A review on the customer perception, expectations and satisfaction post covid in the hotel industry

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ABSTRACT

Customer service is king in the travel industry, and the success or failure of a hotel business is determined by the level of satisfaction of its guests. It becomes more difficult to provide customers with an experience that they will enjoy as their expectations grow higher. During this time period, they must contend with the increasing and dynamic nature of travel technology as well as the savvy and resourceful attitudes of travellers and guests towards their establishments. Consequently, hotels must follow the lead of their guests' behaviour. The majority has the final say. They are typically well-educated, have high incomes, and are not afraid to take risks in order to achieve success. Hotels are realising that they must be in multiple locations at the same time, with constant visibility being a critical component of booking success. In recent years, a new breed of tech-savvy travellers has emerged, and they expect hotels to keep up with the latest technological advancements. Even the older generations are now well-versed in the use of social media and mobile devices, two factors that are critical considerations for hoteliers when planning their marketing strategies. This entails mobile-friendly websites, simple navigation, and a booking process that is quick and straightforward. People are using mobile technology to browse social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram even while gaining travel inspiration, so hotels must maintain a constant presence on the internet. There's no denying that COVID-19 has forever altered the way businesses interact with their customers. In the long run, the way that hospitality businesses operate and deliver experiences will undergo a slew of edits and adaptations, resulting in a new normal. Changes, on the other hand, must take place immediately and swiftly. The failure of a business will result in the company ceasing to operate completely. In addition to complying with any regulations imposed by the government or the industry, hotels will need to consider who might be visiting their area, what they might be looking for, and what services might be available to them. This study is an attempt to understand the perception of customers, as well as their expectations and satisfaction levels, in the hotel industry during the post-COVID phase in various locations throughout South India.

KEYWORDS: Customer Perception, Satisfaction, Hotel industry, Behavioural intention

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the global health crisis brought on by COVID-19, travellers are likely to pay greater attention to the availability and quality of medical facilities when making travel decisions in the future. This consumption requirement is particularly important for hotel properties in gateway cities, particularly those that host a large number of conventions. In this regard, future research should focus on how hoteliers should design marketing communication content and employ marketing communication tactics to demonstrate their ability to protect guests from public health crises, assure guests of their health and safety during their stay, and make them feel more at ease following the COVID-19 outbreak, to name a few key areas. Also in a public health emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus is spread not only between guests and hotel service employees, but also between guests themselves. Future research will examine whether and why technology such as artificial intelligence and AI-driven robotics can ensure social distancing among hotel guests during epidemics, as well as how hotels can implement effective physical distancing measures among guests.

AIM OF STUDY

Among the objectives of the study are to gain an understanding of the various perspectives held by customers, as well as their expectations and satisfaction levels, during the post-COVID phase in the hotel industry in various locations throughout South India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to a study conducted by Feng Hu, Thorsten Teichert, Shengli Deng, and colleagues in the year 2021, the hospitality industry is extremely vulnerable to pandemics. However, little is known about how pandemics affect travellers' perceptions of the quality of the services they receive from hotels. This study investigates the changes in travellers' expectations and perceptions of hotel services as a result of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic at various stages of the epidemic. Text mining and sentiment analysis techniques were used to collect and analyse 98,163 Chinese hotel reviews in order to derive new implications for service optimization. The results were published in the journal Service Quality Management. The findings reveal that consumers' perceptions of hygiene have shifted in ways that go beyond hygienic requirements. Consumer preferences may shift over time, and the insights gained from this research can assist the hospitality industry in organising its priorities during acute pandemic situations and adapting to potentially longer-lasting shifts in consumer preferences

According to the most recent research work by Yan Hong, Gangwei Cai, Zhoujin Mo, et al (2020), the bed and breakfast (B&B) tourism industry faced significant challenges in improving its health strategies following the outbreak of COVID-19 (particularly during the stage of tourism recovery). B&Bs play an important role in the tourism industry in China and many other countries around the world. However, only a few studies have looked into the impact of B&Bs on tourism in China, as part of the COVID-19 initiative. Our paper is one of the first to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on tourist satisfaction with B&Bs in China, and it is one of the most recent. Work and travel restrictions

in Zhejiang, China, were implemented on January 20, 2020, and work and travel restrictions were lifted on February 20, 2020. From the 1st of March to the 15th of March 2020, data from 588 tourists (who had stayed in B&Bs in Zhejiang, China) was collected through an online survey on WeChat. Through an examination of changing levels of tourist satisfaction with bed and breakfast establishments before and after COVID-19, the current study attempted to close this gap. Furthermore, based on an importance-performance analysis, some recommendations are made to the B&B industry for the resumption of tourism following COVID-19 (IPA).

The COVID-19 pandemic, according to the authors Lanji Quan, Amr Al-Ansi, and Heesup Han (2022), has prompted authorities in many countries to implement critical protective measures such as face masks, lockdowns, and social distancing. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between financial risk perception, customer attitude, satisfaction, and behavioural intention in relation to the protective measures against viruses handled by hotels in the hospitality industry. In addition, the study computes the mean comparison across the demographic variables of hotel customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The findings revealed that the protective measures implemented by Chinese hotels against COVID-19 had a significant impact on financial risk perception as well as on customer attitudes, respectively. It also demonstrates a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction as well as a positive relationship with behavioural intention. Financial risk perception and customer attitude, on the other hand, had no effect on satisfaction, whereas they did have an effect on behavioural intention in the study. Protective measures, according to the findings, are an important part of encouraging people to visit hotels in a safe and consistent manner.

Several studies, including those by Ceylan et al. (2020) and Untaru and Han (2021), demonstrated that consumer attitudes toward purchase behaviour changed during the pandemic. Because of the uncertainty created by a pandemic, a fundamental understanding of what influences customer satisfaction is critical for the hotel industry during this time period. In addition, customer satisfaction has risen to become one of the most important factors to consider. It is a high marketing priority because it is generally considered to be a valuable determinant of repeat visits, positive word of mouth, and customer loyalty among the general public. As a result of the SARS outbreak and the subsequent decline in consumer confidence, private consumption spending experienced significant declines both during and after the outbreak (Lu et al., 2020). However, despite the fact that many hospitality industries have implemented protective measures in accordance with government and WHO recommendations, few studies have examined the impact of these protective measures on customer perceptions of financial risk and attitude, satisfaction, and future behaviour intention. The perception of financial risk, in particular, has been shown to have a direct impact on behaviour in a variety of other studies, but studies on this topic have been lacking.

Authors Mihir P. Mehta, Gopal Kumar, and M Ramkumar conducted the research (2021) It is stated that the hospitality industry has been confronted with the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which has resulted in significant social and economic risks. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed a significant threat to tourism around the world, and it has had a

significant impact on the hospitality industry. The purpose of this study is to assess customer satisfaction by conducting sentiment analysis and topic modelling on customer reviews of the hospitality provided by hotels on different continents during the COVID-19 pandemic, which will take place between January and September 2020. Their improved new scale of metrics for categorising customer satisfaction assessed by sentiment analysis had been developed in a detailed manner. Topic modelling was used to gain an understanding of the various topics that customers frequently discussed. They discovered that North America and Europe were capable of meeting and exceeding customer expectations. In Asia, Sri Lanka performed well, Indonesia was able to maintain its high levels of customer satisfaction, and India has consistently increased its levels of customer satisfaction. They identified 12 most frequently discussed topics, with the most common reasons for dissatisfaction being related to the staff, service, room, cleanliness, long wait times for reservations, and the hotel's response to the pandemic. Results of this study will assist senior managers of hotels in developed and developing countries in developing innovative and effective services that will satisfy customers and restore their confidence.

COVID-19, according to Shinu Vig and Tavishi Tewary (2022), has resulted in restrictions on travel and public gatherings, as well as other consequences. As a result of the pandemic, the hotel industry has been identified as one of the most severely affected sectors. Due to mounting debts, changes in consumer behaviour and perception, and a lack of cash flows, the industry is struggling to maintain its viability in the post-covid era. This has resulted in the loss of jobs, as well as a negative impact on ancillary industries. However, hotel entrepreneurs have shown remarkable fortitude in the face of the crisis, and they have begun to explore new business prospects. When it comes to meeting the demands of consumers for a contactless experience, hotels have adopted cutting-edge technological and digital approaches. Specifically, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate how the Indian hotel industry has responded to the pandemic and the risks that have been associated with it. It examines the new paradigm and challenges facing the industry, as well as the resulting new trends in the hospitality industry. There is a strong emphasis on investigating the long-term recovery and resilience of the Indian hotel industry, as well as the policy measures and implications for the hotel industry.

According to the findings of Jongsik Yu, Kyeongheum Lee, and Sunghyup Sean Hyun's research published in 2021, this study examines consumers' perceived risks of COVID-19 in order to develop a solid theoretical framework that explains their behavioural intentions relating to COVID-19 It also investigates the influence of four sub-factors of perceived risk in relation to COVID-19, as well as the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and the intention to return to the scene of the incident. According to the findings of this study, the perceived risk associated with COVID-19 and post-traumatic stress disorder have severe negative effects on revisit intention for hotels, with emotion regulation ability being found to play a moderating role in this procedure. Because hotels are frequented by a diverse range of people in terms of race, nationality, age, and culture, they have the ability to quickly spread epidemics such as COVID-19 among their patrons. So that they can formulate a variety of strategies, hotel managers must first identify the risks of COVID-19 as perceived by hotel

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guests, the potential development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the influence of such negative phenomena on guests' behavioural intentions.

Demand and supply in the hotel industry are also being adversely affected by COVID-19, and this sector is expected to be further harmed by the expected slowdown in the global economy in the coming months. In the case of AccorHotels, for example, the company reported that more than half of its hotels worldwide have already ceased operations (Hotel Management, 2020).

Joo et al. (2019) also provided data on the performance of the Korean tourism industry from June 2015 to June 2016, based on data collected from the Korea Tourism Organization. Approximately $2.6 billion in tourism revenue was lost as a result of the MERS outbreak, as revealed by the study. The MERS outbreak reduced the number of visitors to Korea by 2.1 million (16 percent of the expected visitors during the period). It was also estimated that the per capita tourism spending loss was between $2 billion and $3 billion in the United States. This suggests that disease outbreaks cause consumers to perceive various risks (e.g., physical, psychological, economic, financial, temporal, and performance risks), which can result in extremely passive and restrictive consumer behaviour. As a result, the current period, which coincides with the global COVID-19 outbreak, is likely to cause consumers in the hospitality and tourism industries to perceive greater risks, as well as having a negative impact on their purchasing decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STUDY

The points listed below state that in order to have a better experience, hoteliers and then customers must adhere to the guidelines in order to realise a higher level of service quality from beginning to end.

- Frequently, the experience of the guest and the experience of the hotelier are inextricably linked.
- Starting from the moment they begin their search; the guest experience begins.
- Travelers anticipate that hotels will keep up with technological advancements.
- Prioritize the implementation of COVID-19 precautions and requirements.
- Consider how your website and online experience have been received by your target audience.
- Consider the surroundings and culture to provide guests with a memorable experience.
- Making things easier, quicker, and more exciting through the use of technology
- Make an effort to be detail-oriented, imaginative, and personable.
- Employ the most qualified employees and give them the necessary authority.
- Consider your customer's perspective and tailor your offerings to meet their needs.
- Go above and beyond to provide outstanding hospitality.

CONCLUSION

Beyond the themes discussed above, crisis management is another important topic that should be investigated in greater depth. Due to the fact that hotels are a common victim of pandemics, it is necessary to examine how hotels should establish contingency plans for the control of infectious diseases. Future research is also required to evaluate the various approaches that hotels could use to collaborate with government agencies in order to develop coordination mechanisms and comprehensive crisis management plans. The COVID-19 outbreak has had a negative impact on the operation and even the survival of hotels all over the world. For academics and practitioners alike, it is past time to carefully examine the consequences of this crisis and work toward improving industry practises. Evidence gathered from key stakeholders could aid scholars in exploring and critiquing phenomena of interest in order to make predictions based on that information. Research methods for gathering data to address the issues raised in this article include focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, surveys, scenario-based experiments, digital analytics (including machine learning), and a mixed-methods approach (which includes a combination of methods). In summary, the changes in traveller behaviour, as well as changes in hotel marketing and management practises, as a result of COVID-19, demand close academic scrutiny. It is our hope that the research lines described here will shed light on relevant topics of interest and serve as a springboard for further investigation.

The worldwide panic triggered by COVID-19 may have long-term ramifications for international travel. Effective strategies are required to restore travellers' confidence while also assisting businesses in recovering as quickly as possible from this public health crisis. The hotel industry's resilience and long-term viability can be strengthened by meeting the diverse needs of its customers and taking steps to turn adversity into opportunity. These efforts are in line with projected market demand trends in areas such as traveller wellness, contactless services, and environmental conservation, among others. The courses of action taken by hotels in response to the pandemic and the dynamic market demand reveal a number of areas in which professional knowledge needs to be improved. Following the pandemic, academics can contribute to theory development in hotel marketing and management by reflecting on changing traveller expectations and industry recovery programmes. This will help to foster positive changes in industry practises after the pandemic.

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