



A STUDY ON THE FACTORS GOVERNING CHOICE OF LUXURY HOTELS FOR LEISURE TRAVELERS

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Abstract

Hotels provide various facilities like swimming pools, fitness centres, sports facilities, Wi-Fi access, kids' entertainment zone, etc. to attract leisure tourists. Thus, the present study focuses on analysing the influence of hotel facilities on leisure travelers in their selection of star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh. The research was conducted using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The facilities were grouped under the factors as stay facilities, recreation facilities and miscellaneous facilities, which were found using principle component analysis. The results revealed that demographic variables which created a difference in leisure travelers hotel selection are marital Status, area of residence and annual income. It was also revealed that leisure travelers hotel selection does not depend on the facilities provided by the hotel. The reasons for the same have been explained in details in the paper.

Keywords: Hotel industry, Hotel facilities, Leisure travelers, Star category, Hotel Selection.

Introduction

India is the sixth-largest economy at the worldwide level in terms of nominal gross domestic product (GDP) and the world's third-largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity [1]. The tourism sector plays a very important role in India's economic growth [2]. Tourism in India had contributed US\$240 billion which was 9.2 percent of India's GDP [3]. In the year 2019, tourism supported 39 million jobs in

India which was 8 percent of the total employment generation in India [4]. Indian brand equity foundation also reported that the tourism sector in India is forecasted to grow at an annual rate of 6.7% to US\$ 488 billion by 2029 which will be 9.2% of India's GDP and foreign tourist arrival in India will reach 30.5 million by the year 2028 [4]. Leisure travel and tourism is the largest contributor to the tourism industry but the Coronavirus pandemic had largely impacted leisure tourism and worldwide

leisure travel spending decreased by 49.4 percent in 2020 over the previous year [5]. Leisure travel generally consists of taking a break from everyday life or work. During vacation, the traveler generally aims to experience new cultures and locations, relaxation, broaden their mindset, sports events, and more, depending on the type of travel chosen. . An extensive study of previous literature suggested that leisure travel helps people to recover from tiredness of routine work and personal life, reduce stress, gain knowledge and practice autonomy and self-determination, improve health, transmit norms and values, enjoy the natural environment, interact with other people, and enjoy each other's company [6,7,8]. Thus, leisure plays significant role in people's life, but this role is diverse and differs among individuals, depending on their preferences, commitments and tastes [7].

The hotel industry which is part of the tourism industry always provides services and facilities which should meet the demands of leisure travelers as this is the largest segment of the tourism industry. Hotel leisure travelers generally utilize hotel websites and other digital platforms to make their reservations in hotels and they expect hotels to recognize their connectivity needs [9]. The demands and preferences of hotel guests are becoming increasingly diverse and this exposes the hotel industry to rising insecurity about the future feasibility of their business models [10]. Customers expectations about hotel facilities and services differs between male and female travelers [11, 12] different age groups [13, 14], and users of peer-to-peer accommodation such as Airbnb [15]. The customer satisfaction in hotel industry is becoming a key indicator and an essential condition to achieve competitive advantage and high performance [16]. Customer satisfaction is very significant in the success of any business and this depends on determining key factors of customer satisfaction and meeting the consumers' demands and expectations because

customer satisfaction is a critical element related to a company's future profit by increasing customer loyalty [17,18]. Therefore, hotel professionals are working to develop means to differentiate their products and services to increase customer satisfaction.

Hotel facilities play a significant role in customers' hotel selection and this includes Wi-Fi access, fitness centre, swimming pool, water sports, spa centre, car rental, restaurants, bar/pub/discotheque, etc. [19]. High quality services and facilities have been recognised as a key factor in differentiating service products [20]. Satisfaction of hotel guests can be attained through high-quality products and services [21, 22, 23, 24]. The demographic profile of consumers also plays important role in their hotel purchase decision. The consumer purchase decision is influenced by their demographic profile like age, gender, annual income, area of residence, educational qualifications, occupation or profession, etc. [25]. Hotel customers have different expectations and preferences depending on income, gender, and family status and customers hotel selection is a very complex procedure and depends upon a wide range of demographic factors [26].

Review of literature

Influence of Hotel Facilities on Leisure Travelers Hotel Selection

Hotel facilities directly influence leisure travelers and can be considered as deciding factors in selecting the hotel. This motivates consumers' intention to purchase and can also be used as a distinguishing feature amongst competitors of the hotel industry. [27] in their study mentioned that hotels gain significant consumer satisfaction by providing free wireless internet which is a very important attribute of hotel facilities. Hotel facilities such as clubs, pools, and lounges also attract customers in selecting hotels [28]. [29] in their study concluded that a luxury hotel

without spa and leisure facilities finds it very difficult to survive in the city of London, especially spas are considered as a significant feature of all luxury hotels. Laundry services [30], debit/credit card/online payment [19] and car parking [31] are the important hotel facilities required by the customers of the hotel industry. The travel motivations related to leisure travel are cultural, historical, and natural sightseeing, meeting with family and friends, relaxation, etc. [32]. [33] in their study found that hotel facilities like bars and restaurants also influence

consumers' selection of luxury hotels. Wi-Fi and other high technological facilities influence consumer selection of hotels [34, 35]. Many researches in the past have examined the factors influencing the guests in selecting a hotel [36, 37, 38]. There are many other factors like room attributes, safety, and security features, staff service quality parameters, hotel marketing strategies, etc. which influence travelers hotel selection. Table 1 lists studies that mentioned about hotel facilities influence on travelers hotel selection as their basis of research:

TABLE 1. Hotel facilities influence on travelers hotel selection

Authors	Sector	Hotel facilities
[27]	Hotel	Wi-Fi access
[39]	Hotel	Fitness Centre
[40]	Hotel	Swimming Pool
[41]	Hotel	Water Sports
[42]	Hotel	Spa Centre
[43]	Hotel	Car Rental
[19]	Hotel	Bar/Pub/Discotheque
[44]	Hotel	Restaurant/Coffee Shop with live music
[45]	Hotel	Sports Facilities
[46]	Hotel	Reception Desk
[47]	Hotel	Travel Desk
[48]	Hotel	Kids entertainment zone
[49]	Hotel	Credit/Debit card/Online payment
[50]	Hotel	Laundry Services
[30]	Hotel	Shopping Arcades
[51]	Hotel	Room Service
[52]	Hotel	Car Parking
[53]	Hotel	Babysitter

The research of [54] mentioned factors that are other than hotel facilities and stated that service quality, convenient location, the reputation of the hotel, and friendliness of the staff are the factors that influence consumers preference for hotels. Some other studies mentioned different aspects of factors influencing consumers the choice of hotel selection and these factors include online hotel reviews and website display [55, 56, 57, 58, 59]. Safe and secure hotel environment, location of the hotel, convenience to explore places of tourist's interest, room rates, and value for money are the prominent factors that influence consumers' decision towards choosing a hotel [38]. Staff service qualities, room attributes, food and beverage service quality are the factors that influence travelers selection of hotels [60]. Past experience with the hotel, hotel chain, and value for the money are the factors other than hotel facilities that influence leisure travelers hotel selection [61]. According to the study of [10] on German leisure travelers revealed that cleanliness, economic value and security are the three most influential factors for leisure travelers hotel selection.

Influence of Demographic Factors on Tourists Hotel Selection

[26] in their study concluded that customers selection of hotels depends on a wide range of factors and their age, gender, annual

income and other such demographic factors play a very significant role in the selection of hotels. Many researchers, to highlight more accurately the needs and demands of tourists, enriched customers demographic profiles by adding characteristics to it, such as, level of their education, cultural background, their loyalty (whether they are repeatedly visiting a hotel or a hotel firm), the total amount that they make during their traveling, their past experiences in hotels, the source financing their travel, etc. [62, 63, 64, 65]. The demographic profile of consumers and other aforementioned characteristics can be considered as very significant in their selection of hotels. Hotel ambiance, cleanliness standards, proximity to the beach, online reviews about hotels food and beverage quality and services and Wi-Fi are the important factors for senior citizens while making their choice of hotels [66]. Value for money and provision of organized entertainment facilities in the hotel are the important attributes of hotel selection for senior British tourists as compared to youngsters [67]. [68] in the research paper concluded that male and female travelers have a difference in perception related to facilities and services provided by the hotels and thus this difference influences their decision-making while choosing hotels for stay. Table 2 lists studies that mentioned about impact of demographic profile on travelers hotel selection as their basis of research.

TABLE 2. Important demographic factors having influence on travelers hotel selection

Authors	Sector/Area	Demographic factors
[69]	Hotel	Gender
[70]	Hotel	Age
[71]	Hotel	Marital Status
[72]	Tourism	Area of residence
[73]	Green Products	Educational qualification
[74]	Hotel	Occupation

[75]	Business Management	Annual Income
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Thus from the previous literature review, it is clear that there hotel facilities like Wi-Fi access, clubs, pools, lounge, spas, etc. influence customers hotel selection and some of the studies also stated that there are other factors like room attributes, online review about hotel, cleanliness standards, staff service quality and safety and security features also influence the travelers hotel selection. Thus the present study aims to analyze the influence of facilities provided by star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh on leisure travelers purchase decisions. The present study is focusing on hotel facilities like Wi-Fi, fitness centre, swimming pool, water sports, spa centre, car rental, multi-cuisine restaurants, laundry services, etc. and how these hotel facilities influence leisure travelers hotel selection. In the past most of the studies have been conducted on factors influencing business travelers hotels selection and other travelers in general and no extensive research have been found on influence of hotel facilities on leisure travelers hotel selection. No studies have been found on leisure travelers hotels selection in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Thus the present research will fill all these gaps with the title “analysing the influence of hotel facilities on leisure travelers in the selection of star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh” As the study of previous literature suggested that demographic profile of consumers influences their purchase decision. Thus, this study also focusing on the association of the demographic profile of leisure travelers with their star category hotel selection in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the impact of demographic profile of leisure travelers on their hotel selection.

- To analyse the influence of hotel facilities on leisure travelers hotel selection.

Hypotheses

H0₁: - Demographics (Gender, age, marital status, area of residence, education, occupation, annual income, frequency of travel, duration of stay, etc) shows a significant difference in leisure travelers purchase decisions.

H1₁: -Demographics (Gender, age, marital status, area of residence, education, occupation, annual income, frequency of travel, duration of stay, etc) do not show a significant difference in leisure travelers purchase decisions.

H0₂: Hotel facilities influence the purchase decision of leisure travelers.H2₂: Hotel facilities do not influence the purchase decision of leisure travelers.

Methodology

Type and Source of Data

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect the primary data. Books, journals, previous researches, and conversations with employees helped in the collection of secondary data. Both evidences were used for the study.

Tools and Techniques

Nonparametric tests were used to find whether demographic profile shows a significant difference in leisure travelers purchase decisions. Simple Linear Regression was conducted to explore the predictability of the predictors on the dependent variable.

Data Collection

Convenience sampling was used to collect data from 220 leisure travelers from India who visits star category hotels of state of

Uttar Pradesh in India, especially Star category hotels of Agra, Lucknow, Mathura, Prayagraj and Varanasi in the state Uttar Pradesh, with the use of the online Platform Google forms. Table 3 is representing the demographic profile of respondents.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

To achieve the mentioned objectives of present study, a structured questionnaire was distributed through online platform Google Forms to 300 respondents all over India in the month of November, 2020. 220 out of 300 respondents had filled and submitted the questionnaire. Table 3 represents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The acquired data shows that majority of the respondents were males (84.5%). 41.1% of surveyed population were of the age group between

18 to 30 years and 44.1% of surveyed population were of the age group between 31 to 40 years. The surveyed statistics shows that 44.5% of respondents are single and 55.5% of the respondents are married. Majority of the surveyed population resides in urban area (90.5%) and 9.5% of the respondents resides in rural areas. 50.9% of surveyed population are postgraduate, 41.4% graduates and 4.1 % of respondents are having doctorate degree. The surveyed statistics shows that 9.5% of respondents are students, 30.9% of respondents are having Government job, 43.2% respondents are working in private sector and 10% of respondents are having their own business. 21.4% of surveyed population are earning an annual income between 1 to 3 lakhs, 33.6% between 3 to 6 lakhs, 17.7% between 6 to 10 lakhs and 14.5% of respondents are earning an annual income of more than 10 lakhs.

TABLE 3. Demographic characteristics of respondents

	Variables	(%)
Gender	Male	84.5
	Female	15.5
Age	18-30 years	44.1
	31-40 years	44.1
	41-50 years	7.3
	51-60 years	4.5
	Above 60 years	----
Marital Status	Single	44.5
	Married	55.5
	Preferred not to say	----
Area of Residence	Urban	90.5
	Rural	9.5
Educational Qualifications	Undergraduate	2.7
	Graduate	41.4
	Postgraduate	50.9
	Doctorate	4.1

	Others	0.9
Occupation	Students	9.5
	Government Job	30.9
	Private Job	43.2
	Business	10
	Others	6.4
Annual Income	Not earning	12.3
	Less than 1 Lakh	0.5
	1-3 Lakhs	21.4
	3-6 Lakhs	33.6
	6-10 Lakhs	17.7
	More than 10 Lakhs	14.5
Number of visits in the current hotel	First visit	17.3
	second visit	40.9
	Third Visit	16.8
	Fourth Visit	2.7
	More than 4 visits	13.2
Duration of stay	1-3 days	60
	4-7 days	27.3
	8-10 days	2.7
	More than 10 days	0.9

Analysis and findings

The first step was to measure the internal consistency, through Cronbach's alpha (.751), which is in the acceptable range. Hence further exploratory analysis can be performed. The results of KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Kaise-Meyer – Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: .991; Barlett's test of Sphericity-significance: .000). As a result, the preliminary conditions of using factor analysis were deemed.

The researcher further performed Principal Component Analysis, on the 18 items concerning various parameters identified for hotel facilities. Those items which had extraction value of communalities < 0.4 and

almost the same factor loading, indicating that they did not fit well with the factor were dropped (Fitness Center facility with factor loading .525, .528). Further Kaiser's criterion analysis was used; the scree plot graph indicated clear three factors solution. The 3 components together account for 66.88% variance. Items that had eigenvalue > 1 were considered for respective components. The number of iterations was 25 in the present study. The component matrix uses the factors identified in Kaiser's criterion. The criterion analysis reflects that the first 3 factors show loadings of 0.5 and above. Based on the findings of the Scree plot, the Component Matrix, and the Criterion analysis, it was revealed that 3 factors explain hotel facilities the best.

The 3 components are

Component 1: Stay Facilities;

Component 2: Recreational facilities;

Component 3: Miscellaneous facilities;

The normality of data was checked by using the K-S test (K-S Statistics:7.318; Significance p:.000). It was found that the data is non-normal, so the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis were used to find differences created by the demographics on the dependent variables (selection of hotel).

The demographic variable which created a difference in leisure travelers hotel selection are:

Marital Status: (Mann-Whitney U:4466.00; Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed):.000). The mean rank of marital status: single shows a higher value.

Area of residence: (Mann-Whitney U: 1570.00; Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed):.050). The mean rank of area of residence: Urban shows a higher value.

Annual Income: Kruskal Wallis Test (χ^2 : 9.81; Asymp. Sig.:.044). The mean rank of annual income:3-6 Lakhs shows the highest value.

The rest of the demographics (gender, age, education, occupation, no of visits in a year, duration of stay) show no difference.

Thus, H_{01} was partially rejected and the alternative hypothesis is partially accepted.

Further to find out if the purchase decision of the hotel depends on the facilities provided by the hotel or not, Multiple linear regression was performed using enter method to explore the same. It was found that the linear equation was not significant ($F(3,196) = .568, p=.637; p>.05$) Which suggests that leisure travelers hotel selection does not depend on the facilities provided by the hotel

Thus, H_{02} is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion

Analysing the data, it was found that out of 10 demographic variables only 3 namely marital status, area of residence, and annual income create a difference in the leisure travelers purchase decision. It was found that people with marital status as single, area of residence as Urban, annual income of range 3-6 lakhs, have higher purchase decision. [76] also concluded in their research paper that demographic variables provide significant information in understanding consumers needs and purchasing habits. Marital status is a significant factor influencing consumer behaviour. [77] in their study revealed the moderating role of marital status on consumers purchasing decisions. The findings of the present research also matches with the study of [79]. [79] in the research paper concluded that unmarried people tend to look for more activities than married people and in turn they spend more on leisure activities during their leisure trip and thus it influence their hotel selection also. The findings of the present research paper on area of residence are consistent with the findings of [80]. In the research of [80], it was revealed that purchasing power of the urban population is more than the rural population. Consistent with the findings of this study, [76] concluded that when income increases, a large proportion of earnings are spent on goods and services.[81] concluded that consumer behaviour is affected by income.

Further to this, it was also found that selection of hotel by leisure travelers does not depend on the facilities like swimming pool, restaurants/coffee shop/bar, car parking and rental, sports facilities, kids entertainment zone, debit/credit/online payment mode, laundry facilities, etc. provided by the hotel. In most studies, it has been found that the purchase decision of a hotel depends on the facilities provided by the hotel but this study is a little different than all previous studies. The major reason can be the researcher might not have

considered other variables related to facilities that decide the purchase decision as compared to the facilities considered in this study. In other researches, it has been suggested that the selection of hotel does not solely depend on facilities but also on parameters as room attributes [82], a budget of consumers and purpose of visit [83], hotels marketing strategies [37], value for money [84], social media [85], safety and security of guests [38].

Theoretical Implications

As Leisure tourism is the largest sector of the tourism industry, thus this study contributes towards the growing academic knowledge of leisure travelers hotel selection based on the facilities and services provided by star category hotels. The detected determinants of demographic factors and hotel facilities from the present study deepen the understanding of the leisure travelers hotel selection behaviour. Prior studies were more focused on overall hotel attributes like room facilities, safety and security features, staff service qualities, hotel facilities and services [31, 36, 86, 87, 88, 89] but the present study is specifically focused on the influence of demographic factors and hotel facilities on leisure travelers hotel selection. Prior studies have been conducted more on travelers in general [31, 36, 83] and on business travelers hotel selection [86, 90, 91, 92] but this study is specially based on leisure travelers. The findings of the study showed that leisure travelers hotel selection behaviour is partially driven by their demographic factors including marital status, area of residence as urban and annual income. The findings of the study also suggested that leisure travelers hotel selection does not depends on the facilities provided by hotels. Thus findings of the present research provided useful theoretical base for understanding the leisure travelers hotel selection behaviour. This study would be useful for researchers in the field of hospitality management to investigate and understand consumer behaviour towards

hotel facilities. this study will shed new light on various branches of academics like management, hospitality, human resource, finance, marketing and many. Thus, this research makes a novel theoretical contribution to hospitality industry especially hotel industry and advances further research in that area.

Practical Implications

The findings of the present research are significant for practitioners, consultants and policy makers in the field of hospitality industry. Present research offers a few practical implications. First, tourism industry of India and especially tourism industry in Indian state of Uttar Pradesh may benefit from the present study. As leisure travelers are largest segment for tourism sector and this study is specifically based on leisure travelers, thus the findings of the present research are beneficial for the experts of tourism sector, as they may provide better services in the famous tourist places of Uttar Pradesh. As the study has given a clear view about the demographic factors of leisure travelers and how these factors influence their hotel selection, thus, these findings will benefit Government agencies and other private sector agencies related to tourism sector to attract more various segments of leisure travelers in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Second, these findings will be beneficial for the professionals of hotel industry. As the present research paper's main focus was on finding the hotel facilities and how these facilities influence leisure travelers hotel selection. Thus, the findings of the study may benefit to hotel industry professionals. In the past, most of the studies were based on comparison between business and leisure travelers hotel selection criteria [93, 94, 95]. Very few researches have been conducted on factors influencing leisure travelers hotel selection [96, 97, 98, 99]. But this study is specifically based on hotel facilities influence on leisure travelers hotel selection in Star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh. Thus the findings will help hotel

industry professionals to improve the standards of hotel facilities and provided by the them and how to promote their facilities in better way so as to attract the various segments of leisure travelers. Third, this study may benefit the leisure travelers, as the findings of the research will help hotel industry professionals to improve their services and leisure travelers will receive better services from the hotels

Limitations and future scope of study

A coincidental sampling method was used to collect the data. This sometimes results in biased results. Further, the study can be done to unearth the deeper reasons of different demographics on the impacts they have on the various parameters of purchase decisions of hotels. The study can be further extended using some other purchase decision reasons like budget, marketing strategies, purpose of visit, value for money, social media management etc.,. The research design of the current study is cross-sectional. But longitudinal research on the same population by creating a difference in their education, current marital status, and salary, occupation, age group, or hotel category selection preference. This may reveal the exact behaviour of the individuals concerning the changed demographic values. Further, the data was collected from north India and NCR. The results might vary if data is collected from other parts of India.

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