

An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Indian Leisure Travelers in the Selection of Star Category Hotels of Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Majority of the tourists visit destinations for leisure purposes. Thus, the present research is focussing on analysing the factors influencing leisure travelers in the selection of star category hotels. The objective of the study is to identify factors influencing leisure travelers star category hotel selection in Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the factors influencing leisure travelers hotel selection and four factors were identified. The findings of the study revealed that out of 29 variables of hotels selection, pleasant personality, grooming and hygiene standards, helpful and problem solving staff, interlock and safety chain on guestroom doors, etiquettes, manners & politeness of employees, well trained security staff & Visible staff presence and Prompt Service Provider are the most important variables which influences more to leisure travelers in the selection of star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: Leisure Travelers, Factors, Hotel Industry, Star Category, Hotels.

Introduction

According to the report of Indian Brand Equity Foundation (2021), total contribution of tourism sector in Indian economy in the year 2020 was US\$ 121.9 billion, which is projected to reach US\$ 512 billion by the end of year 2028 and Indian tourism sector contributed for 31.8 million jobs in India which was 7.3% of total jobs in the Nation. The present research area is based on Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh is highest populated Indian state (Population.com, 2020), fourth-largest Indian state by area (Das et al., 2021) and third largest Indian economy (Statistics Times, 2021). Uttar Pradesh is home of Taj Mahal which is one of the eight wonders of the world and the presence of other religious and historical sites makes Indian state of Uttar Pradesh one of

the most favoured tourist destination in India (Jacob et al., 2021). Indian state of Uttar Pradesh ranked first in terms of domestic tourists arrival and total number of domestic tourists travelled in Uttar Pradesh were 533.8 million in the year 2019 and in terms of foreign tourists arrival, Uttar Pradesh was ranked 3rd after Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra and total number of foreign tourists travelled in Indian state of Uttar Pradesh in the year 2019 were 4.7 million (India Tourism Statistics, 2020). Uttar Pradesh Government has working immensely to promote all the major sites of pilgrimage and sacred places and according to official statement all these places of tourists' interest of the state will find a place on the world map (The New Indian Express, June 13, 2021). The present research is especially focussing on five major districts of Uttar Pradesh namely Agra,

Lucknow, Mathura, Prayagraj and Varanasi i.e. leisure travelers who visits star category hotels of these five cities in Uttar Pradesh are the prime respondents of the present research because these five cities are the major tourist destination in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Table 1 is indicating total domestic and foreign tourist arrival in these five cities in the year 2019 with their ranking in terms of domestic and foreign tourist arrival.

leisure tourism largest segment of tourism industry (World Tourism Organisation, 2020). The main purpose of foreign tourists arrival in India was leisure travel in the year 2019 and 57.1% of total foreigners visited India for leisure and recreational purposes (India Tourism Statistics, 2020). In the year 2020, share of revenue from leisure travel was around 97% of total revenues from tourism sector in India (Statista, 2021). Thus,

Table 1: Total Domestic and Foreign Tourists Arrival

Sr. No.	Districts	Total domestic tourists visits (DTV)	Total foreign tourists visits (FTV)	Rank-2019	
				DTV	FTV
1.	Agra	9185808	1680476	2	1
2.	Prayagraj	284057014	1171696	1	2
3.	Varanasi	6447775	350000	6	3
4.	Lucknow	5714400	72129	7	7
5.	Mathura	8240400	29435	3	11

Source:<http://www.uptourism.gov.in/site/writereaddata/siteContent/202003131111297750ranking-13march20.pdf>

The present research is specifically based on leisure travelers who visits star category hotels Uttar Pradesh. Leisure activities can be defined as activities in which people engage in during free time and leads to escape from work and relaxation (Pressman et al., 2009). The fundamental purpose of leisure travelers is to experience the nature along with the tangible and intangible culture, including arts, landscapes, language and tradition. Thus, leisure tourism includes not only leisure activities- and nature based travelers, but leisure tourism also includes heritage-related and culturally motivated tourists (Min et al., 2016). The leisure travel is considered to be the main purpose of visit of travelers in all the regions of the world and share of leisure travel has increased from 50% in the year 2000 to 55% in the year 2019, thus making

these facts suggest that leisure segment is very important for the tourism and hospitality industry of India.

The primary need of travelers visiting any destination is accommodation to stay. Thus, booking rooms in hotels becomes their primary requirement while visiting any destination. The present research is specifically based on leisure travelers star category hotel selection. Star categorization of hotels is a rating system that examines the general features, services and amenities available in the hotel to assist guests to select the best hotel for their stay and budget (Jeong & Mindy, 2008; Soifer et al., 2021). Hotel establishments normally receives a star rating of 1 to 5 star with 1 star category being the most basic category and 5 star is considered as most luxurious one (Filieri et al., 2021; Nunkoo et al.,

2020) and these star rating system of hotels depends on the total number of rooms, services, facilities and amenities provided by the hotels to their guests (Cser & Ohuchi, 2008; Rhee & Yang, 2015).

A successful hotel establishment gives their best to create and provide to the guests services /products that meet or exceed their expectations (Grisseemann et al., 2013). Services offered of superior value that exceed guest expectations are the results in sustainable competitive advantage (Sekulić & Mandarić, 2017). Different segments of tourists have different expectations from the services provided by the hotels, therefore, professionals of hotel industry must think to satisfy the needs and demands of their target customers. The process of providing services is just like a chain of parallel and sequential tasks that the hotels should take more into consideration that how to provide high quality services to customers. There are number of factors which influence leisure travelers hotel selection and few researches have been conducted on the same (Jones & Chen, 2011; Tsai et al., 2015). As the leisure travelers are the prime segment of the market, therefore, it is important to understand the trends of tourists for hotel selection who travel for leisure and recreational purposes. The well-established need for continued research on leisure travelers hotel selection has justified the need for this study.

Review of Literature

Concept of Leisure Travel and Tourism

Huang et al. (2020) in their study revealed that the process of consuming creative leisure tourism products involves skill development and knowledge enhancement in receiving and exchanging knowledge with hosts, thus generates positive effects on an individuals subjective wellbeing. Fancourt et al. (2021) in their research described that leisure activities encompasses activities such as: taking part in arts;

involvement in hobbies; reading; shopping; volunteering; watching television; listening to music; socialising; joining religious activities; regularly participation in trade unions, environmental groups or political parties; participating in libraries, archives, culture, and heritage activities; engagement in exercise groups or sports; cooperating in community, neighbourhood, tenants' groups; and taking part in social clubs. Kim and Mokhtarian (2021) in their study mentioned that the enjoyment of physical activity is one important factor for long distance leisure travel (e.g. for hiking, camping and other outdoor recreational activities). Similarly, visiting family members or travelling with family are other motivational factors for long-distance leisure travel.

Hotel Attributes

Influence of hotel services and facilities on travelers hotel selection

Yang et al. (2014) in their study concluded that hotel location with easily accessible transportation facility and convenience to reach tourists attractions plays decisive role in the selection of hotels by the tourists. Radojevic et al. (2015) in their study analysed that hotel attributes like air-conditioning device in rooms, bar in the hotel premises, free Wi-Fi facility and price of the products have significant influence on consumers selection of hotels and this also leads to customer satisfaction. Prasad (2018) in research paper concluded that for hotel customers, credit/debit/online payment mode was found to be most important hotel attribute in their selection of hotel. Kim et al. (2019) in their study stated that refreshing, healing or relaxing are the various reasons for customers to visit hotels and this can be achieved by enjoying exotic food in hotels, staying overnight in hotels and by experiencing spa and recreational services provided by the hotels. Kim and Han (2020) in their research paper mentioned that with the advancement of technology and changing in

lifestyles of people, new set of technological advancements in hotel attributes has also taken place. Table 2 is indicating various hotel facilities which influence travelers hotel selection:

the guestrooms, customers expectations for the room rates and their willingness to pay for the same, both increases. This suggests to hotel professionals that they must provide luxury brand room items to justify their high room rates

Table 2: Important Hotel Facilities

AUTHOR/S	SECTOR	IMPORTANT HOTEL FACILITIES
Dolnicar and Otter (2003)	Hotel	Hotel Services like Valet (parking) and laundry services
Shoval et al. (2011)	Hotel	Location of the hotel
Costa et al. (2004)	Hotel	Fitness and Leisure(Spa center/Fitness Center/Swimming/Kids entertainment zone/sports facilities)
Wibowo (2012)	Hotel	Multi - cuisine/Specialty restaurant/Cofee shop with live music
Asyary and Veruswati (2020)	Hotel	Pub/Night Club/Discotheque
Lee and Tussyadiah (2010)	Hotel	Wi-Fi internet access
Prasad (2018)	Hotel	Debit/Credit card/online payment facilities
Pranata (2014)	Hotel	24 hours room service

Influence of Room Facilities on Travelers Hotel Selection

Torres et al. (2014) in their study found that for American guests guestroom amenities are the most important hotel attributes for their hotel selection and satisfaction during their stay. Heo and Hyun (2015) in their research paper described that with the increase in luxury items in

during peak periods. Sukhu et al. (2019) in their study found that room features and amenities are the most important determinant of guest satisfaction and whereas social and public elements plays a significant positive role in creating positive emotions. Table 3 is indicating various room facilities which influence travelers hotel selection:

Table 3: Important Room Attributes

AUTHOR/S	SECTOR	IMPORTANT ROOM ATTRIBUTES
Abd Razak and Jaafar (2015)	Hotel	Room Tariff
Leonidis et al. (2013)	Hotel	Electronic Devices (Electronic s afety locker, Electric kettle with tea/coffee making supplies)
Schamel (2012)	Hotel	Minibar
Agmapisarn (2014)	Hotel	Television with satellite network
Song et al. (2017)	Hotel	Air conditioner

Influence of Safety and Security Facilities on Travelers Hotel Selection

Cró et al. (2019) in their study found that security is the most crucial factor in a tourists' hotel selection and guests are keen to pay higher prices to make sure their security and to take pleasure in their trips and this is chiefly accurate for elderly persons and women. Falk and Yang (2020) in their research paper found that in tourists places where rules and regulations are very strict, there level of safety and security measures are also higher and tourists prefer to

Influence of Staff Service Quality on Travelers Hotel Selection

Kuo and Hsiao (2013) in their research paper emphasised on staff service quality and concluded that staff with neat and well-groomed appearance, friendly, enthusiastic and courteous behaviour are the prime staff service attributes which are responsible for customers hotel selection. Anwar and Qadir (2017) in their research paper described that front-line staffs in hotels includes hostess, receptionist, guest relation executives, waitress, guestroom

Table 4: Important Safety and Security Attributes

AUTHOR/S	SECTOR	IMPORTANT SAFETY AND SERVICE ATTRIBUTES
Goh and Law (2007)	Hotel	CCTV Surveillance in hotels
Chen et al. (2012)	Hotel	Fire Safety Devices (Fire alarms, fire extinguisher, Smoke detectors, Sprinklers)
Singh (2014)	Hotel	Luggage Scanner
Nwokorie and Igbojekwe (2020)	Hotel	Emergency exit
Chauhan et al. (2018)	Hotel	Well trained security staff and Visible staff presence
Chiang (2000)	Hotel	Interlock and safety chain on guestroom doors

stay at such destinations. Simpeh and Adisa (2020) in their study concluded that young travelers are more concerned in advanced technological security systems, first aid kits and medically trained employees. Nunkoo et al. (2020) in their study revealed that in three star hotels, safety, security and rooms features are considered to be the most important hotel attributes which contributes for the guests satisfaction. Table 4 is indicating various safety and security attributes which influence travelers hotel selection:

attendants etc. and all the front-line staff must be well trained as well as should be able to handle all guests queries and complaints efficiently. Sultan et al. (2020) in their study revealed that if hotel employees are able to provide the efficient and prompt services to their guests, it has positive influence on customers satisfaction and on their revisit intention. Table 5 is indicating various staff service qualities which influence travelers hotel selection:

Table 5: Important Staff Service Qualities

Author/s	Sector	Important staff service qualities
Kuo and Hsiao (2013)	Hotel	Pleasant Personality, Grooming and Hygiene Standards
Turkay and Sengul (2014)	Hotel	Etiquettes, Manners and Politeness
Caber and Albayrak (2014)	Hotel	Helpful and Problem solving Staff
Lee et al. (2016)	Hotel	Prompt Service Provider
Karpishina and Petrashevskaya (2019)	Hotel	Multilingual Skills of Staff

Factors Influencing Leisure Travelers Hotel Selection

Mccartney and Ge (2016) in their research paper analysed that high quality service features and superior room facilities are the most significant hotel selection factors for outbound travelers of China in Macau. Kim and Park (2017) in their study found that leisure travelers who are travelling with their family members emphasize more on price and overall environment of hotel more important than other choice attributes while their hotel selection. Kucukusta (2017) in the study on Chinese leisure travelers preferences for hotel amenities concluded that Price is considered to be the most important factor for Chinese leisure travelers hotel selection, followed by airport/local area shuttles, Wi-Fi, breakfast and quality of coffee/tea. Wang et al. (2020) in their study found that leisure travelers who are visiting with their friends considers location and cleanliness factors as the most important while their hotel selection while solo leisure travelers gives much importance to places of tourists interest and price while their hotel selection. Spoerr (2021) in a research paper concluded that cleanliness standards, value for money and guests safety and security are the three most important features of German leisure travelers hotel selection.

Objective of the Study

The present research is focussing on to identify the factors influencing leisure travelers hotel selection in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh.

Research Methodology

The questionnaire was distributed to 600 respondents and out of 600, 575 respondents had filled the questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique was used for data collection from respondents of India who visits star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh with the use of online Platform Google forms. The survey included respondents who stayed in 1 star to 5 star category hotels of Uttar Pradesh. Out of 575 responses, 521 responses were found valid according to the requirement of present research. The data is specifically filled by leisure travelers who visited star category hotels of Agra, Lucknow, Mathurs, Prayagraj and Varanasi in Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The surveyed questionnaire consisted closed ended questions in two sections. The first section consisted questions on demographic profile of respondents. The second section consisted questions on the 29 variables of hotel selection on a likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all influential, 2 is slightly influential, 3 is somewhat influential, 4 is moderately influential and 5 is extremely influential. These 29 variables of hotel selection

were subdivided into four parts which included 8 variables of hotel facilities & services, 10 variables on room facilities, 6 variables on safety & security facilities and 5 variables of staff service qualities. The survey was conducted from February 2021 to May 2021. The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.975 of all the 29 variables of Hotel Selection. It signifies that data has high reliability. Normalcy analysis was performed to check the normalcy of the data so that appropriate statistical tests (parametric/

non-parametric) can be used. In present research, since we have only 521 elements, the Shapiro-Wilk for normalcy analysis is used. The p-value is significant. Hence, we can conclude that the data comes from a non-normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric tests must be used for further statistical analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed to identify the factors influencing leisure travelers hotel selection.

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 6: Demographic profile of respondents

VARIABLE		%
Gender	Male	74.3
	Female	25.5
Age	18-30 years	50.1
	31-40 years	38
	41-50 years	8.8
	51-60 years	3.1
	Above 60 years	---
Marital Status	Single	49.1
	Married	49.9
	Preferred not to say	1
Educational Qualifications	Undergraduates	8.4
	Graduate	29.8
	Postgraduate	51.4
	Doctorate	9.0
	Others	1.3
Occupation	Students	20.5
	Government Job	26.7
	Private Job	35.7
	Self-Employed	12.5
	Others	4.6
Annual Income	Not earning	15.9
	Up to 5 Lakhs	33.0
	5-10 Lakhs	33.2
	10-15 Lakhs	12.9
	More than 15 Lakhs	5.0

Table 7: Total Variance Explained of attributes of hotel selection

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	17.271	59.553	59.553	17.271	59.553	59.553	7.818	26.960	26.960
2	1.815	6.259	65.812	1.815	6.259	65.812	5.087	17.541	44.500
3	1.187	4.093	69.905	1.187	4.093	69.905	4.905	16.912	61.413
4	1.145	3.947	73.852	1.145	3.947	73.852	3.607	12.439	73.852
5	.874	3.012	76.864						
6	.651	2.246	79.111						
7	.531	1.830	80.940						
8	.461	1.589	82.529						
9	.430	1.484	84.013						
10	.404	1.393	85.406						
11	.385	1.328	86.734						
12	.319	1.101	87.834						
13	.313	1.079	88.914						
14	.292	1.005	89.919						
15	.283	.976	90.895						
16	.264	.910	91.805						
17	.259	.894	92.698						
18	.254	.874	93.573						
19	.225	.776	94.348						
20	.214	.738	95.086						
21	.203	.701	95.788						
22	.197	.678	96.465						
23	.185	.638	97.103						
24	.174	.602	97.705						
25	.160	.550	98.255						
26	.153	.526	98.781						

Factors Influencing Leisure Travelers Hotel Selection

Factor Analysis was performed to determine the most important Hotel Attributes influencing Hotel Selection in all the star categories of hotels. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity (homogeneity of Variance) has been utilised to test the adequacy of the data. 0.973 is the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy which shows factor analysis can be utilised for the present data. Similarly, Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < 0.001$); which suggests existence of adequate correlation between variables to proceed with the analysis.

The table 7 shows output lists the 29 variables associated with each linear component (factor) before extraction, after extraction and after rotation. Before extraction, Output has identified 4 linear components within the data set. After extraction and rotation, the most important factor 1 explained 59.553% of total variance, factor 2 explained 6.259% of total variance, factor 3 explained 4.093% of total variance, and factor 4 explained 3.947% of total variance that can be extracted. As evident from the above table (Total Variations Explained) it was found that from the total 4 components, 1st factor is most important and can be extracted.

Table 8: Rotated Component Matrix for Attributes of Hotel Selection

Rotated Component Matrix ^a				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Pleasant Personality, Grooming and Hygiene Standards	.781	.232	.295	.139
Helpful and Problem solving Staff	.768	.324	.284	.120
Interlock and safety chain on guestroom doors	.764	.262	.203	.298
Etiquettes, Manners and Politeness	.756	.297	.300	.107
Well trained security staff and Visible staff presence	.753	.306	.198	.256
Prompt Service Provider	.730	.298	.301	.116
Fire Safety Devices (Fire alarms, fire extinguisher, Smoke detectors, Sprinklers)	.709	.362	.318	.192
Emergency exit	.683	.350	.244	.240
Luggage Scanner	.668	.213	.159	.446
Multilingual Skills of Staff	.623	.195	.197	.423
CCTV Surveillance in hotels	.616	.332	.364	.171

Air conditioner	.411	.707	.326	.095
Comfortable bed	.454	.691	.388	.077
Television with satellite network	.232	.683	.190	.369
Washroom supplies like shower gel, shampoo, dental kit, shaving kit, hair dryer, bath towels, face towel etc.	.410	.660	.300	.261
Cleanliness and hygiene standards	.526	.655	.357	.060
Furniture Items (Wardrobe, Luggage rack)	.406	.654	.214	.362
DND Card/Please clean my room card/Please collect my laundry card etc.	.367	.537	.144	.527
Room Tariff	.370	.488	.322	.151
Location of the hotel	.315	.351	.728	.177
24 hours room service	.353	.325	.715	.223
Debit/Credit card/online payment facilities	.389	.346	.706	.068
Wi-Fi internet access	.367	.262	.687	.266
Multi-cuisine/Specialty restaurant/Coffee shop with live music	.315	.228	.670	.380
Hotel Services like Valet (parking) and laundry services	.157	.250	.605	.457

Findings : Most Important Hotel Attributes influencing Hotel Selection: In the present study Factor Analysis exhibits the rotated factor loading for the statements (Variables) of most important Hotel Attributes influencing Hotel Selection for all hotels. Looking at table of Rotated Component Matrix, we found that-

Factor -1 includes following 11 variables

1. Pleasant Personality, Grooming and Hygiene Standards
2. Helpful and Problem solving Staff
3. Interlock and safety chain on guestroom doors
4. Etiquettes, Manners and Politeness
5. Well trained security staff and Visible staff presence
6. Prompt Service Provider

7. Fire Safety Devices (Fire alarms, fire extinguisher, Smoke detectors, Sprinklers)
8. Emergency exit
9. Luggage Scanner
10. Multilingual Skills of Staff
11. CCTV Surveillance in hotels

Factor -2 includes following 8 variables

1. Air conditioner
2. Comfortable bed
3. Television with satellite network
4. Washroom supplies like shower gel, shampoo, dental kit, shaving kit, hair dryer, bath towels, face towel etc.
5. Cleanliness and hygiene standards
6. Furniture Items (Wardrobe, Luggage rack)
7. DND Card/Please clean my room

card/Please collect my laundry card etc.

8. Room Tariff

Factor -3 includes following 6 variables

1. Location of the hotel
2. 24 hours room service
3. Debit/Credit card/online payment facilities
4. Wi-Fi internet access
5. Multi-cuisine/Specialty restaurant/Coffee shop with live music
6. Hotel Services like Valet (parking) and laundry services

Factor -4 includes following 4 variables

1. Minibar
2. Pub/Night Club/Discotheque
3. Fitness and Leisure (Spa center/Fitness Center/Swimming/Kids entertainment zone/sports facilities)
4. Electronic Devices (Electronic safety locker, Electric kettle with tea/coffee making supplies)

Thus, objective i.e. to identify the factors influencing leisure travelers hotel selection has been thoroughly fulfilled.

Conclusions

For fulfilling the objective exploratory factor analysis was performed to identify the factors significantly influencing leisure travelers star category hotels selection in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Four factors were identified and first factor consisted variables of staff service quality and security features. Thus findings of the first objective concludes that pleasant personality, grooming and hygiene standards of employees, etiquettes, manners and polite behaviour of staff, helpful and problem solving nature of staff and safety features like interlock and safety chain on guestroom door are the important variables of first factor (based on staff service quality and

safety features) which influence leisure travelers star category hotel selection in the state of Uttar Pradesh. These findings are consistent with the findings of Cró et al. (2019); Kuo & Hsiao (2013); Rao & Sahu (2013); Spoerr (2021); Turkay & Sengul (2014). Thus, the findings of the first objective concludes that staff service quality and security features are the most important factor for leisure travelers in their selection of star category hotels of Indian State of Uttar Pradesh.

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