Guest Expectations vs. Hotel Performance: a study of Guest Satisfaction in Uttarakhand's Hill Destination

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Abstract - Nainital, known as the Lake District of Uttarakhand, is a well-liked hill station in North India that has been a favorite of foreign visitors ever since the British colonial era. Nainital has an abundance of hotels and other lodging options, from more modest hotels to five-star establishments, to accommodate travelers staying in town for the night. A company's performance is directly tied to the number of satisfied and returning consumers they have. The major motivation for doing this survey was to assess the level of contentment locals had with the range of lodging options in Nainital. The research also aims to categorize any relevant aspects that affect guests' experiences in Nainital's lodging sector. To accomplish the set goals of the study, primary data were collected from 200 tourists who visited the study area for a variety of reasons using structured questionnaires and random sampling techniques to gather information on various service attributes related to the hospitality industry that can influence customer satisfaction. The findings provide light on how consumers in Nainital perceive the quality of services provided to them and on the broad elements that influence their attitudes about the hospitality sector overall. The findings may be utilized as a road map for hotel managers to improve service quality and bottom-line results by focusing on the most important quality indicators.

Keywords - Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Hotels, Nainital

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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of the hotel sector is the delight of its guests. From a company's point of view, the guest is the most important stakeholder. A hotel's success is directly tied to the number of pleased guests they are able to attract via repeat visits and positive word of mouth. As a result, hotels must pay close attention to their clients if they want to ensure them complete contentment. There is no difference in service between the hotel's economy and business class clients. Regardless of the status of the visitor, business is always connected with them. Worst of all is the fact that consumer unhappiness is on the rise, but people aren't complaining to the company or the responsible parties about it. Instead, they're venting to their personal networks. Satisfaction of customers is the result of using a service or buying a product and deciding how valuable its features are. Customers' opinions may have a significant impact on a business's performance by generating either good or negative results.

Customers who are pleased with a product or brand are more inclined to return and tell others about their experience. That way, if guests are dissatisfied, they won't feel as committed to the hotel's brand and won't spread negative word-of-mouth. The hotel's brand is crucial in determining the success or failure of marketing initiatives, and the hotel's image is the primary component in making a positive first impression.

Over the last 45 years, the shift toward service and service-related sectors has been the most notable development in American industry. In a study (Davidoff, 1994) Historically, manufacturing has been given more weight than service. However, service is no longer an afterthought in today's modern, industrialized world. Davidoff claims that

many businesses are actively working to better serve their clients. The quality of services has not been given the same priority as the quality of manufactured goods. The judicial service is far more difficult to measure, thus this is probably accurate. Davidoff said, "The service sector expands of its own accord as more consumers demand its products in the absence of any corresponding increase in production." High-paying service sector positions are multiplying. The many, high-productivity service positions call for highly competent, well-trained professionals who have access to a wide range of career progression opportunities.

Customer Satisfaction: Hotel management has difficulties satisfying all types of consumers with the same service due to the unique qualities of hospitality services, and must therefore segment clients for the provision of individualized care. It has been shown that (Metters, King-Metters, Pullman, & Walton, 2006). "Consumer's fulfilment response and a judgment that a product or service feature, or product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment as being consistent with the conceptual and empirical evidence" (Olivier, 2010:256). The meaning of pleasure was expanded by Olivier (2010) to include "fulfillment that gives pleasure or reduces pain." So, if people want to go back to normal, they only need to get rid of the 'aversive' condition that's making them unhappy. While "fulfillment is not necessarily restricted to the case of met needs," both "overfulfillment" and "under-fulfillment" may be rewarding if they bring about more pleasure than was first anticipated.
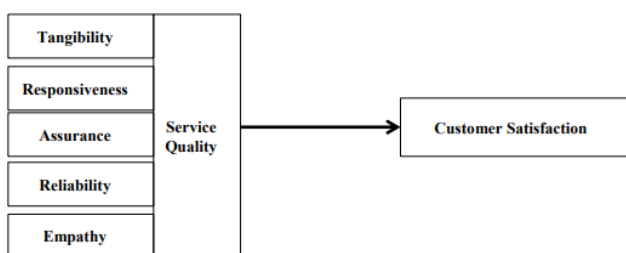

Figure 1: Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

LITERATURE REVIEW

Li, H., Liu, Y., Tan, C-W., & Hu, F. (2020). – Using data collected from 412,784 reviews posted on TripAdvisor by Chinese consumers in various locations, this research investigates the differential impact of hotel characteristics on guests' experiences. Findings - Guests' expectations of hotel performance differ with respect to their origins (domestic and

international guests) and the star ratings of the hotels being reviewed, thus moderating the asymmetric impact of hotel attributes on customer satisfaction. Impacts and restrictions on future study - Customer satisfaction in Chinese hotels is analyzed from both a local and international perspective. However, caution is still warranted when extrapolating the study's findings. Implications for practice - Hotel owners and managers may use the research's results to influence their own judgments on how to best enhance guest satisfaction. Adding to prior research, this one provides a more nuanced picture of how different hotel features affect guests' overall satisfaction levels in a novel way. In particular, this research elucidates the roles of fundamental, performance, and exciting hotel features in explaining consumer happiness across a variety of customer categories in the hotel industry. This research has important implications for the hospitality industry, as it may help owners and managers better understand the role that different aspects of their properties have in influencing guests' experiences and, in turn, help them create retention strategies that focus on delivering experiences that guests find delightful rather than frustrating.

Overall, respondents in Bhat M. A.'s (2013) study on different types of hotels in the Kashmir valley were satisfied with the services they received, but he found that there was room for improvement across the board, especially in terms of reliability and responsiveness. Check-in and check-out services, concierge services, reservation services, lobby atmosphere, competence during check-in and check-out process, staff friendliness, and hotel connectivity all emerged as important dimensions influencing guests' satisfaction from front office in a study of factors affecting satisfaction from front office services & facilities in the Indian hospitality industry. "Moments of truth" are defined as customer service touchpoints when the service provider either exceeds or falls short of the customer's expectations. Interactions between service providers and customers, such as these, set the tone for the guest's overall impression of the quality of the service they received. It's been said that the first ten minutes are the most important.

Chan, I.C.C., Ma, J., Ye, H., Law, R. (2021), In this research, we examine the factors that made a difference in how satisfied guests were at high-end hotels in mainland China both before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. In particular, we gathered 1283 reviews written in Chinese during the epidemic and 740 written in Chinese before it. They used text analytics to categorize the reviews and determine how often certain terms appeared. According to the

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findings, the services, room quality and settings, hotel amenities, eating, location, and atmosphere are the most important aspects of luxury hotel stays. These fundamental features are constant both before and after a pandemic. Guests in hotels, meanwhile, have greater expectations for amenities like late check-out and takeout food delivery during a pandemic. Words like visitor traffic and body temperature, which pertain to pandemic prevention and control, pop up often in online evaluations written during an outbreak. In order to better serve guests at this time of crisis, hotel professionals are given operational and managerial recommendations.

According to **Baquero (2023),** These days, it's common for hotel ownership and management to be treated as separate entities in hotel business models. It's safe to assume that if a hotel is of great quality, it will have satisfied guests. By factoring in the moderating influence of customers' household incomes and the mediating effect of customers' perceptions of hotel staff and management, this study set out to determine how guests' impressions of the hotel's physical amenities affected their overall satisfaction. In June of 2022, a total of 376 surveys were taken at two 4-star Spanish hotels. To conduct a bootstrapping test of the hypothesis in a moderated mediation model, we utilized the PROCESS macro for SPSS. The findings revealed a positive relationship between consumer perceptions of facilities and customer happiness, with human and organizational factors mediating this relationship to some extent. The correlation between how facilities were perceived and consumers' level of satisfaction was stronger among those with higher household incomes. Customers with moderate incomes exhibited a stronger correlation between how they felt about the hotel's staff and how they felt about the hotel's business structure and amenities. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account not only the hotel's amenities but also the hotel's people and business organizations, and a guest's disposable money.

Yu Wang (2022), In this article, we examine the hotel industry's service quality issues from the standpoint of service and customer happiness, and we provide recommendations on how to fix them. In this study, we present a two-channel RNN triplet block model, and we describe the structure and calculation procedure of this model in detail. The RNN ternary block structure is organized to capture the structure of emotional tendency expressions and increase the dependence link between emotional tendency expression words, all in accordance with the expression habits of everyday emotional inclinations. Use the data from the customer

satisfaction study and survey to inform your recommendations for enhancing Guido Hotel's service quality. When applied to the job of analyzing the sentiment of guest reviews for hotels, the two-channel RNN ternary block model is shown to be successful via a comparison to experimental findings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to learn what influences visitors' happiness while staying in Nainital hotels. Personal interviews and structured questionnaires were used to get feedback from 200 people from a range of demographics on their experiences with different facets of the hospitality offering. The following table presents the demographic information of the respondents: 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
0-20	11	5.5
20-40	154	77.0
40-60	30	15.0
60-80	5	2.5
Marital Status		
Single	93	46.5
Married	107	53.5
Educational Qualification		
Secondary	2	1.0
Higher secondary	11	5.5
Graduate	66	33.0
Post graduate	118	59.0
Any other	3	1.5
Occupation		
Self employed	67	33.5
Professional	80	40.0
Retired	4	2.0
Student	34	17.0
Other	15	7.5

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Monthly Income		
Up to Rs. 20000/-	64	32.0
Rs. 20000/- to Rs. 40000/-	70	35.0
Rs. 40000/- to Rs. 60000/-	33	16.5
Rs. 60000/-to Rs. 80000/-	11	5.5
Rs. 80000/-to Rs. 100000/-	8	4.0
Above Rs.100000	14	7.0

The primary objective of this study is to investigate what determines guests' degree of contentment in Nainital's lodgings. With a Likert scale from 1 to 5, customers were polled on their degree of satisfaction with 25 different aspects of the service. The findings were interpreted using the mean score of each characteristic; a score below 1.5 indicated respondents were completely unsatisfied, a score between 2.0 and 2.5 indicated respondents were neutral, and a score between 3.5 and 4.5 indicated respondents were very happy. The findings are shown in Table 2. According to the data in the table, the vast majority of guests were pleased with the hotel's service in most respects, including the majority of the reservation process, the availability of getting a reservation during peak season, the accessibility of the hotel's location, the speed with which guests could check in and out, the courtesy with which their reservations were handled, the quality of the televisions provided, and the tastefulness with which the hotel's public and private spaces were decorated. Examination of the response distribution, however, reveals that the majority of guests were not happy with certain aspects of the service provided, including but not limited to: peak season pricing; peak season parking; staff friendliness; room cleanliness; guest amenities; restaurant service; restaurant quality; room temperature; and value for money. The greater value of the standard deviation for these service features may be ascribed to the dispersion of the answers over the scale, which explains the discrepancies.

Table 2: Satisfaction of the Respondents about Various Service Attributes

Service attributes	Fully Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Fully Satisfied	Mean (SD)
Most of the reservation	15 (7.5)	15 (7.5)	31 (15.5)	115 (57.5)	24 (12.0)	3.59 / 1.04
Availability of getting reserva-tion during peak season	11 (5.5)	22 (11.0)	31 (15.5)	93 (46.5)	43 (21.5)	3.67 / 1.09
Tariff during peak season	27 (13.5)	88 (44.0)	38 (19.0)	33 (16.5)	14 (7.0)	2.59 / 1.12
Parking facilities during peak season	25 (12.5)	99 (49.5)	21 (10.5)	37 (18.5)	18 (9.0)	2.62 / 1.18
Hotel location is accessible	4 (2.0)	19 (9.5)	25 (12.5)	120 (60.0)	32 (16.0)	3.78 / 0.89
Safety and security in hotel	10 (5.0)	29 (14.5)	82 (41.0)	44 (22.0)	35 (17.5)	3.32 / 1.07
Check in /out efficiency	16 (8.0)	14 (7.0)	34 (17.0)	109 (54.5)	27 (13.5)	3.58 / 1.06
Reservation handling	7 (3.5)	22 (11.0)	32 (16.0)	105 (52.5)	34 (17.0)	3.68 / 0.99
Bell staff efficiency	8 (4.0)	21 (10.5)	95 (47.5)	44 (22.0)	32 (16.0)	3.35 / 1.00
Courtesy and efficiency	36 (18.0)	56 (28.0)	43 (21.5)	30 (15.0)	35 (17.5)	2.86 / 1.35
Cleanliness of room first enter-ing	11 (5.5)	59 (29.5)	63 (31.5)	42 (21.0)	25 (12.5)	3.05 / 1.10
Cleanliness and service during your stay	31 (15.5)	42 (21.0)	61 (30.5)	38 (19.0)	28 (14.0)	2.95 / 1.25
Guest supplies and amenities	1 (0.5)	47 (23.5)	86 (43.0)	35 (17.5)	31 (15.5)	3.24 / 0.99
Overall courtesy and friendliness	25 (12.5)	53 (26.5)	55 (27.5)	36 (18.0)	31 (15.5)	2.97 / 1.25
General condition of room	9 (4.5)	102 (51.0)	30 (15.0)	25 (12.5)	34 (17.0)	2.86 / 1.21
Room Temperature	3 (1.5)	71 (35.5)	34 (17.0)	64 (32.0)	28 (14.0)	3.21 / 1.12
Plumbing	12 (6.0)	47 (23.5)	83 (41.5)	41 (20.5)	17 (8.5)	3.02 / 1.01
TV	6 (3.0)	19 (9.5)	33 (16.5)	111 (55.5)	31 (15.5)	3.71 / 0.94
Décor	6 (3.0)	11 (5.5)	41 (20.5)	111 (55.5)	31 (15.5)	3.75 / 0.88
Restaurant	22 (11.0)	63 (31.5)	59 (29.0)	43 (21.5)	13 (6.5)	2.81 / 1.09
Quality of service	26 (13.0)	78 (39.0)	59 (29.5)	16 (8.0)	21 (11.5)	2.64 / 1.13
Quality of food	40 (20.0)	90 (45.0)	37 (18.5)	17 (8.5)	16 (8.0)	2.39 / 1.13
Variety	26 (13.0)	48 (24.0)	69 (34.5)	41 (20.5)	16 (8.0)	2.86 / 1.12
Value for price	38 (19.0)	65 (32.5)	57 (28.5)	27 (13.5)	13 (6.5)	2.56 / 1.13
Prompt service	15 (7.5)	29 (14.5)	107 (53.5)	28 (14.0)	21 (10.5)	3.05 / 1.00

Additionally, principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed on all 25 service qualities established for the current research to examine the underlying dimensions of customer satisfaction about lodging units in Nainital based on the perspectives of respondents. Table 3 shows that the data were appropriate for factor analysis with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic of 0.860 and a Bartlett's test of Sphericity statistic of 2716.34.

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Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.860
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2716.349
	df	300
	Sig.	.000

Table 4 shows that PCA with a minimum Eigen value of one led to a solution with seven factors. As a group, these variables accounted for 67.06 percent of the total variation in the data. There are six components that make up the first aspect, "front office & accessibility;" they include the hotel's location, the ease with which guests may check in and leave, the quality of the reservations department, the friendliness of the bellhops, and the overall quality of the reservation process. This component explained 31.92 percentage of the total variance (Eigen Value = 7.98). Because of the significant amount of variation it accounts for, the 'front office & accessibility' dimension seems to be a crucial one in determining whether or not a guest would be satisfied with a certain hotel room.

Table 4: Factor Analysis

ITEMS	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	Alpha
Most of the reservation	.836	.123	.078	.124	.158	.113	.076	
Availability of reservation during peak sea-son	.829	-.062	-.026	.101	.188	.044	.064	
Hotel location is accessible	.782	.164	.116	-.011	.206	.051	-.076	
Check in /out efficiency	.858	.207	.000	.065	.077	.117	.006	.922
Reservation handling	.818	.199	-.062	.091	.029	.073	.053	
Bell staff efficiency	.615	.433	.055	.098	.042	.098	-.106	
Guest supplies and amenities	.380	.507	.257	-.098	.211	-.108	-.213	
General condition of room	.253	.772	.022	.049	.031	.068	.083	
Room temperature	.357	.666	.224	-.015	-.088	-.074	.128	
Tv	.092	.722	.001	.207	.066	.155	.057	
Decor	.118	.762	.050	.186	.106	.068	-.064	
Plumbing	.383	.402	.394	.115	.132	.229	-.136	

Restaurant	-.120	.214	.722	.190	.061	.078	-.212	
Quality of food	-.126	.113	.687	-.138	.115	.269	.244	.724
Variety	.222	-.012	.848	.118	-.013	-.090	.035	
Prompt service	.535	.241	-.124	.576	.105	.115	.179	
Courtesy and efficiency	.069	.284	-.180	.429	.124	.380	-.327	.743
Overall courtesy and friendliness	.095	.102	-.026	.770	.143	.054	.020	
Parking facilities during peak season	.201	.067	.134	.281	.567	.124	-.054	648
Safety and security in hotel	.417	.305	.122	-.048	.469	-.103	-.116	
Cleanliness of room first entering	.339	-.475	.024	.143	.136	.575	-.014	.625

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	
Cleanliness and service during your stay	.271	.109	.177	-.093	-.066	.787	.092	
Value for price	.030	.089	.090	.070	.101	.056	.886	.589
Quality of service	.276	-.179	.215	.059	-.053	-.159	.679	
Eigen value	7.98	2.26	1.86	1.32	1.16	1.11	1.04	
% of Variance	31.92	9.06	7.45	5.30	4.67	4.46	4.18	
Cumulative %	31.92	40.98	48.44	53.74	58.41	62.87	67.06	
Factor Level	Front office & accessibility	Ambience and amenities	Quality of food and service	Courtesy and efficiency	Safety and security	Cleanliness	value for money & Quality service	

The second factor, dubbed "ambiance and amenities," included six items related to guest supplies and amenities; these included the room's general condition, temperature, television facility, decor, and plumbing. This factor accounted for 9.06% of the total variance and had an Eigen value of 2.26, indicating that it was a significant factor of customer satisfaction. Three elements pertaining to the restaurant, food quality, and food variety make up the third component, 'quality of food and service,' which has an Eigen value of 1.86 and accounts for 7.45% of the overall variation. There is some evidence that this variable has an impact on consumers' happiness as well. With an Eigen value of 1.32 and a total variance of 5.30%, the fourth factor, titled "courtesy and efficiency," is also significant in determining customer satisfaction, albeit to a lesser extent. This factor included three items: speed of service, the friendliness of the staff, and their efficiency. The fifth component, dubbed "Safety and Security," comprises two features—hotel safety and security, as well as parking—that account for 4.67 percent of the total variance and have an Eigen value of 1.16. Again, this is a major contributor to customers' happiness, but the low Eigen values at the item level imply that it only has a minor impact on overall satisfaction. The sixth component, "cleanliness," consisted of two parts: the cleanliness of the room before arrival, and the cleanliness of the room and the service provided by the staff throughout the guest's stay. Also having a modest effect on customer happiness, this component accounts for 4.46 percent of the total variance and has an Eigen value of 1.11. However, the 'cleanliness and service throughout stay' factor loads at 0.787, making it the most influential contributor to customer satisfaction. Value for money and quality of service, the third and final factor, accounted for 4.18 percent of the total variance in the data and had an Eigen value of 1.04, indicating that it, too, has a moderate influence on customer satisfaction. However, the significant values of factor loadings for individual items indicate that value for money and quality of service are the significant component of

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customer satisfaction for the accommodation units in Nainital.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were also used to check the consistency of these seven components derived using PCA. The items showed a reasonable correlation with their component groupings, as shown by coefficients ranging from high (0.922) to low (0.589), suggesting that they are internally consistent and stable.

CONCLUSION

We learned a lot from this research about what makes a difference to customers. According to the statistics, the ideal Nainital tourist demographic consists of young adults between the ages of 20 and 40 who have a disposable income of between 20,000 and 40,000 rupees per month, like traveling with their families, have completed post-secondary education, and work in the professional sector. The study found that customers were dissatisfied with 25 different aspects of service, including tariff and parking facilities during peak seasons, staff friendliness, room cleanliness, guest amenities, general room condition, temperature, restaurant service, food quality, menu variety, and value for money. There were seven main elements found to determine or influence guest happiness with Nainital hotels. A hotel's cleanliness, cost-effectiveness, service quality, convenience of location, friendliness of staff, speed with which requests are processed, comfort of rooms, availability of services, security of premises, and overall atmosphere are all important considerations. The cleanliness, price, and quality of food and service are all important, but the quality of food and service is especially important in determining customer happiness. Research also shows that guests' level of satisfaction has a direct correlation to whether or not they want to return to the same housing unit in the future.

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