ANALYTICAL STUDY ON PREFERRED TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

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ABSTRACT

Background: *In recent years, the travel and tourism industry has experienced significant growth, with an increasing number of tourists exploring different destinations for leisure, business, and other purposes. This surge in travel has led to a parallel expansion in the accommodation sector, with a diverse array of options available to cater to the evolving needs and preferences of travelers. Consequently, it has become imperative for accommodation providers to understand the factors that influence consumers' choices.* **Objective:** *To identify and find relationship between the preferred type of accommodation and gender. Another aim of the study was to identify and find relationship between the factors of choosing accommodation and gender.* **Methodology:** *Research design was descriptive. Study was conducted in Delhi- NCR. The tool used for survey was close ended questionnaire. A sample size of 100 was chosen randomly using convenience method. The majority of the respondents were in the age group of 18-30 years. The data has been analyzed on the basis of gender and the statistical analysis was done using MINITAB 14 and chi square test.* **Results:** *54% of the guests who mostly come from the age group of 18-30 years and prefer traditional accommodation i.e., hotel as compared to other accommodation alternatives and for 45% of them price is the most important factor while location with 41% of the total response being the second while choosing their accommodation. The association between gender and vacation rental (homestay) was found to be significant and for rest of the accommodation type the association was not significant. Similarly, the association between gender and location as factor for choosing accommodation was significant.* **Conclusion:** *From the present study we may conclude that location and homestays are the preferred choice of both the genders.*

Key Words: *Accommodation Preferences, Amenities, Customer Preferences, Decision Making, Guest Services.*

INTRODUCTION

Accommodation facilities were discovered around 6000 years ago when travelers found it difficult to travel to faraway places due to non-availability of resting facilities. In the early 1800s Inns in Europe and Taverns in America came up with a concept of a resting place and a cot to sleep at night which led to the emergence of the accommodation industry that is closely related and an integral part of the hospitality industry. The traditional hospitality industry has evolved with the advent of technological advancements and with the element of luxury it has given birth to modern Hospitality which is no more restricted to being a mere lodging services provider.

Hotels are considered as a traditional type of tourist accommodation however the gap in the demand and supply trends in the accommodation sector has led the pathway for the alternate accommodation options for tourists. This accommodation refers to guest houses and service apartments that provide short term as well as long term lodging facilities. (Gunasekaran et al., 2012). As per AdminTHDM 2023, alternative accommodations are the accommodations availed by tourists other than hotels some of the examples mentioned in the hospitality daily website are homestays, vacation rentals, camping, tiny homes, container homes and co living spaces. These alternative accommodations are also posing threat to the hotels and also the future of these alternative accommodation is bright. However, the rise of these alternative accommodations has given an opportunity to the hotels to innovate and move with the changing world.

Homestays serve as a major segment of the alternate accommodation market and possibly nothing could be a better way of demonstrating the Indian tradition of 'Atithi Devo bhava' which is translated to 'Guest is god.' This concept has laid the foundation for the emergence of homestays in India. Navare and Mali (2016). Tourists opting for homestays are mostly students interested in learning the cultural diversity and indulge with the local residents to have a better understanding of the destination (Agyeiwaah & Akyeampong, 2013). As per Pandey et al. (2022) alternative accommodation is a fresh research theme in the hotel and hospitality sector. Pandey et al. (2022) concluded in their research that budget accommodation and bed & breakfast lodgings are a popular choice amongst the alternative accommodation. Their study also relieved the reasons for selection of the alternative accommodation as budget i.e. willingness to pay for the accommodation by the guest, the authentic experience given by the accommodation chosen, homely atmosphere, local and regional food & customs, environmental sustainability aspect and informal setting.

Lockyer (2005) stated that consumers behavioral pattern of choosing among various accommodation choices are guided by many factors, one of the most important factors being the 'cleanliness factor' and the 'price factor' being ranked as the least important one when a survey was done among 42 participants. Similarly, a study conducted by Ogbunankwor et al. (2022) in hotels of Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria stated that consumers give more preference to cleanliness than location. While Pertiwi and Sulistyawati (2020) did research on factors of influence in choosing accommodation which targeted foreign tourists visiting Mas village in Ubud, Bali. The results showed that location was considered the most important factor. It differed from other researches as others were conducted in big cities where location did not seem to play a major role.

Hada and Chaturvedi (2014) has conducted a study in the city of Jaipur to understand the preferences of the guests while selecting a hotel. 100 leisure tourists have been surveyed on the basis of age group, marital status, profession, family income. These factors have been analyzed using chi square to understand the type of hotel preferred by the guests, the influential factor for selection.

As already mentioned in the review of literature research on alternative accommodations is becoming a popular choice of the hospitality researchers. Many researchers have been done on the topics like factors considered for selection of alternative accommodation, types of alternative accommodations existing, facilities provided by the alternative accommodations etc. There are many articles available on the internet where the authors have emphasised the importance of having alternative accommodations for the guest, as these alternative accommodations give opportunity to the hotels for innovation and rethink strategies so that not much of their business is lost. Seeing the importance of the present topic, this research is being conducted to study and analyse the emergence of new trends in the consumer behavioural pattern that guides them to select their preferred type of accommodation. The purpose of this research is to improvise the various factors and recommend changes based on the analysis of the data collected to enhance customer satisfaction.

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify the preference of type of accommodation.

- To identify the association of the preference of type of accommodation and gender.

- To identify preferred factors based on which the accommodation is selected by male and female.

- To identify the association of the factors of choice of accommodation and gender.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design-: The research design adopted for the study was descriptive method.

Locale: The research was conducted in Delhi-NCR region.

Sampling Design: A total sample size of 100 was taken for the study. The sample were selected on convenience method. Hard copy of the questionnaires was circulated among participants who were related to the Hospitality Industry. 59% male and 41% female responded to the questionnaires. The respondents were of different age groups ranging from 18 years to 61+ years of age while most of them being young participants aged 18-30 years.

Tools and Technique: For data collection a structured close ended questionnaire was used to collect responses from participants. It had 4 distinct sections. The first one being demographic information, followed by accommodation preferences, final section being factors affecting accommodation preferences. Each question had multiple options out of which only one was to be selected by the respondents.

Data Analysis and Statistical Analysis: Data analysis was done on the basis of gender and for statistical analysis MINITAB 14 was used and chi square test were conducted. Percentage analysis was also done for the calculation of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Demographic data of the respondents

Age Group (years)	Number of Participants (n)	Occupation		
		Number of Students (n)	Number of Participants Employed (n)	Number of Participants Un-Employed(n)
18-30	93	86	7	0
31-45	7	0	7	0
46-60	0	0	0	0

Table 1 shows the demographics data of the respondents. The respondents were identified by categorizing them into various age groups. About 93% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18-30 years and 7% were of 31-45 years of age group. Out of 93 respondents of 18-30age group, 86 were students and 7 were employed. The rest 7 respondents of 31-45 age group were all employed.

Table 2: Purpose of travel

Purpose of travel	Number of participants (n)	Percentage of participants (%)
Official/Work	7	7%
Leisure	93	93%

The data in Table 2 shows that on analyzing the primary data, it was found out that 93% of the participants were travelling for leisure purposes and the rest 7% were travelling for official/work related purpose.

Table 3: Preferred online booking platform

Online Booking platform preferred	Make My Trip	Oyo	Trivago	Goibibo	Yatra.com	Ease My Trip
Number of Participants	68%	19%	7%	6%	0%	0%

In Table 3 the data shows that when the respondents were asked about their preferred third party online booking platform to which 68% of the respondents opted for Make my trip, 19% opted for Oyo, 7% chose Trivago and 6% chose Goibibo.

Table 4: Preferred type of accommodation

Preferred type of accommodation	Hotel	Hostel	Vacation Rental	Bed & Breakfast	Resorts	Camping
Number of Participants	54%	19%	13%	7%	7%	0%

In Table 4 the data shows that preferred type of accommodation while traveling 54% of the surveyed people said Hotels, 19% said Hostel ,13% said Vacation rental, 7% answered resorts and & 7% answered Bed and Breakfast and 0% answered Camping.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation- Association of gender to preference of type of accommodation

Gender	Not Preferred Type of Accommodation	Preferred Type of Accommodation	
	Hotel	**Hotel**	**Total**
Female	13	28	41
Male	33	26	59
Total	**46**	**54**	**100**
	Hostel	**Hostel**	**Total**
Female	41	0	41
Male	40	19	59
Total	**81**	**19**	**100**
	Vacation Rentals	**Vacation Rentals**	**Total**
Female	35	06	41
Male	52	07	59
Total	**87**	**13**	**100**
	B&B	**B&B**	**Total**
Female	41	0	41
Male	52	07	59
Total	**93**	**07**	**100**
	Resort	**Resort**	**Total**
Female	34	07	41
Male	59	0	59
Total	**93**	**07**	**100**

Table 6: Chi Square test between gender to preference of type of accommodation

Type of accommodation	Pearson Chi-Square	DF	P Value	Accepted/ Rejected
Hotel	5.715	1	0.017	Rejected
Hostel	16.300	1	0.000	Rejected
Vacation Rentals	0.164	1	0.685	Accepted
B&B	5.231	1	0.022	Rejected
Resorts	10.831	1	0.001	Rejected

Since the p – value was less than 0.05, this means the null hypothesis was rejected for the association of gender with hotel, hostel, B&B and resorts. Therefore, it may be concluded that there was significant association of gender with hotel, hostel, B&B and resort as a preferred type of accommodation. However, the p – value was more than 0.05, for the association of gender with vacation rentals as the preferred type of accommodation thus the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it may be concluded that there was no significant association of gender and vacation rentals as a preferred type of accommodation. From the above data it is seen that there is significant difference between the genders in choosing the accommodations except in the vacation rentals like homestay. The same results were seen in the study done by Dash (2022), where he found that gender and selecting homestay were not connected. As per his study the chi square between gender and selection of home stay was 0.063 which was greater than 0.05.

As there was significant difference by gender in selection of type of accommodation, therefore the factors of contribution to the selection were analyzed. In Table 7 when respondents were asked about the most important factor for choosing accommodation 45% of the surveyed people said price, 41% said location, 7% said amenities, 7% said reputation/reviews and 0% said safety and security.

Table 7: Factors determining accommodation selection

Factor determining accommodation selection	Price	Location	Amenities	Reputation/ Reviews	Safety & Security
Number of Participants(n)	45%	41%	7%	7%	0

The above factors were analyzed further by checking the association between factors and gender. For this cross tabulation and chi square test was done.

Table 8: Cross Tabulation- Association of gender to factors of selection of types of accommodation

Gender	Not as factor of selection	Factor of selection	
	Price	Price	Total
Female	35	06	41
Male	20	39	59
Total	**55**	**45**	**100**
	Location	Location	Total
Female	20	21	41
Male	39	20	59
Total	**59**	**41**	**100**
	Amenities	Amenities	Total
Female	34	07	41
Male	59	00	59
Total	**93**	**07**	**100**
	Reputation	Reputation	Total
Female	34	07	41
Male	59	00	59
Total	**93**	**07**	**100**

Table 9: Chi Square test between gender and factors for selecting the type of accommodation

Factors for selection of accommodation	Pearson Chi-Square	DF	P Value	Accepted/ Rejected
Price	25.890	1	0.000	Rejected
Location	3.000	1	0.083	Accepted
Amenities	10.831	1	0.001	Rejected
Reputation/ Review	10.831	1	0.001	Rejected

Since the p – value was less than 0.05 for association of gender with price, amenities and reputation. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, it may be concluded that there was significant association of gender in choosing price, amenities and reputation as a selection of accommodation. However, p – value was more than 0.05 for the chi square test of association between gender and location. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted and it may be concluded that there is no significant association of gender and choosing location as a selection of accommodation.

From the above data it was seen than location is the factor where there was no significant difference by the gender. The results of this study is similar to the study done by Pertiwi and Sulistyawati (2020) where they concluded that location was the key factor in choosing the accommodation. As per Ban (2018), there was correlation between both gender and the location in choosing the accommodation. Even in this study

it may be seen that both the genders have selected location as the factor of selection of accommodation. Another study by Vishwakarma et al. (2021) found that the most influential factor for the selection of the accommodation as per social media marketing was location of the hotel.

As per Thakur and Monga (2022), tourist who stayed in homestays in Shimla were neutral or not satisfied with the accessibility of the homestays. As per the present study, homestays were the preferred type of accommodation by both the genders, and the location was the factor which was preferred as the selection criteria of accommodation by 41% of the tourist. Therefore, it is recommended that the homestay operators must work on the easy accessibility of the homestays.

Through extensive research and analysis several key findings have come to limelight. From the primary sources of data, it has been understood that determining forces behind consumers behavioral pattern arise from their age group occupational factors. From key messages that has been drawn from literature it was found that price, location and cleanliness were the few important factors that guided consumer's choices while selecting accommodation. It was also found that in spite of availability of various types of alternative accommodation, guests still prefer the traditional accommodation services- Hotels. These research findings can help the accommodation service providers understand the tourist market and make moderations as required to optimize their marketing strategies and enhance customer satisfaction. This research highlighted location as a common selection factor of the genders, therefore the marketing department may consider as an important factors and keep the marketing strategies in such a way so that it influences both the genders equally.

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