"SATISFACTION DIMENSIONS OF THE DIGITAL BOOKER OF STAR HOTELS"

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ABSTRACT

Satisfaction of the customer during all stages of purchase is the single most critical factor that is responsible for purchase decision. Satisfaction is meeting expectations and is a cognitive evaluation of the customer experience. It is influenced by many factors and also has many facets and dimensions. The aim of the study is to explore the various dimensions responsible for satisfaction with regards to online booking of star hotels. The research was carried out by conducting a survey of 683 respondents with means of a structured questionnaire. It was found that satisfaction is related to e-quality, e-trust, brand, price, loyalty, gender and income. There exists a dynamic relationship between all the said variables, making satisfaction an all important construct to be considered and realized for success in establishing businesses.

KEYWORDS: *Satisfaction, Trust, Online Hotel Reservations, Loyalty and Brand*

INTRODUCTION

Consumer satisfaction is the goal of business establishments in order to of sustain and grow. Especially in the highly competitive market, just satisfaction is not enough, to dazzle and delight is the key in order to retain consumers. Consumer satisfaction is a resultant sum total of many factors. Zhang, et. al., (2011), commented that there is considerable distinction between perceived service quality and expectations of service quality. The digital travel reservation service quality dimensions positively correlate with overall satisfaction. Satisfaction is determined by quality of service. Whilst satisfaction directly impacts purchase and re-purchase. Unlike traditional form of business, it is difficult to satisfy and measure satisfaction for online businesses. The behaviour is difficult to ascertain and certainly is more complex. There exists an important connection between customer satisfaction and return on assets and a firm's future profitability depends on satisfying current customers. Lee, et. al., (2016), advocated that satisfaction is the chief reason for success and depends largely on the frontline staff behaviour. Customers should be handled as assets, and when their varied needs are adequately met, they are satisfied. Satisfaction is the antecedent of repeat patronage. It is also one of the aims of any business operation. Loyalty stems from satisfaction. In case of e-commerce, satisfaction is a precursor to a long standing relationship which once established is even stronger than off line transactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trust and Satisfaction

Satisfaction and trust are important aspects of consumers' behaviour. Especially in case of a service product like hotels, coupled with the mode of distribution which is internet, the interaction is remote. So, satisfaction and trust play an even more important role. Seung Hyun, K., et. al., (2012), evaluated the difference between the perceived satisfaction and trust that consumers demonstrated between hotel websites and the other online travel agent websites. Many have been undertaken to probe the relationship that exists between trust and satisfaction. There are researches which have successfully established that both correlate positively. Trust determines the level of satisfaction. They elaborated that higher the trust leads to higher satisfaction. With diminished trust, satisfaction also is reduced. Setiawan, H., (2017), advocated that consumer trust is proven to have a significant and positive effect on the satisfaction of consumers. He claimed that companies and corporate that succeed in winning trust of consumers; invariably will have consumers who are more satisfied with their products. He mentioned that to have satisfied customers, it is important to win their trust.

Loyalty and Satisfaction

Loyalty programs may also be used in order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Vinod, (2011), explained for customers benefit from the program or emotional attach to the brand can generate more This is important for channels as it is three times more expensive to get a new customer. So it is essential to retain old ones and encourage repeated purchases. loyalty programs may also be used in order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. He further explained for customers benefit from the program or emotional attach to the brand can generate more This is important for channels as it is three times more expensive to get a new customer. So it is essential to retain old ones and encourage repeated purchases. Li-Ming, A., (2013), found that for customers to patronize an online website, they need to be satisfied based on various parameters such as ease of use, convenience and deal. Furthermore, their actual stay of experience should also match their expectations. Once this is achieved, then most likely that travellers would like to repeat their purchase. The destination may change, but if customer is satisfied with online booking portal he will continue to use it for other travel plans. Even though customers can easily check and switch other websites, they may not like to undergo the process afresh every time and if customers are pleased with the website services, they will stay rather than search for substitutes. The advantage of a satisfied customer is hence two-fold. Kumar, et. al, (2010), emphasized that customisation leads to satisfaction and in turn assurance that same care would be taken by the hotel in subsequent visits. This decided for future and with that expectation a satisfied guest already in his mind plans to further the relationship.

Brand and Satisfaction

Brand building is an important aspect of business generation and sustaining the same. Stressing further, Yoo, et. al., (2010), advocated that brand value also adds to the much needed incremental value to a product brand. Customers of strong built and communicated brand, are not only attracted to the brand, but also find more value using it. This added value is possible when a strong brand value is created and communicated to the customers and plays an important part in increased customer satisfaction.

Online Reviews and Satisfaction

Jeong and Jeon, (2008), voiced that the essence of customer feeds is their personal experience that makes it original and honest. It is not camouflaged as any gimmick and is straight as is. The customers share their personal journey in detail, the level of satisfaction they experienced and also their intention of revisiting. For other customers, scouting for information, they can lay hands on immense data available that can be defined and narrowed based on parameters such as hotel company, location, star categorization, pricing, to name a few. Online reviews and ratings indicate satisfaction. Satisfied guests not only come back as regulars, they are influencers as well who through positive e-wom also impact sale positively.

Gender and Satisfaction

Mansoora, A., (2017), found that the difference between the two genders has a considerable impact on their satisfaction levels. There are also times when there is no difference at all, and also times when the difference is neglible. But in most cases they asserted that owing to differences in personality, attitude,, expectations, there exists a difference in male and female consumers that affects their perceptions and satisfaction thereof. On online consumers' perception, Negahdari, A., (2014), studied in usage of technology, both males and females seem to have equal resources and access to the internet. But, their results found that there exist gender differences in online shopping. Further, Museklwa, (2011), noted that female customers had high assurance expectations and were more sensitive to service courtesies and knowledge, compared to males.. Males were found to have more satisfaction stemming from meeting promises and expectations. Their findings were in line with the notion that satisfaction differs depending on gender and compared to female consumers, that male consumers are usually less satisfied.

Income and Satisfaction

Income is one of the demographic variable which is known to influence consumption and satisfaction thereof. Khadka, K., (2016), advocated the role economic circumstances have a significant impact on consumer buying behaviour. He mentioned that typically a low income consumer chooses less expensive purchases and vice-versa. Klopotan, I (2016), further supported that there lies a difference between respondents having below-average income, consider price as an important determinant of loyalty. Whereas, consumers with income ranging from average and above, consider quality of product as important determinant of loyalty. He concluded that consumers who earn more do not pay attention to price, but lay more emphasis on to quality and satisfaction post sale. Razak, A., (2016), also asserted income to be one of the basis of segmentation in order to group homogeneous customers. He found that it was more easy to please lower income customers as their expectations were low and their need of price was met. On the contrary, he found that customers who paid premium, were more particular, critical and hard to please. Hence, satisfying them was more challenging.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the role satisfaction on repeat usage and loyalty in online booking of star hotels.

- To study the influence of gender on satisfaction in online booking of star hotels.

- To study the influence of income on satisfaction in online booking of star hotels.

Hypotheses

- H1: Consumer satisfaction leads to loyalty towards specific hotel booking portal.

- H2: Gender of the consumer significantly affects consumer satisfaction towards online bookings of star hotels.

- H3: Income of the consumer significantly affects consumer satisfaction towards online bookings of star hotels.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The primary study is purely on the basis of their response. Also, the geographical study is limited to a particular city. For a broader and generalised understanding it has to be studied across multiple cities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Collection of Data

The primary data required for the research was collected using the following technique:

- Data collection tool: Questionnaire

- Research Design: Descriptive

- Sample Type: Non Probability Judgment Sampling

- Sample size: 683

Apart from the above mentioned tools the relevant secondary data for the research was collected from journals, books & internet sources.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Low Price is Compromised Quality

S.No	Scale		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	5	410	60	60
2	Agree	4	132	19	79
3	Undecided	3	70	10	90
4	Disagree	2	37	5	95
5	Strongly Disagree	1	34	5	100
Total			**683**	**100**	

Quality is known to be the fitness for use. 60% respondents strongly agreed and additional 19% agreed that when price is lowered, then the quality is also lowered. This means that price and quality have a positive relationship. Increase in one leads to increase in the other and vice versa. Online portals provide last minute deals, sharp price drops and other such promotions to fill rooms that are highly perishable. In such cases the quality might also alter. Amenities, services and facilities might be adjusted to suit the price. Doing so might affect the quality of experience. Since the guest understands, he is considered to be accepting of the situation as well.

Table 2: Lower Price Increases Satisfaction

S.No	Scale		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	5	350	51	51
2	Agree	4	160	23	75
3	Undecided	3	97	14	89
4	Disagree	2	36	5	94
5	Strongly Disagree	1	40	6	100
	Total		**683**	**100**	

Satisfaction is ordinarily is when experience meets expectations. 79% respondents agreed that when they buy high priced products, their expectations are high. When costs are low, they might still buy the product, but their expectations are also low. In such cases, they agreed that lowered cost, causes lowered expectations. In such cases, when expectations are low, the product might succeed in meeting them leading to satisfaction.

Table 3: Satisfaction Leads to Loyalty

S.No	Scale		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	5	324	47	47
2	Agree	4	157	23	70
3	Undecided	3	100	15	85
4	Disagree	2	34	5	90
5	Strongly Disagree	1	68	10	100
	Total		**683**	**100**	

Loyalty is repeated purchase. It is when the customer comes back, without taking his business to the competition. In such cases, it is seen that 70% agree that satisfaction leads to them coming back. In case of the hotel product, there are two sides to the coin. This means that on one side, the leisure traveller sees satisfaction as important, but his hedonistic value and pleasure and adventure seeking nature might push him to try alternate hotels in subsequent stays, thus depriving repeat business. On the other hand, frequent travellers such as businessmen, the sameness of a hotel might appeal to them as they prefer a home away from home. Thus encouraging repeat business and loyalty.
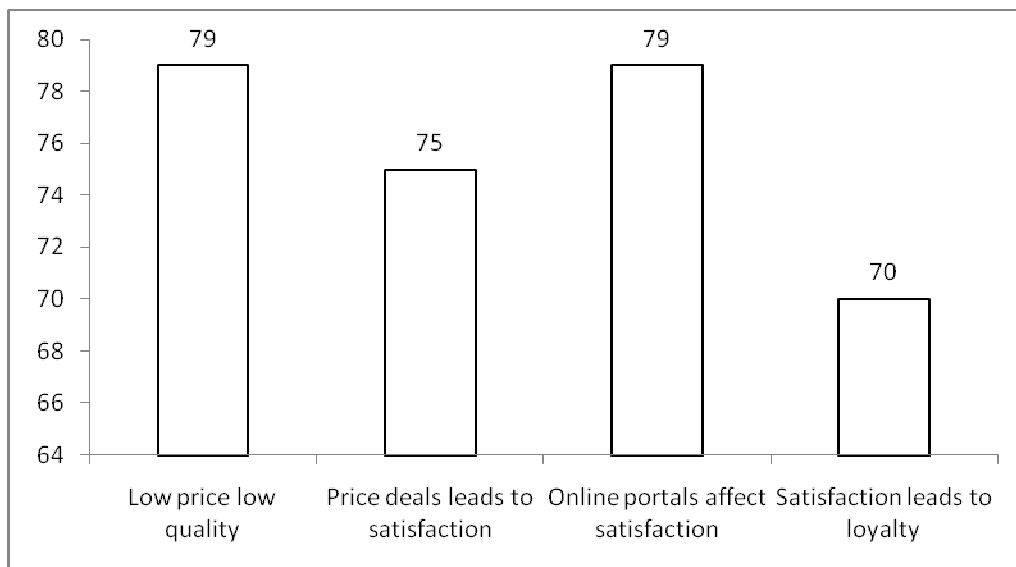
Figure 1: Parameters of Satisfaction

It is reflected by the data that customers feel that satisfaction is inversely related to price. This means, lower the price gives more satisfaction. When price is high, so are the expectations and satisfaction is not easy to attain. Also, customers felt that when price is less, the quality is compromised thus affecting satisfaction. Lastly, once satisfied, customer does not shop around and more likely to make repeated purchase. This in turn leads to customer loyalty. The above charts on satisfaction indicate the same.

Hypotheses Testing

- **H$_0$1:** Consumer satisfaction leads to loyalty towards specific hotel booking portal.

- **Test Used:** Simple Regression

- **Test Result:** $p < 0.05$

- **Decision:** Accept Alternate Hypothesis

Simple regression is forced entry method used to test the aforementioned hypothesis. In this method the predictor is forced into the model. The one independent variable that was considered for force entry was Consumer satisfaction. The following tables demonstrate simple regression analysis.

Online Buying Behaviour mean is 4.1261 with the standard deviation 0.68897 and Consumer Satisfaction mean is 4.1640 with the standard deviation 0.83647.

Along the diagonal of the matrix the values for the correlation coefficients are all 1.00 (i.e. a perfect positive correlation). The reason for this is that these values represent the correlation of each variable with itself, so obviously the resulting values are 1. The correlation matrix is extremely useful to get a rough idea of the relationship between predictor and outcome, and for a preliminary look for multicollinearity. If there is no multicollinearity in the data then there is no substantial correlation ($r > .9$).

If we look only at the predictor then correlation is between Online Buying Behaviour and Consumer Satisfaction which is significant at a.05 level ($r = .343$, $p < .05$). We can see also that of all of the predictors the Consumer Satisfaction correlates best with the outcome ($r = .343$, $p < .001$) and so it is likely that this variable will predict Online Buying Behaviour.

Table 4: 47 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.343[a]	.117	.116	.64775	.117	90.540	1	681	.000	1.888
a. Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Satisfaction										
b. Dependent Variable: Online Buying Behaviour										

R is the value of the correlation coefficients between the predictor and the outcome. Consumer Satisfaction is used as a predictor; its correlation with Online Buying Behaviour is 0.343. The next column gives us a value of R2, is a measure of how much of the variability in the outcome is accounted for by the predictors. For the present model its value is.117, which means that Consumer Satisfaction accounts for 11.7% of the variation in Online Buying Behaviour.

ANOVA tests whether the model is significant at predicting the outcome. Specifically, the F-ratio represents the ratio of the improvement in prediction that results. The value of the sum of squares for the model represents the improvement in prediction resulting from fitting a regression line to the data rather than using the mean as an estimate of the outcome. The residual sum of squares represents the total difference between the model and the observed data. The 'df' is the degrees of freedom (df) for each term. In this case of improvement due to the model, this value is equal to the number of predictors (1 for the model), and for SSR it is the number of observations (683) minus the number of coefficients in the regression model. Therefore, model has 681 degrees of freedom. The average sum of squares (MS) is then calculated for each term by dividing the SS by the df. The F-ratio is calculated by dividing the average improvement in prediction by the model (MSM) by the average difference between the model and the observed data (MSR). If the improvement due to fitting the regression model is much greater than the inaccuracy within the model then the value of F will be greater than 1, calculates the exact probability of obtaining the value of F by chance. For the model the F-ratio is 90.540, which is very unlikely to have happened by chance (p <.000). We can interpret these results that the model significantly improved our ability to predict the outcome variable, which means Consumer Satisfaction is quite able to predict the Online Buying Behaviour.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.951	.126		23.434	.000	2.704	3.199					
	Consumer Satisfaction	.282	.030	.343	9.515	.000	.224	.340	.343	.343	.343	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: Online Buying Behaviour													

The b-values tell us about the relationship between Online Buying Behaviour and the predictor. If the value is positive we can tell that there is a positive relationship between the predictor and the outcome, whereas a negative coefficient represents a negative relationship. For this data the predictor has positive b-value indicating positive relationship. So, Consumer Satisfaction predicts the Online Buying Behaviour. Finally with the regression analysis it is confirm that the Consumer Satisfaction affects Online Buying Behaviour positively. For our current model the VIF values are all well below 10 and the tolerance statistics all well above 0.2; therefore, we can safely conclude that there is no Collinearity within our regression model.

On the basis of the simple regression analysis out we reject the null and conclude that the Consumer Satisfaction positively affect the Online Buying Behaviour F = 90.540, p < 0.000 (n = 683).

Regression Equation

Online Buying Behaviour = 2.951 + Consumer Satisfaction (.282)

Figure 2

- **Hypothesis $H_0 2$:** Gender of the consumer significantly affects consumer satisfaction towards online bookings of star hotels.

- **Test Used:** Independent t test

- **Test Result:** p>0.05

- **Decision:** Accept Null Hypothesis

The independent *t*-test is used in situations whereby there are two experimental conditions and different participants have been used in each condition. Two different equations can be used to calculate the *t*-statistic depending on whether the samples contain an equal number of people.

The independent t-test provides summary statistics for the two experimental conditions. From the table, it is seen that both groups have different participants (Male = 482 and Female = 201). The male group with a mean of satisfaction is 4.1300, with a standard deviation of 0.82814 and the standard error of group is 0.03772. In addition, the table tells us that the average satisfaction level in participants of female group was 4.2457, with a standard deviation of 0.85266 and the standard error of group is 0.06014.

Table 6: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality Of Means					95% Confidence Interval Of The Difference	
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig. (2 Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Consumer Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	.038	.846	-1.650	681	.099	-.11577	.07014	-.25350	.02195
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.631	364.824	.104	-.11577	.07099	-.25538	.02383

The output contains the main test statistics. The first thing to notice is that there are two rows containing values for the test statistics: one row is labelled Equal variances assumed, while the other is labelled Equal variances not assumed. We see that parametric tests assume that the variances in experimental groups are roughly equal. Well, in reality there are adjustments that can be made in situations in which the variances are not equal. The rows of the table relate to whether or not this assumption has been broken. Levene's test checks if variances are different in different groups. Therefore, if Levene's test is significant at p >.05, it is revealed that the variances are significantly equal and that the assumption of homogeneity of variances has not been violated. For this data, Levene's test is non-significant (because p =.846, which is greater than.05).

On average, participants male respondents level of satisfaction (M = 4.1300, SE =.03772) is not significantly different than female respondents level of satisfaction (M = 4.2457, SE =.06014). This difference was not significant t (681) = −1.650, p >.05.

On the basis of independent test statistic we accept the null hypothesis which confirms that there is no difference in the level of consumer satisfaction with decision-making of online booking of star hotel according to their gender.

- **Hypothesis H_03:** Income of the consumer significantly affects consumer satisfaction towards online bookings of star hotels.

- **Test Used:** One-way ANOVA

- **Test Result:** p<0.05

- **Decision:** Accept Alternate Hypothesis

Descriptive statistics shows the mean, standard deviation, standard error, confidence Interval, and sample distribution according to income group. Customer Satisfaction amongst different income categories it is observed that the level of Customer Satisfaction is high on the low-levelincome as compared to High-level income class, but theses result interpret on the basis of descriptive (primary) statistics, theses are not final test result. For analyzing test result, we move to other test statistics.

As the ANOVA is a parametric test, and the assumption of homogeneity of variance needs to be considered. The test of Homogeneity of Variances show variance is tenable as value of Levene's statistics is 2.666 at 0.57 significance level. As levene test is not significant and hence robust test of equality of means is not needed. The difference can be found by using ANOVA statistics.

Table 7: ANOVA

Consumer Satisfaction					
	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	13.359	3	4.453	6.519	.000
Within Groups	463.828	679	.683		
Total	477.187	682			

The resulting analysis of ANOVA is shown in output. This test is significant, $F_{(3, 679)} = 6.519$, p <.05. Given that the model represents group differences, this ANOVA signifies that using group means to predict scores is significantly better than using the overall mean: in other words, the group means are significantly different. The table of ANOVA shows F-ratio is 6.519 at 0.000 level of significance. On the basis of these values, null hypothesisis rejected and it is found that the income of respondent affects the level of customer satisfaction and hence there is a difference in level of customer satisfaction amongst respondents according to their income level.

Table 8: Multiple Comparisons

	(I) Income	(J) Income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	Dependent Variable: Consumer Satisfaction						
Hochberg	Less than 1 Lakh	1 - 3 Lakhs	-.11111	.18780	.992	-.6066	.3844
		3 - 6 Lakhs	.00585	.18393	1.000	-.4794	.4911
		Above 6 Lakhs	.25143	.16967	.591	-.1962	.6991
	1 - 3 Lakhs	Less than 1 Lakh	.11111	.18780	.992	-.3844	.6066
		3 - 6 Lakhs	.11696	.12020	.910	-.2002	.4341
		Above 6 Lakhs	.36254[*]	.09698	.001	.1067	.6184
	3 - 6 Lakhs	Less than 1 Lakh	-.00585	.18393	1.000	-.4911	.4794
		1 - 3 Lakhs	-.11696	.12020	.910	-.4341	.2002
		Above 6 Lakhs	.24558[*]	.08927	.036	.0101	.4811
	Above 6 Lakhs	Less than 1 Lakh	-.25143	.16967	.591	-.6991	.1962
		1 - 3 Lakhs	-.36254[*]	.09698	.001	-.6184	-.1067
		3 - 6 Lakhs	-.24558[*]	.08927	.036	-.4811	-.0101
Games-Howell	Less than 1 Lakh	1 - 3 Lakhs	-.11111	.18665	.933	-.6082	.3860
		3 - 6 Lakhs	.00585	.16771	1.000	-.4484	.4601
		Above 6 Lakhs	.25143	.16040	.413	-.1874	.6903
	1 - 3 Lakhs	Less than 1 Lakh	.11111	.18665	.933	-.3860	.6082
		3 - 6 Lakhs	.11696	.12056	.767	-.1964	.4304
		Above 6 Lakhs	.36254[*]	.11016	.007	.0752	.6499
	3 - 6 Lakhs	Less than 1 Lakh	-.00585	.16771	1.000	-.4601	.4484
		1 - 3 Lakhs	-.11696	.12056	.767	-.4304	.1964
		Above 6 Lakhs	.24558[*]	.07365	.006	.0547	.4364
	Above 6 Lakhs	Less than 1 Lakh	-.25143	.16040	.413	-.6903	.1874
		1 - 3 Lakhs	-.36254[*]	.11016	.007	-.6499	-.0752
		3 - 6 Lakhs	-.24558[*]	.07365	.006	-.4364	-.0547
The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.							

For the analysis of multiple comparisons between all ages categories researcher run Post Hoc Tests, as an assumption of homogeneity of variance is tenable we select Hochberg GT2 and Games-Howell procedures. The advantage of Games-Howell is it control Type –I error rate very well, and Hochberg GT2 is very useful test for our data because this study used very different sample size amongst different income groups. If we observed Post Hoc Tests, the Games-Howell test and Hochberg GT2 reveals that the Above 6 Lakhs, 1 - 3 Lakhs and 3 - 6 Lakhs showing the difference in level of customer satisfaction. The multiple comparisons test showed that the highest satisfied income class is 1 - 3 Lakhs while least satisfied income class is Above 6 Lakhs. This finding also proves that the level of customer satisfaction amongst low income group of consumer is very different as compared to all other income groups of consumers. Calculated effect size for this test is r =.22 and w =.20, Using the benchmark of effect size (r) this represent small effect (less than 0.5), but the difference of level of customer satisfaction amongst different age groups is a substantive finding of this study.

FINDINGS

Satisfaction leads to repeated usage and in turn loyalty. This is resultant of the following factors:

- When price is lowered, so is the quality.

- When price is lowered, satisfaction increases.

- Hypothesis testing further cemented that:

- Satisfaction leads to repeated usage.

- Difference in satisfaction is not dependent on gender.

- Satisfaction does depend on the income. Increase in income leads to increased spending leading to higher expectations and if not met, lowers satisfaction. Contrarily, lower income, prompts low spending, where expectations are lowered and satisfaction is high.

- There exists positive correlation between trust and satisfaction.

SUGGESTIONS

- Consumer satisfaction helps in predicted online buying behaviour. It positively affects online buying behaviour. Hence, to leverage online buying, companies should focus on consumer satisfaction during all stages of consumer buying behaviour.

- There exists no difference in the level of consumer satisfaction with regards to online booking of star hotel according to their gender. Hence, both genders can be equally targeted as a market to electronically distribute the hotel room product.

- Since income and price affects satisfaction, consumers who pay higher are more difficult to satisfy. Companies should do more to satisfy the high paying guests.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Trust and satisfaction is mutually inclusive. Both are pre-cursor and also resultant for each other. It is established that satisfaction of online booking experience cannot be separated from the actual stay experience. It adds and impacts the overall satisfaction of the hotel stay. Satisfaction is experienced once the product is consumed. The experience should match the expectation that the customer had when they made the purchase decision. Also, satisfaction in turn leads to repeated usage and loyalty to the said property using a said booking website.

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