UNRAVELING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PUZZLE: FACTORS AFFECTING SATISFACTION IN THREE STAR HOTELS

Sukarn Sharma *

* Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Jimma University, Oromia, Ethiopia
Contact details: Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Jimma University, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study aims to facilitate sustainable growth in hotels by understanding tourists' preferences. Though there is existing research on customer satisfaction in hotels (Radojevic et al., 2017), this study narrows the scope to three star category hotels in Chandigarh, India, with its unique data collection approach based on traveller rankings of Trip Advisor (2023) to select the top twenty hotels, ensuring a representative sample of highly ranked establishments. The five-point Likert scale was used in a closed-ended questionnaire to gather primary data from visitors who stayed in the city's hotels between March 5 and April 5, 2023. Convenience sampling was used, resulting in 385 participants selected from the chosen hotels. Mean ratings were calculated for 25 hotel service attributes from the respondents' responses and used for the importance performance analysis (IPA). The results indicate that hotels need to prioritize specific attributes, such as spaciousness of rooms, quietness of rooms, bathroom amenities, value for money, taste and variety of food, and prompt service. The study also identified areas where the hotels performed well, such as cleanliness, safety and security, staff communication and friendliness, and multiple modes of payment. Overall, the study provides valuable insights for hotel managers to meet customer expectations.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Importance Performance Analysis, Influencing Factors, Likert Scale, Hotel Amenities

Authors' individual contribution: The Author is responsible for all the contributions to the paper according to CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) standards.

Declaration of conflicting interests: The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the travel and tourism industry, according to Cooper et al. (2008), accommodation is the starting point from which visitors can engage in any activities at a destination. Accommodation facilities should provide comfort and satisfaction to the tourists at a reasonable price. In the tourism economy accommodation is the largest subsector and has a strong influence on the tourism destination (Chawla & Sengupta, 2017).

A huge number of hotel properties have come up to fulfil the needs of the tourists. With growing competition, it is one of the difficult tasks to keep the customers patronizing the organization. Regular monitoring of guest requirements has now become a compulsion for organizations so that they can match the performance of their hotel product with the dynamics of customer demand (Curaković et al., 2013).

Differentiation of the product can be one of the main strategies to make the customers feel special. A satisfied customer is of utmost importance

for the organization as it can help to attain new customers and retain the older ones (Martin, 2002). Customers feel satisfied when their experience is above their expectations and tend to feel dissatisfied when it is the vice versa (Oliver, 1980). A good customer experience which is above their expectation can lead to an enhanced image, increased business performance, reduced costs and customer loyalty (Choi & Chu, 2011, as cited in Boon-itt & Rompho, 2012).

The professionals in the tourism sector can now better understand the consumers' desires for superior goods and services. Maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction is one of the industry's biggest challenges, though (Lam & Zhang, 1999; Su, 2004). According to several researchers (Matzler & Pechlaner, 2001; O'Neill et al., 2006; Shanka & Taylor, 2004), excellent customer service, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty are crucial components of a successful hotel business. According to Lin and Wang (2006) and Eggert and Ulaga (2002), customer satisfaction is a sign of behavioural traits like loyalty, a desire to return, and a propensity to recommend. High customer satisfaction ratings are the best indicator of a company's future profits, according to Kotler (1991).

Therefore, in this study, an attempt was made to assess the satisfaction of tourists staying in three star hotels in Chandigarh, India. Chandigarh attracts a significant number of leisure and business tourists both domestic and international throughout the year. The city is not only renowned for its scenic beauty but also offers numerous tourist attractions. Additionally, its proximity to the industrial hubs of Baddi in Himachal Pradesh and Ludhiana in Punjab makes Chandigarh International Airport the closest airport, leading to the influx of many business travellers who then opt for taxis to reach Baddi or Ludhiana.

A brief review of the available literature indicates that while previous research has covered customer satisfaction and its influencing factors within the hotel industry, there is a notable gap in terms of specific investigations focused on three star hotels in Chandigarh. This research aims to fill this void by delving into the distinct elements contributing to satisfaction within this particular context. The primary objective of this study is to facilitate sustainable growth for three star hotels by recognizing and comprehending the elements that impact customer satisfaction in the setting of Chandigarh. The central research question addressed by this study is:

RQ: What are the primary factors influencing customer satisfaction in Chandigarh's three star hotels in India?

The study utilizes the importance performance analysis (IPA) framework to categorize attributes of hotels based on their significance to customers and their actual performance. This framework aids in prioritizing areas that necessitate improvement and upkeep.

This study carries importance for both the hospitality industry and scholarly research. From the industry perspective, it offers valuable insights into customer preferences, enabling hotels to allocate resources more effectively. On an academic level, it contributes to the existing knowledge concerning customer satisfaction within the distinctive domain of three star hotels in Chandigarh. The research design involved the utilization of a close-ended questionnaire featuring a five-point Likert scale to gather primary data. The sample encompassed 385 individuals who had stayed at the top twenty three star hotels in Chandigarh during a specific timeframe. The method of convenience sampling was adopted to select participants.

The findings suggest that hotels should give precedence to particular attributes, such as spaciousness of rooms, quietness of rooms, bathroom amenities, value for money, taste and variety of food, and prompt service. The research also pinpointed regions in which the hotels demonstrated strong performance, such as cleanliness, safety and security, staff communication and friendliness, and multiple modes of payment.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and delves into the significance of customer satisfaction in business success, particularly within the hospitality industry. Customer satisfaction's connection to repeat sales, loyalty, and competitive advantage is explored. Further, the IPA model, a tool to assess competitive status and guide strategic planning, is introduced. The model is explained, along with its four quadrants that categorize attributes based on their importance and performance. The benefits of using IPA for improving service quality and prioritizing enhancements are outlined, and its previous application in the hospitality and tourism industry is discussed. Section 3 outlines the research design and methodology. It describes the selection of three star hotels in Chandigarh listed on Trip Advisor and the use of a close-ended questionnaire with a Likert scale to collect data. The rationale behind convenience sampling and sample size determination is provided. Section 4 presents the analysis of the collected data and the findings are discussed. The demographic profile of respondents is outlined, including gender, age, education, and employment status. The importance performance matrix is described, and the attributes falling into each quadrant are discussed in detail. Lastly, Section 5 concludes the purpose and outcomes of the research. The significance of focusing on customer preferences, strengths, and areas for improvement in Chandigarh's three star hotels is reiterated. The limitations of the study are acknowledged, and suggestions for further research, are given.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Services hold a pivotal role in the advancement of service-based economies, especially in sectors like tourism. This is due to their capacity to generate income and facilitate a favourable trade balance among various sectors and even nations, as pointed out by Wu et al. (2018) and Xiao et al. (2022). Implicitly, services generate revenue and simultaneously contribute to customer contentment. Additionally, Kandampully and Solnet (2020) put forth the notion that services are essential for organizations to gain a competitive advantage by incorporating the human factor into the customer experience. Evidently, services provide avenues for establishing emotional connections and fostering technological reliance, thereby enhancing an organization's dependability and confidence.

Service providers can gain and maintain a competitive edge in the market by accurately anticipating the needs of their customers. Various approaches are employed to understand the wants and expectations of customers, with customer satisfaction being the fundamental basis for planning the company's activities, as stated by Sekulović (2009).

Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) suggest that customer satisfaction is critical for generating repeat sales, customer loyalty, and making customers the cornerstone of any successful business. Bowen and Chen (2001) go further, arguing that merely satisfied customers are insufficient; businesses must strive for highly satisfied customers to achieve long-term success. According to Bansal and Gupta (2001), cultivating client loyalty is the only realistic strategy for creating a long-lasting edge over competitors. A company can manage customer behaviour regarding satisfaction by carefully focusing on the amenities and service excellence provided to its customers, as highlighted by Barusman et al. (2019).

According to Oliver (1999), marketing managers and specialists have long considered customer satisfaction to be a key indicator of a company's past, present, and future performance. The core idea behind customer satisfaction is found in Lewin's (1938) expectancy-disconfirmation theory, which states that comparisons between a customer's initial expectations and the perceived performance measured against a norm form the basis of satisfaction judgments. According to this theory, subjective disconfirmation occurs under various conditions and results in customer satisfaction (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). If a customer's experience exceeds their expectations (a positive disconfirmation), they are likely to be satisfied, while performance falling below expectations (a negative disconfirmation) is likely to lead to dissatisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Customer satisfaction is essentially a subjective experience of happiness or dissatisfaction brought on by a comparison between the services received from an organisation and the individual's expectations. It can be interpreted as the degree to which a company's product or service performance meets the expectations of the client. Customer satisfaction is influenced by expectations, perceived quality, and perceived service. Service providers often prioritize customer satisfaction as it is considered a prerequisite for customer retention (Yim et al., 2004).

Customers' primary mental state is referred to as customer satisfaction, which includes two essential components:

1) the expectations they held prior to making a purchase;

2) their perception of performance following the purchase (Thakur & Singh, 2011).

Customer satisfaction can be viewed from two different angles: transaction-specific and cumulative. According to recent purchase experiences, the transaction-specific perspective focuses on assessing customer satisfaction. The cumulative perspective, in contrast, places more emphasis on an overall assessment that takes into account all of the customer's purchase experiences while ignoring specific instances (Grewal & Levy, 2010). According to Wang et al. (2003), the cumulative perspective is especially useful for assessing a company's customer service performance and forecasting consumers' post-purchase behaviours.

According to Valdani (2009), having clients to serve is essential for an enterprise to exist. Businesses that can quickly recognise and satisfy the needs of their clients typically make more money than those that can't (Barsky & Nash, 2003). Customer satisfaction serves as the starting point for defining business goals, and the relationships built up with customers are viewed as a strategic asset for the company (Gruen et al., 2000). Positive customer interactions can increase commitment and the likelihood that a customer will return. In order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately develop stronger relationships with each customer, hotels are investing more in enhancing service quality and perceived value for visitors (Jones et al., 2007). Notably, the relationship's quality significantly influences how hotel guests behave, encouraging positive word-of-mouth recommendations and raising the rate of return visits (Kim et al., 2001).

The modern hotel industry places a high value on customer satisfaction (Radojevic et al., 2017). As it directly affects guests' choices and decisions about whether to return to a specific hotel, it is essential to the success of hotels (Mohamad et al., 2017). According to Sharma and Srivastava (2018), a hotel's perceived services must exceed the expectations of its customers in order for it to develop a loyal following of repeat customers. Within the hotel industry framework, ensuring customer satisfaction involves various factors such as the hotel's environment, welcoming staff, standardized room service, and delectable cuisine (Priyo et al., 2019). Consequently, hotels must prioritize customer satisfaction to compete and thrive in today's highly competitive market.

The characteristics of hotel products that are considered important by customers have been the subject of numerous studies. For instance, Choi and Chu (2001) list the top three factors influencing customer satisfaction as being staff quality, room quality, and perceived value. Meanwhile, other researchers, such as Curaković et al. (2013), suggest that quick service, convenient location, comfort, employee demeanor, and timeliness are critical. Atkinson (1988) discovered that hotel guests' satisfaction level is determined by cleanliness, safety, value for money, and friendly staff.

Customers' choice of hotel and decision to stay at the same hotel are both significantly influenced by customer satisfaction (Mohamad et al., 2017). Oliver (2014), Hinlayagan (2018), and Olivar (2021), among other sources, all contend that a satisfying customer experience is the foundation of customer satisfaction. High levels of customer satisfaction must be achieved within the hotel industry in order to foster the kind of customer loyalty that is necessary for success.

Customer satisfaction has a variety of repercussions in the hotel management industry and has long been seen as a predictor of future revenues and profits (Forozia et al., 2013). In simpler terms, it is imperative for hotel service providers to prioritize meeting the needs of their customers as their primary objective. In today's competitive market, hotels cannot expect to compete effectively unless they are capable of satisfying their customers (Forozia et al., 2013). Additionally, studying customer satisfaction enables hotel owners to identify shortcomings and limitations, enabling them to better understand and fulfil the demands and desires of their customers.

Satisfied guests become advocates who generate positive word-of-mouth (WOM) publicity for the hotel, at no cost to the enterprise, and with a higher level of effectiveness and credibility compared to traditional advertising methods (Lee et al., 2006; Tarn, 2005; Villanueva et al., 2008). Furthermore, the power of WOM is amplified in the digital age, particularly through the internet, as online platforms can enhance its reach and impact (Dominici, 2009; Trusov et al., 2009).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to enable hotels to grow in a sustainable manner. To achieve this, it was decided to gather information on what tourists want. The study concentrated on Chandigarh's three star hotels listed on Trip Advisor. For the research, the top twenty hotels on Trip Advisor after applying the "traveller ranked" filter were chosen. The following is a list of the hotels: Hometel Chandigarh, Lemon Tree Hotel, Mango Grove Hotel, Hotel Rajshree, Hotel City Plaza 7, Fern Residency, Sunbeam, Premium, Hotel Shivalik View, Hotel Heritage, Hotel Park Grand, Hotel Emerald, Hotel KLG, Hotel Oyster, Hotel Aroma, Hotel Western Court, Hotel City Heart Premium, Hotel Classic, Hotel President, Hotel Solitaire, Hotel GK International (Trip Advisor, 2023).

To gather primary data for this study, the researchers used a closed-ended questionnaire with items graded on a five-point Likert scale. Tourists who stayed in the city's hotels from March 5 to April 5, 2023, were the intended audience. To choose the most effective sampling strategy, the researchers examined customer satisfaction studies conducted by various service organisations, such as hotels, banks, restaurants, and airlines. According to the review, convenience sampling is the method most frequently employed in studies of the hotel industry (Boon-itt & Rompho, 2012; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Qu & Sit, 2007). The researchers approached the respondents for this study using convenience sampling. The sample size was determined using the sampling formula for an infinite population, which provided a 95% level of confidence and a 5% margin of error.

$$N_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16 = 384 \quad (1)$$

The study selected 385 participants who had stayed at the chosen hotels during the specified duration. The researchers identified 25 hotel characteristics by considering their frequency in previous hospitality research conducted in the past five years. To ensure the questionnaire's accuracy, input was gathered from hotel managers and industry experts, and a trial survey was conducted on 10 tourists who had stayed at the hotels in consideration.

The data collection instrument was developed in English. The researcher gave a brief explanation to the enumerators who met the respondents near the departure terminal of Chandigarh International Airport in order to ensure proper survey implementation. Only participants in the study who were at least 18 years old and had spent at least one night at one of the aforementioned three star hotels qualified as respondents.

Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and a cover page explaining the goal and significance of the research was included with the questionnaire to promote truthful responses. 450 tourists received the survey, but only 385 returned questionnaires with all required fields were used for the analysis. Utilising the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0, the collected data was examined. The respondents' responses were used to calculate means for 25 hotel service attributes, which were then taken into account for the IPA. According to Martilla and James' (1977) suggestion, the crosshairs were calculated to divide the hotel attributes into four quadrants, using the mean as the dividing line to preserve important data.

The data was presented by the researchers using a two-dimensional grid, where each service attribute was plotted according to how important they thought it was and how well it performed. The importance of the attributes was shown on the grid's vertical axis, with high importance at the top and low importance at the bottom. High performance was shown on the right and low performance was shown on the left of the horizontal axis, which represented the performance of the attributes.

The IPA is a useful tool for determining a company's competitive status in the market, identifying opportunities for growth, and directing strategic planning initiatives, according to Hawes and Rao (1985), Martilla and James (1977), and Myers (1999). Martilla and James (1977) were the first to propose this strategy, which assists in determining the precise characteristics of a company's good or service that ought to be prioritised in order to raise client satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2004). Figure 1 illustrates how the matrix is divided into four quadrants based on the most common performance and importance metrics.

Figure 1. Importance performance quadrants
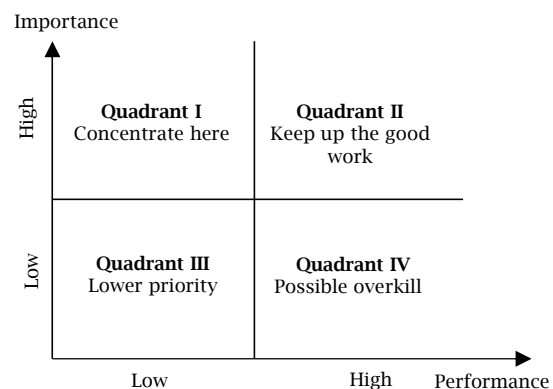
Source: IPA framework adopted from Martilla and James (1977).

• *Quadrant I.* Respondents rank the attributes in the first quadrant as being of the utmost importance, but the performance levels are low. This indicates that these attributes should be the focus of improvement efforts.

• *Quadrant II.* The attributes are rated as being of utmost importance by respondents in the second quadrant, and the organisation has excelled at these tasks. The organisation should "Keep up the good work", according to the message in this quadrant.

• *Quadrant III.* The attributes perform poorly and are of low importance in the third quadrant. Although the performance levels in this quadrant may be low, managers need not worry too much because the attributes in this cell are not thought to be crucial. As a result, this low-priority cell should only receive a limited amount of resources.

• *Quadrant IV.* The attributes in the fourth quadrant have a low importance but relatively high performance. Respondents are happy with how the organisation performed on these attributes, but managers should think about reducing their efforts on these attributes as they might be using too many resources in areas that customers do not find to be crucial.

Research suggests that analysing the importance performance matrix can help pinpoint precise areas that need improvement. For instance, academics frequently advise that Quadrant I's major weaknesses be given top priority and improved upon right away (Martilla & James, 1977). On the other hand, qualities that were deemed to be significant strengths (Quadrant II) ought to be preserved, exploited, and vigorously promoted (Lambert & Sharma, 1990). According to these findings, businesses should concentrate their efforts on strengthening their areas of weakness while utilising their comparative advantages.

Two important scales for measuring service quality are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Both IPA and SERVQUAL contend that a company's performance and the importance of a specific attribute are influenced by how customers view it. The IPA technique, in contrast to SERVPERF, enables the simultaneous comparison of a direct performance measure of service quality to the importance rating provided by customers for the various quality items under evaluation. The addition of customer preference ratings to IPA provides a clearer picture of how customers evaluate the quality of the services they receive. Such relative evaluations, following Barsky (1995), clearly identify the product or service quality elements that are crucial to customer satisfaction. As a result, the data from IPA can help create marketing strategies that are more targeted (Ford et al., 1999).

An IPA model is produced by fusing the crucial service attributes with the performance attributes. Numerous researchers have found the IPA model to be useful and have used it frequently in hospitality and tourism research for a number of years (Qu & Sit, 2007). According to Sethna (1982), the IPA model emphasises regions that need more resources and thus offers clear guidelines for action. Lewis (1984) also assessed competitors using the IPA model to learn how visitors felt about the hotel business.

At the Sheraton Hotel Corporation, Lewis and Chambers (1989) showed how the importance performance approach could be used to track customer satisfaction. Almanza et al. (1994) used the IPA matrix in a manner similar to Evans and Chon (1989) to identify opportunities to improve customer satisfaction.

The IPA technique has become widely accepted, probably as a result of its simplicity of use and the appealing ways in which data and strategic recommendations are presented, among other things (Martilla & James, 1977).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to analyse the variables that affect customer satisfaction with three star hotels in Chandigarh, India, a self-administered questionnaire was created. The questionnaire included 25 variables as well as demographic data (gender, age, employment status, and education).

4.1. Demographic profile of respondents

According to the study, from the total respondents, i.e., 385 majority of participants were male, making up 78% ($n = 300$) of the sample size. All the respondents stayed for at least one night at one of the three star hotels under consideration, indicating that they were able to provide data on the variables being studied. Additionally, all the participants had obtained a minimum of a bachelor's degree and were employed. Furthermore, the majority of participants were between 35 and 44 years old, accounting for 58% of the sample size ($n = 223$).

4.2. Importance performance matrix data

The mean values of importance and performance ratings provided by the customers for the twenty-five variables that were used to create the importance performance matrix are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Importance performance (Mean values) (Part 1)

No.	Attributes	Mean importance (Y)	Mean performance (X)
1	Spaciousness of rooms	4.6	4.1
2	Comfort of bed, mattress, and pillow	4.8	4.5
3	Quietness of rooms	4.7	4.1
4	Bathroom amenities	4.6	4.1
5	Value for money	4.6	4.0
6	Taste of food	4.8	4.2
7	Food portion size	4.2	4.1
8	Variety of food	4.6	4.2
9	Food presentation	4.7	4.6
10	Variety of drinks in bars	4.3	4.0
11	Cleanliness of hotel	4.8	4.6
12	Attractiveness of the surrounding environment	4.4	4.1
13	Landscaping	4.2	4.2

Table 1. Importance performance (Mean values) (Part 2)

No.	Attributes	Mean importance (Y)	Mean performance (X)
14	Hotel ambiance	4.4	4.5
15	Comfortable furnishings	4.6	4.5
16	Proximity to attractions	4.3	4.1
17	Prompt service	4.8	4.0
18	Neat and clean staff	4.8	4.6
19	Communication skills of staff	4.7	4.5
20	Friendliness of staff	4.6	4.5
21	High-speed Internet	4.1	4.5
22	24-hour cold and hot water	4.6	4.8
23	Safety and security at the hotel	4.8	4.6
24	Multiple modes of payment	4.7	4.8
25	Accessibility	4.7	4.5
	Grand mean	**4.5**	**4.3**

Source: Author's elaboration.

The importance performance matrix, shown in Figure 2, was plotted using the mean scores for importance and performance rating of the twenty-five variables. The grand means for performance rating (X = 4.3) and importance (Y = 4.5) were used to position the axes on the grid.

Figure 2. Importance performance matrix
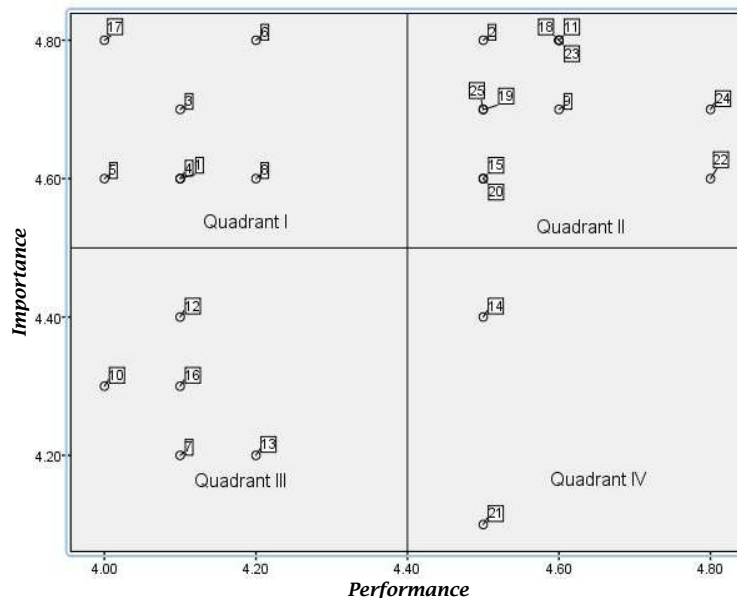
Source: Author's elaboration.

4.2.1. Quadrant I (Concentrate here)

The hotels should place an emphasis on prioritising and paying close attention to particular attributes. These include spaciousness of rooms (1), quietness of rooms (3), bathroom amenities (4), value for money (5), taste of food (6), variety of food (8), prompt service (17).

The spaciousness of rooms can be influenced by the type of room selected by the customer, and poor aesthetic choices can worsen the issue. Rooms facing the road may be noisier and bathroom amenities can vary from hotel to hotel. Therefore, the hotels should focus on improving their aesthetics and acoustics, in order to create the impression of larger, quieter rooms. In addition to the existing provisions of shampoo, soap, and clean towels, they might also want to consider offering additional bathroom amenities such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, hair conditioners, hair dryers, shower caps, and bathroom slippers.

Customers usually don't feel like they're getting their money's worth unless they receive high-quality service at a reasonable price, but this may not always be possible. While customers may have different opinions on what represents good value for money, offering better quality at lower prices could be a viable approach. Ultimately, if customers want high-quality service, they have to be willing to pay for it.

Food preferences are subjective, so what one person enjoys may not be to another's liking. Customers may have a preference for traditional or specialty dishes, which could explain why the attribute variety of food is in this quadrant. It seems introducing local delicacies to the menu could enhance the range of available food options and appeal to customers. Hiring well-trained chefs or offering training to existing chefs may help improve the taste of food although it's important to recognize that individual tastes vary widely. During peak hours, hotels may struggle to provide prompt service therefore; the hotel could consider hiring additional staff or reorganizing existing staff schedules to deliver prompt service.

4.2.2. Quadrant II (Keep up the good work)

The attributes that are the strengths of hotels are comfort of bed, mattress, and pillow (2), food presentation (9), cleanliness of hotel (11) comfortable furnishings (15), neat and clean staff (18), communication skills of staff (19), friendliness of staff (20), 24-hour cold and hot water (22), safety and security at hotel (23), multiple modes of payment (24), accessibility (25).

In a number of crucial areas, such as comfortable furnishings, cleanliness, safety, and security, the hotel has performed admirably. Customers have said they are happy with the minimal requirements set by three star hotels for the calibre of rooms. The staff has received praise for their excellent communication skills, friendliness, and cleanliness. The appealing presentation of the food is also helped by the well-trained staff. The hotel provides amenities like hot and cold water and accepts multiple modes of payment, including cash, cards, and widely accepted electronic transactions. Additionally, the hotel has good accessibility, making it simple for guests to arrive and depart.

4.2.3. Quadrant III (Lower priority)

In a corporate environment, it would be unwise to dedicate substantial resources to attributes that customers do not deem significant or that the business is not excelling in. Rather, businesses should focus on allocating resources according to the requirements and preferences of their customers to guarantee effective utilization of resources. The attributes in this quadrant are food portion size (7), variety of drinks in bars (10), attractiveness of surrounding environment (12), landscaping (13), proximity to attractions (16).

Due to the fact that most hotels' food portion size is generally consistent, despite not being especially large, customers do not typically view it as a significant concern. Similarly, customers do not place a high priority on the variety of drinks offered by the bar because some visitors may opt to bring their own alcoholic beverages to their rooms while others may not drink at all. Customers may not place much emphasis on the hotel's aesthetics or landscaping because they are more concerned with its accessibility, which has already garnered favourable reviews. Numerous customers are probably business travellers, for whom convenience to tourist attractions might not be a top consideration.

4.2.4. Quadrant IV (Possible overkill)

The attributes that are classified in this quadrant may not hold significant importance, as the analysis indicates that they are not viewed as crucial from the customers' point of view, despite being well-performance. The attributes in this quadrant are hotel ambiance (14) and high-speed Internet (21).

The hotel's ambiance has already been deemed satisfactory and meets the minimum standards that customers expect from a three star establishment.

Similarly, the internet speed provided by the hotel is also considered satisfactory. However, it is worth noting that the high internet speed may be due to the fact that many customers rely on their personal data connections and may not extensively use the hotel's internet service.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the satisfaction of tourists staying in three star hotels in Chandigarh, India. The city's popularity as a tourist destination, along with its proximity to industrial centres and a busy airport, attracts both leisure and business travellers throughout the year. The study focused on the top twenty three star hotels in Chandigarh listed on Trip Advisor. The researchers employed a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to collect primary data. Convenience sampling was used to select 385 participants who had stayed at the hotels during a specific period. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and 25 variables related to hotel service attributes. The analysis of the data revealed four quadrants in the IPA matrix. In Quadrant I, the hotels should prioritize attributes such as spaciousness of rooms, quietness of rooms, bathroom amenities, value for money, taste and variety of food, and prompt service. Improving aesthetics and acoustics, and offering additional amenities can enhance the guest experience. Quadrant II represents the strengths of the hotels, including the comfort of beds and furnishings, food presentation, cleanliness, communication and friendliness of staff, safety and security, multiple payment options, and accessibility. These areas received positive ratings from customers and should be maintained. Quadrant III includes attributes of lower priority for customers, such as food portion size, variety of drinks in bars, attractiveness of surrounding environment, landscaping, and proximity to attractions. The attributes in this cell are not thought to be crucial and should only receive a limited amount of resources. Attributes in Quadrant IV, such as hotel ambiance and high-speed internet, were found to be well-performed but not of significant importance to customers. These areas may not require additional attention as they already meet customers' expectations. The findings of this study can guide hotels in Chandigarh to grow sustainably by focusing on areas of improvement and maintaining their strengths. By prioritizing guest preferences and requirements, hotels can enhance customer satisfaction and provide a better overall experience. The study's limitation was that it focused primarily on hotel attributes and did not deeply explore external factors that could influence customer experiences, such as local attractions, cultural events and weather. These factors could interact with hotel attributes to shape overall satisfaction. Further research can be conducted on the perspectives of hotel managers and staff to gain a better understanding of the challenges they face in delivering high-quality service while balancing costs and other constraints.

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APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

I am an academician and have a research interest in the field of hospitality and tourism. I would be thankful if you can spare five minutes of your valuable time to answer the questions in the below given questionnaire.

In the questionnaire first, you can rate on a five-point scale how important you feel for a particular attribute, and then you can rate the performance of the services provided by three star category hotels in Chandigarh, India, on the same attribute. The data gathered from this research will be presented in totality and no individual respondents or origination will be identified.

Important: For this research, it is mandatory that a respondent should have stayed at least one night at a three star category hotel in Chandigarh, should possess at least a bachelor's degree and be employed/self-employed.

1. Have you stayed at any of the hotels listed below for at least one night?

Hometel Chandigarh, Lemon Tree Hotel, Mango Grove Hotel, Hotel Rajshree, Hotel City Plaza 7, Fern Residency, Sunbeam, Premium, Hotel Shivalik View, Hotel Heritage, Hotel Park Grand, Hotel Emerald, Hotel KLG, Hotel Oyster, Hotel Aroma, Hotel Western Court, Hotel City Heart Premium, Hotel Classic, Hotel President, Hotel Solitaire, Hotel GK International.

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Demographic information:

2. Gender

☐ Male   ☐ Female

3. Age

☐ 25–34   ☐ 35–44   ☐ 45–44   ☐ 55–64   ☐ 65 and above

4. Occupation

☐ Business   ☐ Employed (govt./private sector)

5. Qualification

☐ Graduate   ☐ Post graduate   ☐ Other _____

S. No.	Attributes	How much importance do you give to the attributes mentioned below? 1 = Highly unimportant; 2 = Unimportant; 3 = Neither unimportant nor important; 4 = Important; 5 = Highly important					Where do the hotels stand in terms of performance? 1 = Very poor performance; 2 = Poor performance; 3 = Neither poor nor good performance; 4 = Good performance; 5 = Very good performance				
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1	Spaciousness of rooms										
2	Comfort of bed, mattress, and pillow										
3	Quietness of rooms										
4	Bathroom amenities										
5	Value for money										
6	Taste of food										
7	Food portion size										
8	Variety of food										
9	Food presentation										
10	Variety of drinks in bars										
11	Cleanliness of hotel										
12	Attractiveness of the surrounding environment										
13	Landscaping										
14	Hotel ambiance										
15	Comfortable furnishings										
16	Proximity to attractions										
17	Prompt service										
18	Neat and clean staff										
19	Communication skills of staff										
20	Friendliness of staff										
21	High-speed Internet										
22	24-hour cold and hot water										
23	Safety and security at the hotel										
24	Multiple modes of payment										
25	Accessibility										