews in the hotel industry by developing a conceptual framework and measurement scale. It is a descriptive research, analysis of data from a total of 110 customers revealed their views which helped us reach a conclusion. Online intermediaries in hospitality and tourism industry provide various options and comparison of hotels, tourist products, travel destinations, brand choices, prices and most importantly convenience to the consumer.

This research helps us to understand consumer behavior and motivators based on hotel services, amenities and reviews as criteria to search and book hotel deals through online travel intermediaries. Following research was employed to measure the perceptible, emotional and social factors that influenced motivation and also how motivation mediated these factors toward booking intention. The result indicates consumers' attitudes and perception towards the hotel amenities, service quality and online reviews.

Keywords: Amenities, Customer, Hospitality industry, Online reviews, Service quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hotel amenities are anticipated goodies provided to guests when renting rooms at various lodging institutions. The amenities provided in each hotel vary. Certain hotels will have standard amenities provided in all rooms to all guests while the others may provide them at an additional price based on their category.

Hotel services, their number and the no of employees depend on the size of the hotel as well as on its classification. Typically, the basic hotel services include reception guests, room service, food service, including restaurants in the hotel, and security etc.

Customer reviews provide us with a brief idea of what to expect and with readily available review about a lot of products and services it has become our habit to quickly check reviews for our purchases. According to a survey by the Pew Research Centre's Internet & American Life Project, 58% of the Americans research products and services on the internet before purchasing and 24% write reviews and post comments online after the purchase (Jansen, 2010). The growing importance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) for e-commerce success is reflected by a growing body of research that draws upon online customer review data.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS AND NEED OF STUDY

Hotel industry is very fast paced industry in today's world, there are many competitors in hospitality industry. Every hotel has its own unique amenities or services. So, there is need to study on what is majorly considered while selecting hotels.

In the present scenario of international hospitality industry, hotels are facing both challenges and opportunities in terms of the customer service, expectations and demands. Evidently it can be seen that customer service plays a vital role in the hospitality business as the service quality and experience are more emphasized by the customers compared to before. Therefore, this study is considered as important to know the customers attitude while selecting hotels.

III. OBJECTIVES

- To understand customer's expectations and understanding about hotel amenities.

- To understand the services and facilities customers expect for the price they pay for booking different hotels.
- To know the influence of reviews on hotel bookings.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hotels are classified according to the hotel size, location, target markets, levels of service, facilities provided, number of rooms, ownership and affiliation etc. (Patrick Landman). Classifications help guests to get an idea of the hotel without checking the property themselves. It thereby enables trade by acting as an intermediary, providing trust between the customer and the property. Hotel categorisation is based on a scale from 1-5, one being the lowest and five the highest standard.

Kotler Philip (2006), explains that as against to features of physical products, the services are not given for pre-testing, neither it is felt or smelled before purchase making buyers look for some tangible evidence that will provide facts, figures and confidence about service. For example the décor and ambience of a restaurant or hotel is the first thing to see and experience on arrival of the guest; cleanliness of the public areas etc provides clues about service. He also mentioned that American society for quality control defines quality as the features and characteristics of the service or product that has a capability to satisfy customer needs. High quality services build loyal customers and creates positive image of product and service which further determines customer satisfaction, and brings repeat business. The long-term success is broadly based on guest loyalty and customer retention which inevitably results in future revenue.

Smith Willas in 2016, 90% of shoppers read at least one online review before deciding to visit a business. More importantly, 94%

of online shoppers reported that *a negative review has persuaded them to avoid the business*. This means that whatever industry you are in, having a positive online presence provides many advantages, which is why it's becoming a key part of branding. Understanding why you need online reviews will help you enhance your customer experience to help create a positive online footprint. *Being a successful brand also means you're a visible one*. Most customers will look on search engines like Google and Bing, or even on Facebook, when deciding what to buy. These websites have their own distinctive ways of indexing and progressing content, but they all value innovative and fresh content, and customer reviews can definitely help feed the content. Online customer reviews gives a stable pipeline of (hopefully) positive content that search engines value highly when choosing which results to return.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary and secondary data. During the research relevant content has been reviewed from several articles, news reports, internet documents. The survey is based on Quantitative method to understand general characteristics and different Responses given by Individuals. Graphs have been used after the survey to analyse collected data.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Respondent's feedback is very important factor while doing any research. To understand the customer's attitude towards the hotel amenities, service quality and online reviews it is important to do the survey on the same. Data analysis helps getting detailed overview of the research. So it is an important step of the research to reach the conclusion.

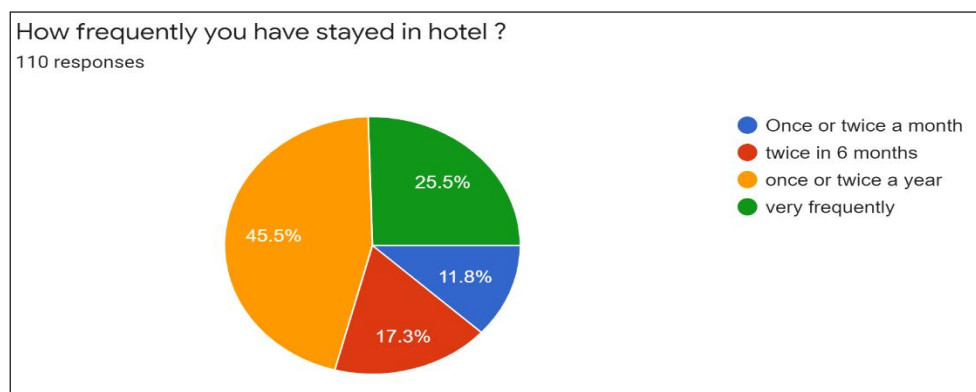


Fig. 1

The main objective is to know how frequently the person has stayed in hotel within a month, six months or within span of a year. The more a person uses a facility the more he/she knows

about them. From Fig. 1 it has been observed that maximum people has stayed in hotel for very less time i.e. once or twice a year not more than that.

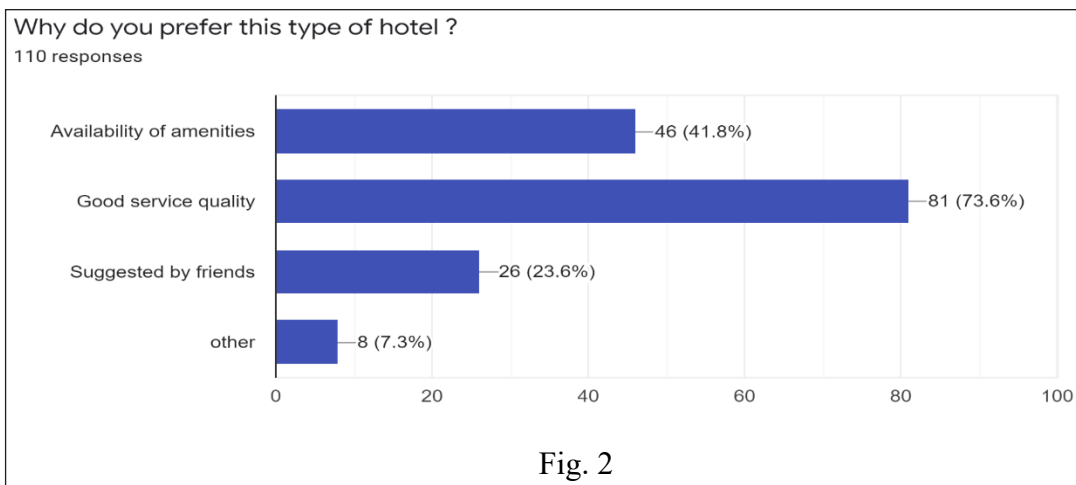


Fig. 2

To know why people choose a Star category hotel only and major factors that are considered.

Fig. 2 indicates service quality is the major factor considered by people while choosing any hotel, amenities are also important for few individuals travelling mostly for business purposes.

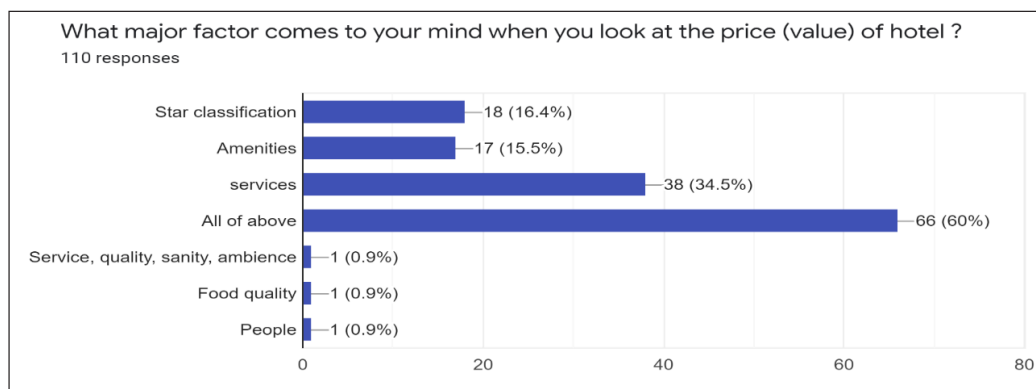


Fig. 3

All services and commodities are valued by the amount we pay for it, hence the above graph is all about the factors which are taken into consideration while making purchasing decision after looking

at rates at the hotel. Fig. 3 clearly shows 60% of the respondents considers all factors like services, amenities and star classification against the amount they are paying for booking any hotel.

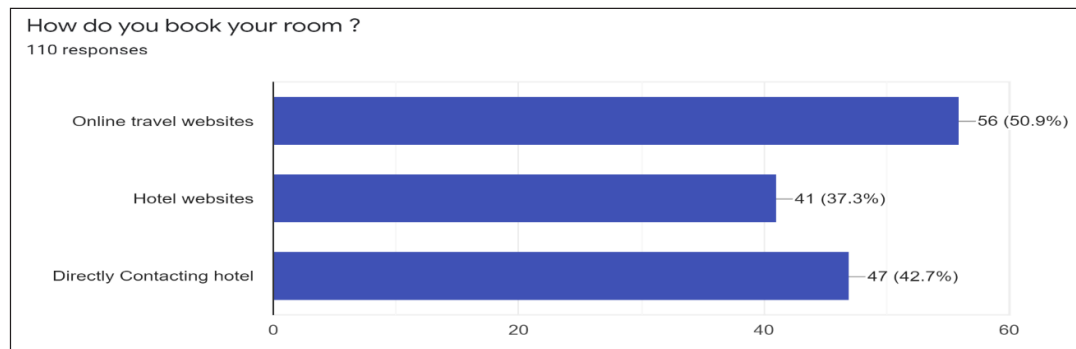


Fig. 4

To find the method, channels or websites used for booking the rooms. From Fig. 4, it has been observed that online travel websites are the most popular channel for booking hotels, there are a lot of benefits of using online platforms that includes

instant rate comparison through which one can find cheapest and book their room, readily available guest experiences and reviews of people who have stayed at the hotel, this helps customers in choosing the right hotel at right price.

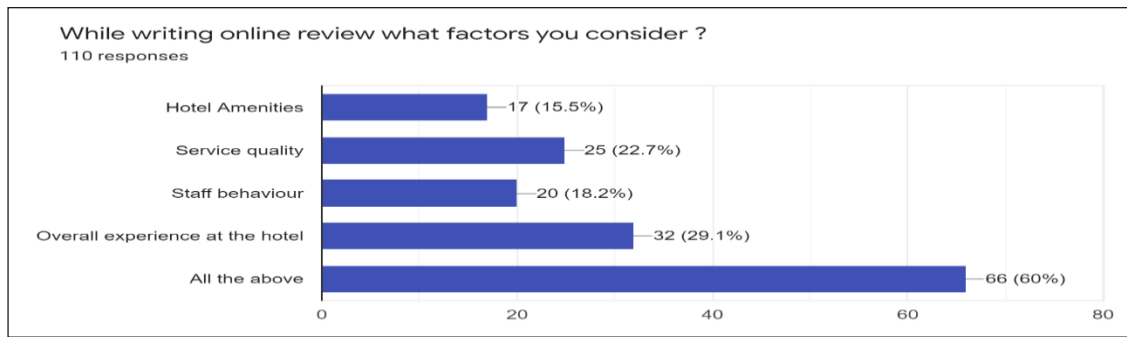


Fig. 5

To understand importance of the various factors while reviewing hotel, Fig. 5 depicts all factors like Hotel amenities, service quality, staff behaviour and overall experience during stay influence hotel review.



Fig. 6

The pie chart gives us idea about importance of online reviews for respondents. There are many people who think online reviews are actually important while deciding anything or purchasing. Online reviews can be positive as well as negative which affect the decision of few people. Online reviews are actually helpful and so as important as agreed by 95.5% of respondents.

The other 4.1% people don't think it is important. It depends on individual perception. Some people may not find reviews as useful or they may get confused after reading them, hence they may not find them as important.

VII. CONCLUSION

Hospitality is the association between a guest and a host, wherein the host receives the guest with warmth and care, including the welcoming, greeting and entertaining the guests. The study focuses on the impact and significance of amenities, services and online reviews as a deciding factor while booking accommodations. Amenities are the tangible products that guest can keep as souvenir of their visit to a hotel, amenities with the logo and name of the hotel also helps in branding and marketing of the hotel.

Service is an intangible entity which cannot be seen but can be felt, while staying in hotel the guest must feel welcomed, must feel comfortable and must feel at home. Service Quality and the feel of luxury and comfort is what brings customers back and helps inculcating the feeling of loyalty towards a specific brand.

It is now old tradition where we book a room at the reception, but in the current scenario everything has become so easy and fast. There are various online booking sites which gives complete details about the hotel and helps one to differentiate with different booking rates. There is review option on any of the sites even on small products we look to purchase. Reviews help in understanding the service quality, the people managing the property and other aspects like facilities, cleanliness, staff friendliness etc. from the person who has already stayed in the property and experienced it. Hence, online reviews are helpful for deciding whether to select or reject any hotel.

Likewise it may be concluded from the data, that the factors like Amenities, Service Quality and online reviews all are the important factors which help one to decide their hotel.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The survey and its responses does not give a generalised outlook of entire population as the respondents are limited to a specific zone, each individual has a different view depending on their experiences.

Suggestions

Building customer loyalty towards a brand can take a business long way, it is imperative to always keep a track of the customer satisfaction by constantly being in touch with them and go ahead for immediate service recovery in case if a dissatisfied customer and make sure the interaction is effective enough to bring the customer back.

From the guests point of view the products and services are measured by the value they pay for it hence the shortcoming in one factor can be compensated by the other and vice versa. Identifying the shortcoming and how it can be supplemented can be decided by the management.

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