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SATISFACTION OF MIDLIFE CUSTOMERS TOWARDS HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KOCHI

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Introduction

The hotel sector is vital to the tourism and service industries, making a substantial contribution to job creation and economic growth. The hotel sector in India has grown, particularly in urban and tourist areas, as a result of the country's strong tourism growth and greater mobility. As one of Kerala's main commercial, cultural, and tourism hubs, Kochi has seen significant expansion in hotel businesses in a number of categories, which has led to fierce rivalry and increased consumer demands. Customer happiness has become a crucial element affecting hotels' survival and performance in this cutthroat market. Numerous factors, including service quality, cost, lodging options, food and beverage offerings, employee conduct, safety, and overall experience, influence customer satisfaction. Long-term profitability, favourable word-of-mouth, and customer loyalty are all more likely to be attained by hotels that successfully comprehend and address client needs.

Customers in their midlife, who are typically between the ages of 35 and 55, make up a sizable and financially secure portion of hotel patrons. This group prioritizes comfort, dependability, value for money, and individualized services, and they typically have clear expectations. Despite their significance, there hasn't been much empirical research done on midlife guests' happiness in the hotel sector, especially in Kochi.

Therefore, the current study is to analyse midlife consumers' satisfaction levels with Kochi's hotel sector and pinpoint important variables affecting their opinions and preferences.

Literature review

The body of research on midlife consumers' satisfaction with hotel businesses is substantial, demonstrating the industry's growing comprehension and application of customer satisfaction strategies. Therefore, an effort is made to revive some of the previous research on many facets of hotel sector consumer satisfaction.

“A study on customer satisfaction towards hotel industry in Theni” (2022) by DR. R Vijaya Rajya Synthia: - The study found that the overall satisfaction level among the customers is satisfactory and hence the strategy needs to be directed towards delighting the customers.

“The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in hotel business development” (2021) by Dider Bhuian: - The study identified the factors that affect customer happiness and to establish the clear connection between customer satisfaction and service quality at the Best Western Princess Hotel in Norrkoping, Sweden. The factors include hotel amenities, employee appearance, the condition of hotel equipment, communication channels, meeting deadlines,

and promptly addressing customer concerns.

“Customer Satisfaction in Luxury Hotels: A Study of Midlife Customers” (2020) by Hassan, A., & Ahmed, M: - This study investigates customer satisfaction among midlife customers in luxury hotels. Midlife customers prioritize comfort, cleanliness, and location when choosing a luxury hotel, and hotels should focus on these factors to enhance customer satisfaction.

“The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: In the case of Hyatt Regency Hotel” (2020) Bekele, Feven: - The study demonstrate how crucial aspects of service quality are to patron satisfaction in Hyatt Regency hotels. In order to provide some insights that can help hoteliers offer service excellence, which leads to client retention, potential recommendations are sent.

“Evaluation of the Service Quality for Hotel Industry - A Case Study” (2017) Kanchan and Aditi Sharma: - To be competitive in the market, the hotel uses loyalty management software and a continual development approach. Hotels must adapt to the constantly shifting client perception in the hotel sector by providing high-quality services. Higher levels of client loyalty and satisfaction result from this.

Objectives of the study

1. To access the level of satisfaction among midlife customer towards hotel service in Kochi
2. To identify the key factors that influence the satisfaction of midlife customer towards hotel service in Kochi
3. To analyze and suggest measures for improving midlife customer satisfaction in hotel services

Research Methodology

Research Design: This study was mostly analytical and descriptive in character.

Period of Study: The study covers a period of 21 days

Sources of Data:

Primary data: Primary data were collected by using structured questionnaire.

Secondary data: Secondary data were collected from published articles, journals and website.

Sampling Design

Population: The present study covered the selected hotels of Kochi city.

Sample Size: 100 samples were taken for this study.

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling method was used for the study.

Statistical Design: The collected data was examined using mathematical techniques including Chi square, ranking and simple percentage. Charts and graphs were used to reach a definitive conclusion.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Important Factors in Choosing a Hotel

Properties of Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness	19(19)	30(30)	27(27)	14(14)	10(10)
Location	20(20)	29(29)	20(20)	18(18)	13(13)
Budget	30(30)	16(16)	19(19)	16(16)	19(19)
Accessibility	9(9)	17(17)	21(21)	36(36)	17(17)
Customer Service	22(22)	8(8)	13(13)	16(16)	41(41)

(1 most preferred, 2 somewhat preferred, 3 neutral, 4 somewhat not preferred, 5 least preferred)

Table 2

Ranks showing the factors of influence in choosing hotel

Properties of Rank	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Rank
Weight	5	4	3	2	1		
Cleanliness	95	120	81	28	10	334	1
Location	100	116	60	36	13	325	2
Budget	150	64	57	32	19	320	3
Accessibility	45	68	63	72	17	265	4
Customer Service	110	32	39	32	41	254	5

According to the research, respondents chose cleanliness as the most critical factor, with location coming in second, budget coming in third, accessibility coming in fourth, and customer service coming in fifth.

Chi-Square Test for Gender vs. Overall Satisfaction of Service

Table 3

Observed Frequency Table (Contingency Table)

Satisfaction Level	Male	Female	Total
Very Satisfied	10	5	15
Satisfied	30	23	53
Neutral	7	20	27
Dissatisfied	5	0	5
Total	52	48	100

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between gender and overall satisfaction of service.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between gender and overall satisfaction of service.

Satisfaction Level	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2/E$
Very Satisfied (Male)	10	7.8	4.84	0.62
Very Satisfied (Female)	5	7.2	4.84	0.67
Satisfied (Male)	30	27.56	5.97	0.22
Satisfied (Female)	23	25.44	5.95	0.23
Neutral (Male)	7	14.04	49.56	3.53
Neutral (Female)	20	12.96	49.40	3.81
Dissatisfied (Male)	5	2.6	5.76	2.22
Dissatisfied (Female)	0	2.4	5.76	2.40

$$\chi^2 = 0.62 + 0.67 + 0.22 + 0.23 + 3.53 + 3.81 + 2.22 + 2.40 = 13.7$$

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$$\text{Degrees of Freedom} = (\text{Rows} - 1) \times (\text{Columns} - 1) = (4-1) \times (2-1) = 3$$

$$\text{Significance Level } (\alpha) = 0.05$$

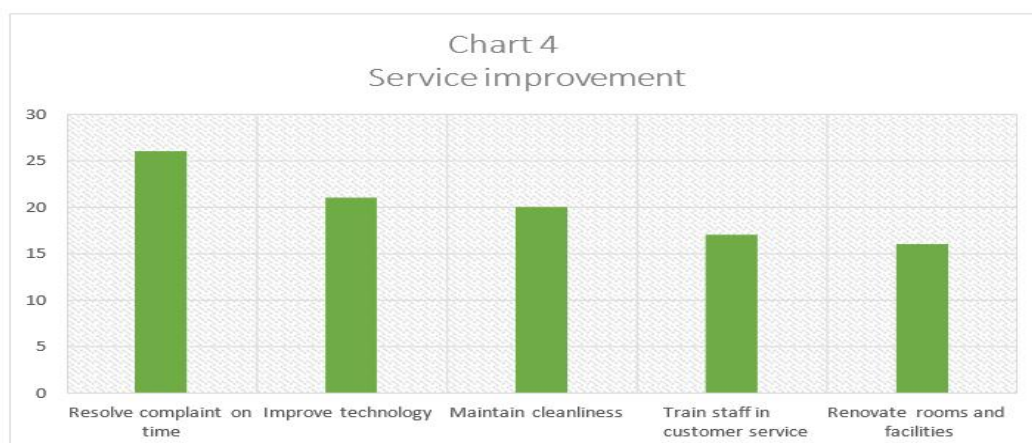
Chi-Square Critical Value (from table) at degree of freedom = 3, $\alpha = 0.05 \rightarrow 7.81$ since $\chi^2 = 13.7 > 7.81$, we reject the null hypothesis.

There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and satisfaction level at a 5% significance level. This suggests that satisfaction levels vary between males and females, and gender plays a role in how service is perceived.

Table 4

Suggestions for Service Improvement

Suggestions for Improvement	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Resolve complaints on time	26	26
Improve technology	21	21
Maintaining cleanliness	20	20
Train staff in customer service	17	17
Renovate rooms and facilities	16	16
Total	100	100



According to the research, 26% of respondents think that enhancing the promptness of complaint resolution is a crucial area for service improvement, suggesting that customers value timely resolution of problems. While 20% stressed the significance of keeping things clean, 21% recommended technological advancements. Furthermore, 16% suggested

remodelling rooms and facilities to enhance the overall visitor experience, and 17% emphasized the necessity of providing personnel with customer service training. These results imply that visitors want improved amenities, quicker problem solving, and attentive, well-trained staff.

Suggestions

- Hotels in Kochi, being a major tourism and commercial hub, should focus on improving service quality to cater to both business travellers and leisure tourists, especially midlife customers who value efficiency and professionalism.
- Transparent and region-sensitive pricing strategies should be adopted, considering seasonal tourism fluctuations and the competitive hotel market in Kochi.
- Hotels should offer location-based personalized services, such as travel assistance to heritage sites, business centres, and transport hubs like the airport, metro, and port areas in Kochi.
- Maintaining high standards of cleanliness, safety, and comfort is essential, particularly in hotels located in high-traffic areas such as Fort Kochi, Marine Drive, and Ernakulam.
- Food and beverage services should highlight local Kerala cuisine and healthy food options, as midlife customers often prefer authentic regional flavours along with hygienic dining experiences.
- Hotels should collaborate with local tourism agencies and cultural organisations in Kochi to provide curated cultural and recreational experiences for guests.
- Regular customer feedback specific to Kochi-based services should be collected and analyzed to address location-specific concerns such as accessibility, traffic, and service delays.
- Digital service platforms should be strengthened to assist midlife customers with online bookings, local information, and customer support relevant to Kochi.
- Segment-specific marketing strategies should focus on Kochi's identity as a blend of culture, commerce, and tourism,

emphasizing comfort, reliability, and value for money.

Conclusion

The present study examined the satisfaction of midlife customers towards the hotel industry in Kochi, with a focus on understanding the key factors influencing their perceptions and experiences. The findings reveal that midlife customers in Kochi are generally satisfied with the core services offered by hotels, particularly in terms of staff behaviour, cleanliness, safety, and food quality. These factors play a crucial role in shaping overall satisfaction and customer loyalty within this demographic segment. However, the study also identified areas requiring improvement, notably in pricing transparency, perceived value for money, and the extent of personalized services. Given the highly competitive and diverse nature of the hotel industry in Kochi, addressing these concerns is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction. Midlife customers, being experience-oriented and value-conscious, expect reliable services that balance comfort, quality, and cost-effectiveness. The study concludes that hotels in Kochi must adopt customer-centric and segment-specific strategies to meet the evolving expectations of midlife customers. By focusing on service quality enhancement, transparent pricing, and customized experiences, hotels can strengthen customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on hospitality management and offer practical insights for hotel managers and policymakers to improve service delivery and competitiveness in the Kochi hotel industry.

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