

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

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Master's Thesis

The impact of online reviews on businesses.

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CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

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Economics and Management

Economics and Management

Thesis title

The impact of online reviews on businesses.

Objectives of thesis

The objective of the thesis is to research and analyse the impact of online customer reviews on hotel businesses in Prague.

To assess the challenges arising out of online reviews and their effect on the Czech hospitality industry.

To assess ways in which a business could improve their online reviews and ratings.

Methodology

This thesis will be written in two main parts.

The theoretical part will be a review of current literature based on current academic and other appropriate sources (studies, Journals, articles, books etc)

The practical part will take the form of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, based largely on questionnaire responses and interviews, together with secondary data. These will be presented, interpreted, and analysed using appropriate techniques, to achieve the objectives.

The proposed extent of the thesis

approx 60-80 pages

Keywords

Customer care, Marketing communication, Internet reviews

Recommended information sources

KOTLER, P. – ARMSTRONG, G. – OPRESNIK, M O. *Principles of marketing*. 2021. ISBN 978-1-292-34113-2.

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0851995535.

Expected date of thesis defence

2022/23 WS – FEM

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled "The Impact of online reviews on businesses" by myself, and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the diploma thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 30.11.2022

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my professor Ing. Richard Selby, PhD for his support and guidance while working on this thesis. Additionally, I would like to thank my family and friends for all encouragement and support they gave me.

The impact of online reviews on businesses.

Abstract

In the hotel business, Online customer reviews are becoming increasingly important. If the customer pays close attention and reads the online review, they will notice that it has an impact on the hotel's reputation. The key to making a positive impression on customers is to keep interacting. How well the services meet the needs of the customers determines their quality. Despite this, the hospitality industry employs various strategies, such as electronic word of mouth (EWOM), that impact sales. Most people agree that providing top-notch services and making customers happy are crucial aspects of a successful hotel business. To that end, the study investigated the effect that online customer reviews have an impact on businesses.

Customer reviews were a big part of e-marketing and its common knowledge that many businesses have grown because of them. It stands to reason that every hotelier needs to be able to make customers happier than their rivals in a highly competitive hospitality industry where all services are the same. Customer feedback is based on the property's appearance, service, food, and staff behaviour. Additionally, the findings demonstrated a significant connection between business performance and online customer reviews. Before making a purchase, consumers consider online reviews to be a useful source of information, and many of them significantly impact consumers' purchasing decisions.

Keywords:

Purchase Decision, E-marketing, Business Performance, Customer Feedback.

Abstrakt:

V hotelovém byznysu jsou online zákaznické recenze stále důležitější. Pokud si zákazník dá pozor a přečte si online recenzi, všimne si, že to má dopad na pověst hotelu. Klíčem k pozitivnímu dojmu na zákazníky je neustálá interakce. Jak dobře služby splňují potřeby zákazníků, určuje jejich kvalitu. Navzdory tomu odvětví pohostinství používá různé strategie, jako je elektronické slovo z úst (EWOM), které mají dopad na prodej. Většina lidí souhlasí s tím, že poskytování špičkových služeb a spokojenost zákazníků jsou zásadní aspekty úspěšného hotelového podnikání. Za tímto účelem studie zkoumala, jaký vliv mají online zákaznické recenze na podniky.

Zákaznické recenze byly velkou součástí e-marketingu a je všeobecně známo, že mnoho firem díky nim vyrostlo. Je logické, že každý hoteliér musí být schopen učinit zákazníky šťastnějšími než jejich konkurenti ve vysoce konkurenčním pohostinství, kde jsou všechny služby stejné. Zpětná vazba zákazníků je založena na vzhledu ubytování, službách, jídle a chování personálu. Zjištění navíc prokázala významnou souvislost mezi obchodní výkonností a online zákaznickými recenzemi. Před nákupem spotřebitelé považují online recenze za užitečný zdroj informací a mnohé z nich mají významný vliv na rozhodování spotřebitelů o nákupu.

Klíčová slova:

Rozhodnutí o nákupu, E marketing, obchodní výkonnost, zpětná vazba od zákazníků.

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List of abbreviations

EWOM - Electronic Word of Mouth

MSDCT - Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Comparison Tools

OCR - Online Customer Reviews

PRV - Positive Review Valence

NRV - Negative Review Valence

POS - Point of Sale

SEO - Search Engine Optimisation

REVPAR – Rooms Revenue Rooms Available

DG SANCO - Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety

RV - Review Valence

ZAR- South Africa

1 Introduction

The internet has transformed consumer behaviour and business advertising and selling. Consumer behaviour and business models are becoming increasingly adapted to price comparison websites and online reviews. Comparing products and services offers many benefits to consumers (e.g., saving money and time, finding deals tailored to meet the needs of each consumer, facilitating international purchases, etc.). Furthermore, it helps businesses (e.g., retailers and service providers reach a broader consumer base and improve their market position). These comparison tools influence consumers' decisions, but concerns have been raised about their trustworthiness due to the rapid growth of their uptake and use (Petricek et al., 2020). Comparative tools and online reviews can undermine consumers' trust in the market if their transparency and reliability are not guaranteed. To identify existing deficiencies in the functioning of comparison tools and explore the most efficient and effective ways to address them, the European Commission (EC) set up a stakeholder dialogue process as a first step in addressing the issue of transparency and reliability (Petricek et al., 2020).

DG SANCO chaired a series of workshops in Brussels on 29 May 2012, with representatives of national and EU-level consumer organisations, national authorities of Member States, and business associations from across the EU participating. A report summarising the conclusions and recommendations of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Comparison Tools (MSDCT) has been published. It is important to note that user ratings and reviews are integral to the MSDCT. Despite their ability to facilitate consumer participation in evaluating and comparing goods and services, their effectiveness and authenticity have been questioned (Mellinas et al., 2019). Several issues have been identified, including instances where paid advertising has been disguised as user testimonials; instances of positive reviews flooded in by companies; reviews removed from negative reviews; targets of respectable businesses by their competitors submitting biased negative reviews; etc. According to the MSDCT, finding the right balance between collecting user reviews efficiently and preventing abuse is a challenge. This study, commissioned by DG SANCO, aims to examine the online market for hotel reviews, the reliance consumers have on such reviews, and the harm that could result from biased or fake reviews (Mellinas et al., 2019).

In the study, bias and fake reviews are investigated, as are the sources (including reputation agencies) of fake reviews. The reviewers are also examined as to how they

manage and publish the reviews, and how authenticity and quality are determined. Operators of online platforms use various methods to spot fake reviews and prevent tampering, and whether they have addressed these issues, the industry, and consumer protection authorities. Several recommendations are included in the study as well as possible solutions to online fake reviews (Nieto-Garcia et al., 2019).

The hotel and tourism industries have benefited from Internet-based marketing strategies. As technology has made travel more accessible within and beyond a country, the world has become a global village. A great deal of your decision-making is influenced by online reviews when you are travelling to a new place (Nieto-Garcia et al., 2019). Consumers have been able to share their opinions on product and service features on social media platforms and online portals in this circumstance, which makes them an essential source of information.

Users review products from a consumer perspective and evaluate the utility of the product or service from an end-user perspective, which is more credible than company-based marketing. As a result, consumers can plan a trip and make decisions much quicker and more easily with internet reviews. Review websites are regarded as electronic versions of word-of-mouth marketing (Kulikova, 2016). Those who are interested in purchasing the product or service can use online customer reviews to get product information and recommendations from customers' perspectives.

A wider audience can be reached through e-word-of-mouth marketing, which is advantageous in comparison to traditional word-of-mouth marketing. In the internet age, consumers' behaviour has been modified by word of mouth. E-word of mouth allows customers to share both good and bad experiences with products and services. Increasing numbers of local tourists and international tourists are interested in visiting Prague for tourism reasons. Tourists enjoy visiting Prague. Tourism has led to an increase in budget hospitality players. There is a hotel chain in Prague: Airbnb. On websites like TripAdvisor and booking.com, users provide accurate reviews and feedback on the quality of service offered by hotels and tourism businesses (Kulikova, 2016). Using social media, hotels facilitate connections for guests before and during a stay, allowing them to mingle and make new contacts.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The research aims to analyse the impact of online customer reviews on hotel businesses in Prague. The research objectives have been developed following SMART such as:

- Assess the importance of online reviews in the hospitality industry through suitable research methodology.
- Assess the challenges arising online and their effect on the hospitality industry by following a suitable research methodology.
- Assess how businesses in the hospitality industry could be followed to improve their online reviews.

Research Questions:

- Would an online review of a hotel posted by past visitors affect the behaviour and attitude of upcoming visitors?
- At what level does online consumer feedback impact potential visitors to Prague?
- Determine the measures that the hospitality industry could take in Prague to improve their online review for better business operations.

2.2 Methodology

It is essential to apply suitable research methodology in the research as it helps acquire the required data and information so that its analysis would help reach the research outcome. The research paradigm is initially decided for conducting the research. There are three major research paradigms: positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory. Interpretivism research paradigm would be followed in the research where the observation and understanding of humans and the findings of former studies would be utilised to fulfil the research aim and objectives.

A suitable research methodology would be followed under the interpretivism research paradigm to collect the primary and secondary data. Here, the mixed research methodology would be followed, and qualitative and quantitative research methodologies would be applied. The qualitative research methodology would be

conducted to collect secondary data. Here, the literature review process would be followed to collect the secondary data such that studies, journals, articles, documents, research, etc., related to the existing research area would be critically analysed, and it would help in building potent understanding and new insights regarding the research area. Further, a quantitative research methodology would be followed to collect primary data. Here, a survey method would be utilised where a questionnaire would be developed comprised of 20 questions related to the research and shared with tourists in Prague so that their understanding of online review could be availed. It would help in fulfilling the core areas of interest in the research.

The data collection process would be followed by data analysis where collected data would be analysed and represented through graphs and charts. The findings would be determined through the data analysis and would further help achieve the research outcome.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Customer Reviews and their importance in Hospitality Industry

Customer reviews are the feedbacks and suggestions that customers share online about their experience in the hotel they stayed in. The hotel industry is highly dependent on the reviews of the hotel after the world of digitalisation. Customers are more often booking hotels and stays that have major ratings and good reviews (Hornig et al., 2013). This is because the customer's experiences provide a genuine report about a hotel.

People want to know what they're getting and if it's worth the money, whether they're purchasing a toothbrush or booking a vacation. If your hotel has received numerous positive ratings, you can encourage hesitant guests to reserve a room there. Here are three topics that will engage your prospective guest. The hospitality industry works to impress customers in the best way possible to provide them with an experience of happiness and relaxation (Semerádová & Vávrová, 2016). While this is to be understood by the hotel industry, it is essential to be understood that the customer review depends on the experience customers get. Thus, overall customer experience matters for getting impressive customer reviews.

Moreover, the importance of customer reviews in the hospitality industry includes a few points which have been discussed and are presented below. A hotel's credibility is one reason for the importance of customer reviews. With the changing and updated technology, a picture can be made beautiful and could be enhanced to an unbelievable extent. However, sometimes the pictures of a room, views and hotel area could be a little different, and this makes the customers trust the credible reviews of the hotel more than the website description and pictures (Xie et al., 2015). Customers believe in the spread of the word, which also assures genuine feedback. The customers can see videos, photos etc of the property which attracts more trust and increases the credibility of a hotel.

Although customer reviews increase the credibility of the hotel property it also confirms whether the hotel is reliable or not. While these two terms seem similar, reliability can be defined in another way. With the use of the internet, it is easy to fool anyone, which is why people trust more on reviews by customers more than website content (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). Reviews of customers with a picture give reliability to the people willing to book and give an idea about the worst-case scenarios.

With online booking, people face various issues in deciding which place is the best. Due to the highly competitive market, hotels' website content is supreme and promotes the property in the best way possible (Shahril & Aziz, 2022). The pictures, views, property sites etc are given lavish looks to attract customers' interest while all the properties look amazing, and customers find it difficult to make a decision. Thus, customer reviews make it easy for customers to decide by learning about the hotel and its services through feedback and reviews online.

3.2 Basis of customer reviews in the hotel industry

Customer reviews in the service industry play a crucial role in affecting the hotel's brand image. For maintaining a brand image, a hotel needs to keep its services, hygiene, activities and property up to the mark. With increasing competition in this industry, there has been a continuous chain of new challenges daily for the hotels to serve something new to their customers to attract them (Xie et al., 2015).

The brand image depends on customer reviews and to gain higher reviews from the customers, hotels are focusing on their services a lot. The customer reviews are based on certain things on which the hotels must work and focus. It is important to treat the customers with the right tone and smile. Customer experience in the hotel is depended on how they get treatment from the hotel staff. With a humble and requesting tone, a customer is certainly happy with the service.

While it is important to treat the customers well, hotel staff needs to connect regularly with the customers during their stay. Keep interacting is the key to making a good impression on customers. This way customer also gets personal attention. However, the customers need impressive services as well, these bases are important for reviews in the hotel industry (Ahmad & Sun, 2018). Customer reviews are based on the factors of property look, service, food and behaviour of staff. This basis helps in motivating guests to update and give feedback about the hotel. Moreover, these reviews help the hotels to increase sales.

Hotel sales can be increased using guest reviews. It happens frequently that the customer does not give any review to the hotel which fails the hotel in attracting customers. Hotels could use guest reviews to enhance sales in different ways. It is general and understandable

that using guest reviews to improve the services and venue is very important. It enhances the customer attraction towards the property and more good reviews are posted.

While it is essential for the hotels to collect customer feedback, the staff must find the right time to get feedback throughout guests' stay. For example- asking for a guest review during check-in. While checking in, the guests have already gone through your sales and booking processes. Depending on which they create a mindset about their upcoming stay. Moreover, during breakfast, the wi-fi login screen is of the perfect time to ask for a review from the customer (Zhong et al., 2014). The management could also keep scanning at different locations where the customer can be asked to provide feedback by scanning and clicking on the link.

According to the study by (Kim & Kim, 2022), customers' will be increasingly inclined to share their experiences and knowledge through online reviews as the internet's popularity develops. Consumers regard internet reviews as a valuable source of information before making a purchase, and many of them significantly affect people's shopping decisions. To keep consumers satisfied and make them want to buy again, the hotel firm needs to know what customers say about their experience in internet reviews. This study aimed to determine what customers seek in a hotel based on internet evaluations of the customer experience and how these ratings are related to customer pleasure.

On websites like TripAdvisor, users may discuss their shopping experiences and opinions on products and services. Customers are more inclined to believe EWOM than commercial information because consumer reviews provide a wealth of information on what individuals have done and how they felt about it. By reading other people's evaluations, prospective buyers may learn more about the items and become more aware of the hazards involved. (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) report that those who read internet reviews were more inclined to book a hotel. (Stringam et al., 2010) examined evaluations on Expedia.com, an online travel agency platform, and discovered a strong correlation between overall happiness and the intention to suggest the service. They analysed internet evaluations on Skytrax.com and discovered a correlation between six assessment categories (seat comfort, crew, entertainment, food and beverage, ground service, and value for money) and consumer contentment and referrals.

There has been very little empirical research on how hotels may earn money utilising social media features, even though user-generated reviews on social media significantly influence their competitiveness and purchasing patterns. In terms of revenue growth, Trip Advisor reviews appear to be beneficial, while gross profit margins appear to be negatively impacted. Since online retailers obtain the majority of the value from online transactions through social media features and have little impact on net profitability, hotel rivalry is shifting from unit profit margins to better room occupancy rates. This is because reviews made by other users are gaining importance in online travel forums. According to the study by (Neirotti et al., 2016), hotels with better star ratings and less local competition, particularly those located outside of famous tourist zones, made more money online. Hotels should employ social media features to differentiate their services to increase online exposure and safeguard their profit margins against customer relationship intermediation, as outlined in these studies.

3.3 Hotel Grandium in Prague and its customer reviews

Hotel Grandium is one of Prague's popular hotels, rated 4 stars in the city. The hotel is a luxurious set-up for the guests who can visit there for a stay with all the luxurious facilities and services at an affordable price. The hotel rooms are spacious and have a variety of facilities within the rooms. Grandium Hotel in Prague is famous among visitors as its rating is high on various websites such as Trip.com. On trip.com this hotel is holding a rating of 4.5, which is considered excellent.

Moreover, among the rating, the reviews are wonderful by the customers after their experience. International customers have also given the highest ratings to this hotel. With a 4.5 rating, the hotel is reviewed based on its cleanliness, location, amenities and service. The hotel services are great, and its location is outstanding according to the reviews. The hotel has been reviewed well but people expect more from this as they have some little complaints as well. This is important to consider by hotels as these small and little upsetting reviews can be more dangerous for the business. With time, these issues must resolve, and the hotel must continuously impress the guests.



Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice 2021

Grandium Hotel Prague



Figure 1: Hotel Grandium 's latest awards
Source: (Facebook.com, 2021)

There are some positive reviews from customers about the hotel Grandium Prague.

5/5 Perfect

Luxury Prague, five-star hotel, service specifications, the hotel lobby is very bright and the breakfast is very rich. The bed was very comfortable and clean. how to say? Individuals still like the hotel with European bohemian style, this is a simple way. The location is on the side of the Mazraf Square, where you can take a quiet place.

[Original Text](#)

Translation provided by Google

Posted September 23, 2019

4.5/5 Excellent

The room is the same as the picture, it feels a bit small, more than 1,300 RMB a night, the morning variety may be rich for the local, but the Chinese hotel feels not much, and most of them are cold dishes, I think the only good is geography. Location, very convenient, very close to the square, as long as the legs go. This is what I am satisfied with. I feel normal in health.

[Original Text](#)

Translation provided by Google

Posted April 24, 2019



4.7₅ Outstanding

The breakfast was very good, and there was a pancake-like cake. The interior of the room is small, and the domestic ratio is 4 stars. The hotel location is very close to the train station. We are from Prague by train, and it will take 10 minutes to get off the bus. The service is very good, we have consulted the airport bus and other things, the front desk gave us a brochure, very useful.

Original Text

Translation provided by Google

Posted September 8, 2019

Figure 2: Hotel Grandium Reviews
Source: (TripAdvisor.com, 2021)

Prague is a beautiful city and people visit there for vacation and business purposes. However, the hotel industry in that city is on a competitive edge and a lot is expected from the service industry in Prague. Considering these hotels in Prague are keener towards customer satisfaction, this makes Grandium off the list of the best hotels in Prague. Despite being one of the finest hotels and popular among visitors, the Grandium hotel has tough competition in the market. People are refusing to visit again to that hotel because of its general services and amenities. However, the other hotels have higher ratings and better customer reviews. Based on amenities there are better hotels and services in Prague than in Grandium.

Customer reviews played an important role here, and it is also understood that many businesses have gone higher with customer reviews. The hotel business runs on word of mouth, and many of the customers only believe in the reviews they read online. Customer reviews are free marketing of the business and are also genuine. It has been considered seriously by the hotel industry.

3.4 Impact of Positive and Negative customer reviews on Hotel Business

According to the results of the study by (Gavilan et al., 2018), there is an assessment of ethical relations when numerical ratings and reviews are included. When the rating is high, the number of reviews increases the rating's trustworthiness; nevertheless, when the rating is low, the number of reviews does not influence the rating's trustworthiness.

(Anagnostopoulou et al., 2020) stated that this is the first research, as far as we know, to look at how online review content impacts a company's bottom line, which is defined as revenue, costs, and investment. Previous studies focused solely on RevPAR, bookings, and booking

income. The hotel in issue must put in a lot of effort to please a customer and receive a positive rating on the internet. Providing a given quality of service, might include foregoing money or paying costs. This expenditure is overlooked when research considers financial success in sales or booking income. In contrast to negative online reviews, empirical evidence shows that frequent textual themes from good online reviews are more united and homogeneous. The better a hotel succeeds financially, the more good evaluations it receives. Negative feedback does not appear to be as essential. The findings add to the argument over how a positive internet image might help you generate money.

(El-Said, 2020) said that a previous study has been divided on whether Online customer reviews (OCR) combined with Positive review valence (PRV) increases a customer's likelihood to book a hotel. People believe that OCR and PRV have the most influence on how they see their service. (Zhong et al., 2014) discovered that positive OCR had a greater influence on customer sentiments than negative OCR in the Chinese market. This meant that guests were more receptive to favourable OCR recommendations and booked lodgings accordingly. (Somohardjo, 2017) used a similar approach. He examined the influence of Review Valence (RV) on Dutch consumer purchasing behaviours and discovered that, once again, positive OCR had the most impact on customer purchase decisions. (Phillips et al., 2017) discovered that hotels with a positive OCR fared better on online platforms than those with a negative OCR. This resulted in greater occupancy rates for such restaurants than for those with a less favourable OCR. When customers stay at hotels with mixed ratings, they receive fewer new guests and book fewer rooms than when they stay at places with a higher OCR. They demonstrate how much RV influences hotel room demand (Chan et al., 2017), and they demonstrate that positive OCR encourages people to book hotel rooms, which makes sense given that people want to remain there.

According to (Floh et al., 2013), OCR with NRV does not increase people's proclivity to purchase. Numerous others take a contrary position to them. (Avant, 2010) discovered that OCR with NRV reviews had a greater influence on customer behaviour than positive evaluations on Trip Advisor. (X. R. Zhao et al., 2015) assert that evidence from the hospitality sector supports their assertion that OCR with NRV has a greater effect on potential hotel guest behaviour than positive OCR. According to (Ghosh, 2018), negative OCR has a greater influence on hotel stay intentions than good OCR. A review advising readers not to book with a certain hotel would have a greater influence on the reader than one expressing delight or satisfaction with a stay experience. (Yang, 2013) provides an

answer to this question. He asserts that purchasing a hotel room online has dangers (such as a negative stay experience) and fees (for example, opportunity, time, and money). A negative OCR is interpreted as a red flag that the costs will fall short of the anticipated stay experience. A poor OCR increases the likelihood that customers would avoid booking with the hotel and instead search for alternatives where booking fees are less likely to be matched with poor service.

3.5 Effects of previous online reviews on the attitude of upcoming visitors in the hotel industry

Recent growth in internet review sites has made it possible to establish a new field of study on hotel customer satisfaction. These services provide thorough information regarding the quality of service at various tourist destinations throughout the globe (Radojevic et al., 2017). Empirical data are not as difficult to get as they once were, therefore researchers are increasingly relying on online evaluations to learn what constitutes a successful consumer experience. As in many other research sectors, the expanding volume of data is pushing the hotel industry to do research differently and employ new analytical methods. This makes these data a useful tool for predicting the future of research methodologies and determining which ones are most likely to be successful. The data's specifics may conceal a portion of the answer to this question. Large data samples from online surveys differ from those from traditional surveys in that they are more likely to include evaluations from the same individuals more than once as well as reviews from different regions of the world. The data has a distinct hierarchical structure, as reviews are contained within reviewers, hotels within destinations, and countries within destinations. The issue with typical analytical techniques is that they either do not account for the hierarchical patterns that already exist in the data, which can lead to skewed conclusions, or they attempt to account for them by employing statistically ineffective dummy variables.

Future data analysis systems must be able to deal with the hierarchical patterns that frequently comprise online data in a statistically valid and efficient manner. The answer may also depend on the types of research questions that must be answered in the future (Radojevic et al., 2017). The literature has already addressed several level-specific concerns in the hospitality industry about consumer happiness, as previously stated. The majority of us still

have a limited understanding of how variables operating at different levels of analysis can have simultaneous and synergistic effects on customer satisfaction.

According to (Radojevic et al., 2017), some intriguing subjects require extensive discussion: Are the consequences of specific characteristics of a person, a hotel, or a location still significant when all relevant variables at other levels are considered? How much of the variance in customer satisfaction can each level of analysis explain? What interactions between variables at different levels increase, decrease, or maintain consumer satisfaction? To comprehend how the customer experience is composed of multiple layers, it may be essential to examine a large number of relevant components operating on multiple levels simultaneously. Researchers can now perform this type of multilayer review because the amount of data on the internet is increasing, and any future technologies must be able to do so as well.

Using online information and feedback, images of tourism destinations can be created. This provides plenty of food for thought for academics and managers, such as: How many online blogs or reviews (eWOM) left by previous customers affect future customers? How does what is written affect the purchasing decisions of online shoppers? This article attempts to determine how many factors influence people's judgments when searching for and purchasing items online. This study uses an experimental methodology to examine four crucial elements of an online hotel review. Included are the specific part or aspect of the service reviewed (such as the customer service staff or core functional features), the overall tone of the reviews (positive or negative), the tone of the information presented first (positive or negative), and the presence of simple-to-understand graphical information (consumer numerical ratings)

(Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Utilising blog pages, forums, and review websites, consumers are conducting more product research and shopping online. Significant growth has occurred in the number of online search and review engines, which is especially significant for service-oriented companies. Consumers appear keen to search for and review products based on corporate and consumer information (such as travel, accommodation, computers, phones or banking). As a source of information, the significance of social media for travellers cannot be overstated. This could be because internet shoppers seek to reduce their risk and obtain an "independent" third-party judgement. Online reviews of a firm or website are one approach to determining its reliability. eWOM on the internet probably aids in the expansion of reputation and trust.

When clients feel betrayed by a business or dissatisfied with a location, they may submit a complaint on an internet discussion forum to exact revenge on the business or location. However, take in mind that there are other reasons why people post, one of which is a concern for other shoppers. Importantly, prospective buyers may have faith in these evaluations because marketing personnel believe they are predominantly objective and uninfluenced. We discovered that user recommendations were more influential in selecting a product than reviews from experts or corporate employees. (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) publish data indicating that many travellers utilise search engines and social media to get information about a location before visiting.

Most people agree (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) that technological advancements, particularly the internet, have increased the number of information sources available to consumers. As part of their research process, customers who wish to purchase travel or hospitality products frequently examine online reviews. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly vital to comprehend how various web information search and evaluation aspects influence customer behaviour, particularly the propensity to reserve a hotel room (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). A potential guest's perception of the hotel's reliability influences their decision to book a stay. (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) discovered that trust in a firm makes consumers more likely to purchase from it. Frequently, marketers want to reduce clients' apprehension about their purchases. To accomplish this, firms frequently attempt to instil customers' confidence in their products or services.

According to (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), consumer trust is the expectation that a company will be dependable and carry out its promises. (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) discuss the concept of trust in online marketplaces where firms offer goods and services. According to them, trust is one of the most crucial factors in determining whether a buyer will purchase something online. The majority of the time, the actions of the front-line employee and the firm itself have the greatest impact on developing trust. However, factors such as the industry or the company's website design may also have an impact.

Cognitive trust, which is the customer's willingness or confidence to trust the service provider in the future, is influenced by the customer's past satisfaction with the frontline service workers. By reading evaluations on travel and hospitality websites, customers can virtually observe how other customers have dealt with customer service. This can increase their confidence in a company's service quality. According to (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) customers can lessen risk and uncertainty while making purchases by reading online

customer reviews. By reading user reviews and recommendations, you can determine whether you can trust the hotel you're considering. This study examines the potential relationships between a variety of characteristics and two crucial variables: trust in the target entity and the likelihood of a purchase. The content or target of reviews, the general tone or valence of the reviews (as a group), the framing of the review set (what is read first), and easily-processed supplementary information such as consumer-generated numerical ratings could all have a role.

3.6 Factors affecting the positive feedback in the hospitality industry

How a customer perceives the value they received from a transaction or relationship determines their level of pleasure. How people perceive the product or service's value concerning its price and the cost of acquiring a customer is its value (Radojevic et al., 2015). The quality of the services is determined by how well they satisfy consumer needs. Most people concur that offering high-quality services and making clients happier are essential components of a successful hotel business. Hotels that give superior service generate more revenue (Radojevic et al., 2015). In a highly competitive hospitality industry where all services are the same, it is logical that each hotelier must be able to make consumers happy than their rivals. Due to the diverse nature of hospitality services, research in this field frequently focuses on measuring and analysing consumer satisfaction with specific transactions. Customer satisfaction with a single transaction with a corporation (in this case, a hotel stay). A hotel's number of stars indicates its level of luxury. This ranking is primarily determined by the hotel's appearance and quality of service. Star ratings are also a useful tool to compare the diversity of foreign hotels.

It contains several hotel services and features that people believe are essential for ensuring client satisfaction (Radojevic et al., 2015). Several studies have indicated that cleanliness, pricing, location, safety, personal service, physical attractiveness, entertainment possibilities, service quality, an appealing image, and a positive reputation are all quite essential. Customers care a great deal about the hotel's appearance, both inside and out, as well as more practical aspects such as whether or not it offers a restaurant and convenient parking. They also claim that the significance of the client-staff interaction increases with the length of the stay and the frequency of hotel use. Guests are most likely to be pleased with the hotel's outside, its reputation, and the cleanliness of the rooms. The most consistent characteristics are the staff's expertise, the quality of the accommodation, and the price.

Similarly, rooms, personnel, and location are the terms most frequently used to define hotel client happiness.

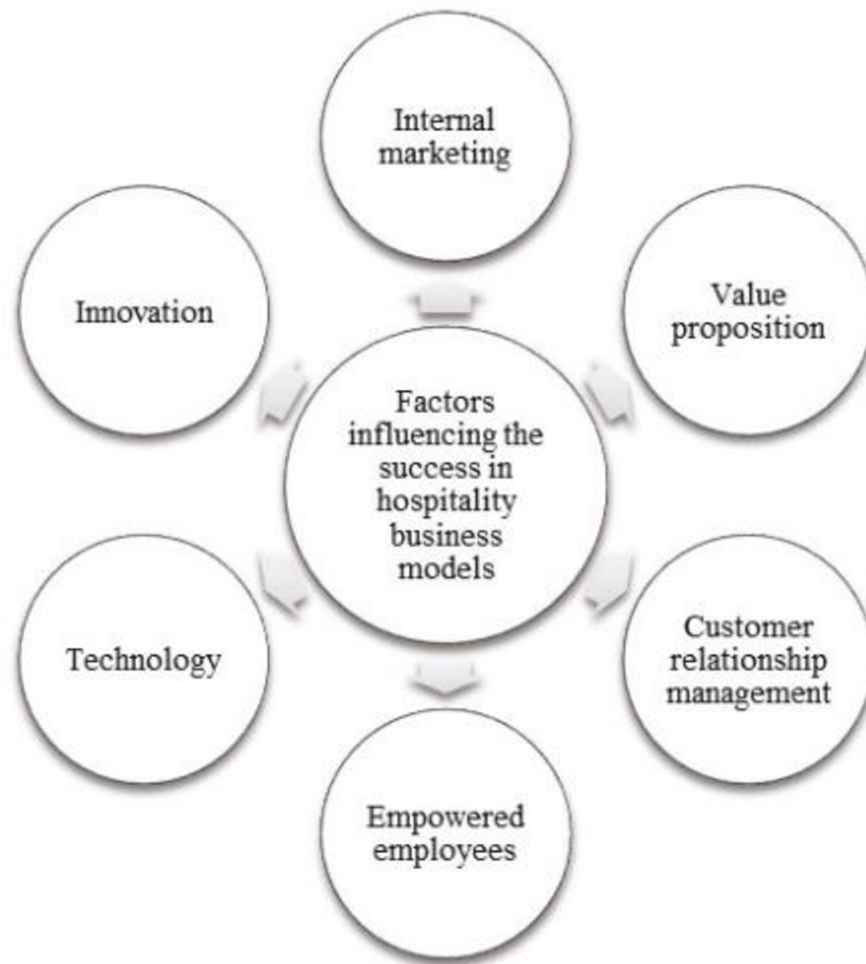


Figure 3: Factors affecting positive feedback

Source: (Langvinienė & Daunoravičiūtė, 2015)

Hu et al. (2016) refer to POS as employees' "global perceptions of the organisation's appreciation for their efforts and concern for their well-being." According to the social exchange theory, people get along because they give and receive items from one another. Social exchange is the voluntary performance of actions with the expectation of receiving something in return. It examines the interactions between individuals on a very small scale. This concept asserts that social contact between people involves a rational and deliberate exchange of resources and is founded on the individual concepts of reward and trade. Therefore, "equitable distribution" and "reciprocity" are the two key concepts underlying this theory. The social exchange theory demonstrates the significance of understanding what

motivates employees and how that connects to the organisation's objectives. According to this notion, how you treat your employees significantly impacts how they feel about the firm, which benefits the company's bottom line. (Hu et al., 2016).

When employees are treated properly, they feel obligated to assist the organisation in achieving its objectives and implementing its strategy. When valuable resources are provided to service employees, the reciprocity standard would motivate them to contribute to the company's success by performing better. According to (Hu et al., 2016), this improved performance is evidenced by greater employee participation in the organisation's culture and more proposals for enhancing service.

According to the norms of reciprocity, when employees understand how their organisation supports them, they care more about their jobs and perform better than if they were given more responsibilities or treated better. By enhancing POS, businesses could make their employees happier, raise morale, and reduce the number of employees who leave or wish to leave. Through POS, employees are more devoted to the organisation, hence enhancing their ability to enhance organisational performance. According to research, point-of-sale (POS) systems are beneficial for customer service and directly and indirectly affect how personnel perform their duties. When service workers perceive organisational support, they are more likely to contribute to the organisation. According to studies, supportive environments are associated with more proactive and productive employees (Hu et al., 2016).

Therefore, it is anticipated that employees will be more willing to provide client feedback in establishments with effective POS. Since discussing ideas for enhancing service and reporting customer feedback are both beneficial to the organisation, it is logical to assume that POS would encourage employees to share ideas for improving service.

3.7 Measures to tackle bad feedback and enhance customer satisfaction

Multiple research has revealed that the opinions gained from consumers' written reviews and ratings are not always the same. The emotional interplay between consumers' written evaluations and ratings can be altered based on their level of satisfaction (Y. Zhao et al., 2019). Several research (Y. Zhao et al., 2019) indicate that the sentiments of online textual reviews correlate strongly with customer ratings. However, the correlation between other

technical characteristics of online textual evaluations, such as subjectivity, variety, readability, length, and consumer ratings is still completely unclear (Geetha et al., 2017).

This investigation attempts to bridge the gap between the technical components of customer reviews and their indicators of overall hotel satisfaction. This is accomplished by comprehensively explaining the technical features of online text evaluations. We want to know how people behave while writing online reviews, including the terms they use and the length of their evaluations so that we can determine how they feel about their hotel stay as a whole. This raises the first issue of the study: What effect do subjectiveness, diversity, readability, polarity, and review length have on overall consumer satisfaction? This is the second research question: What are the most essential technical features of written reviews, based on the extent to which they affect a customer's total enjoyment, that best reflect the opinions of travellers? A person's demographic background, such as their language group, and trip information, such as the reason they are travelling, may also influence their online review habits and impressions of hotels. Customers' varying levels of participation and engagement in the online community (active or inactive) reveal who they are and what they liked and disliked about their hotel stay and reviews, which influences how they feel about hotels (Y. Zhao et al., 2019). However, it remains unclear how a reviewer's participation in an online review community impacts total customer satisfaction.

The technical section of hotel text reviews is the second sort of online hotel review that has recently gained popularity in online review studies. The hospitality business can use the technical analysis of internet reviews to develop forecasts on the reviews' usefulness, the number of clients they convert, and the hotel's performance. argued that textual evaluations on the internet are an excellent approach to obtaining opinions and that utilising sentiment analysis to analyse reviews of restaurants online will assist businesses in identifying their competitors and becoming more competitive.

(Geetha et al., 2017) investigated the polarity of sentiment in online customer reviews and discovered that it influences customer ratings in terms of how the technical aspect of hotel textual evaluations interacts with online customer ratings. (Y. Zhao et al., 2019) examined online hotel reviews using natural language preprocessing, text mining, and sentiment analysis. They discovered a significant correlation between how individuals felt about the title and content of online customer reviews and how they rated hotels. Their findings revealed a high correlation between consumer happiness and the attribute sentiments gleaned from written reviews. This is consistent with what (Y. Zhao et al., 2019) discovered in their

study: that overall ratings are the best indicator of a hotel's performance. Customers can post online reviews in various languages and from various cultural backgrounds; therefore, it is essential to consider the technical aspects of reviews written in different languages and by people from diverse backgrounds (Y. Zhao et al., 2019).

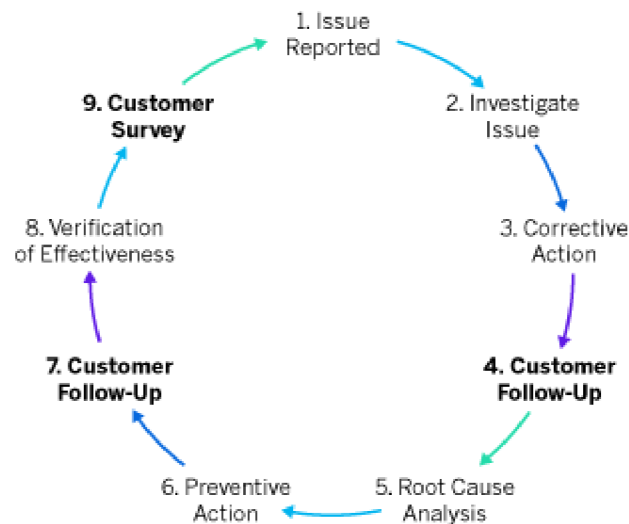


Figure 4: Measures to enhance customer satisfaction

Source: (Qualtrics.com, 2019)

In terms of language, it has been claimed (Y. Zhao et al., 2019) that analysing the tone of textual reviews published in different languages could assist hotel management in better understanding their consumers and enhancing the products and services they provide. Internet evaluations demonstrated that literal and metaphorical language has distinct effects on individuals. The authors utilised a technique known as "text mining" to determine how the style of online evaluations influences the frequency with which people purchase from various product websites. (Y. Zhao et al., 2019) discovered that Chinese customers behave differently than their Western counterparts due to their reputation as typical collectivists. As a result, the emotional link between written reviews and ratings is weakened. In addition, they discovered that neutral or satisfied customers are more likely to send mixed signals in their written reviews and ratings. A variety of additional variables can also influence the technical aspects of textual evaluations. (Y. Zhao et al., 2019) examined various online review sites for travel agencies and social media and discovered that the quality of

information on each platform varies. They analysed the persuasiveness of editors' and customers' online evaluations and the reviewers' demographics.

4 Practical Part

4.1 Primary Data Analysis

The section primarily focuses on primary data analysis wherein, a structured questionnaire online survey was conducted at the hotel from random customers to understand their perspectives regarding the online reviews. The survey analysis was done on the data gathered from a total of 152 respondents which helped in knowing their perspective regarding the topic through the responses that they have filled and the same are shown below. Further, the Survey was collected from visitors at a hotel in Prague between July 02 to July 17, 2022.

4.1.1 Questionnaire Survey Analysis

1. Please specify your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Don't want to specify

1. Please specify your gender
152 responses

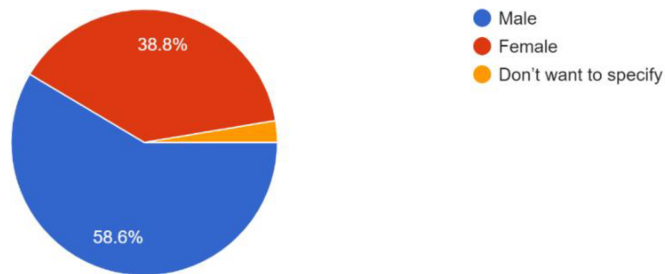


Figure 5: Respondents' gender

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 1: Respondents' gender

Options	Responses	Percentage
Male	89	58.6
Female	59	38.8
Don't want to specify	4	2.6

Analysis

On asking about the gender of the respondents, we came to know that 89 respondents (58.6% Of the respondents) were male, 38.8% of the total were female, and the remaining 2.6% of the total respondents were unwilling to share their gender. All together we can conclude that there were most male respondents almost 58.6% of the total respondents.

2. Please select your age group (in years)

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51 and above

2. Please select your age group (in years)
152 responses

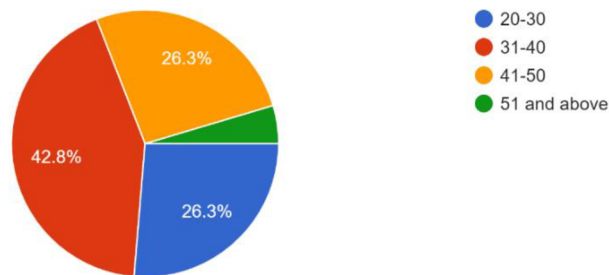


Figure 6: Respondents' age group

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 2: Respondents' age group

Options	Responses	Percentage
20-30	40	26.3
31-40	65	42.8
41-50	40	26.3
51 and above	7	4.6

Analysis

On asking the age of the respondents we came to know that 40 respondents were from the age group of 20-30 years, 65 respondents were from the group 31-40 years of age, 40 respondents were from the group 41-50 years of age and the remaining 7 respondents were from the age group 51 and above. We can conclude that we had most of the respondents are from the age group 31-40 years. The internet is the place where people can find information before making purchase decision. They visit different websites to find all relevant information, ask questions, discuss with others to find available opinions.

I wanted to find out how frequently people were using the hospitality services, this is very important information, since it crucial for businesses to have great visibility which will help them to gain more customers and increase revenue. Besides that, online reviews are more influential when consumers have relatively greater internet experience.

3. Please mention your nationality.

- Czech
- Germany
- Indian
- Ireland
- Kyrgyz
- Netherlands
- Scotland
- Spanish
- Sweden
- UK
- ZAR
- Australia

3. Please mention your nationality

152 responses

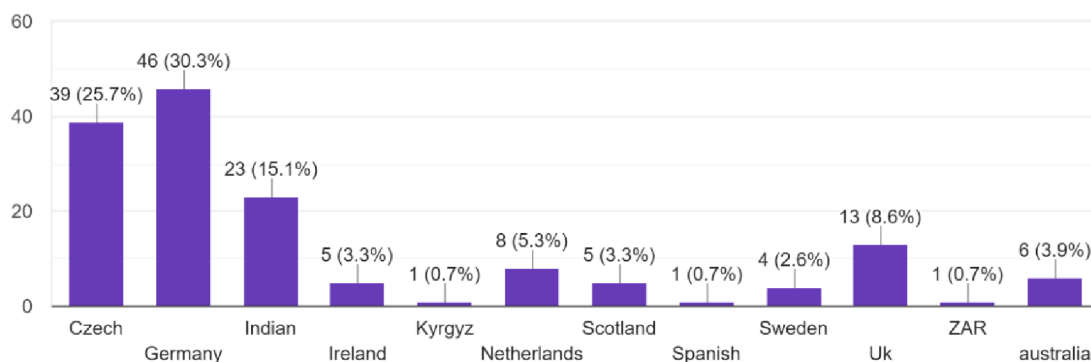


Figure 7: Respondents' nationality

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 3: Respondents' nationality

Options	Responses	Percentage
Czech	39	25.7
Germany	46	30.3
Indian	23	15.1
Ireland	5	3.3
Kyrgyz	1	0.7
Netherlands	8	5.3
Scotland	5	3.3
Spanish	1	0.7
Sweden	4	2.6
UK	13	8.6
ZAR	1	0.7
Australia	6	3.9

Analysis

On asking them to discuss their nationality to which 39 respondents revealed Czech, 46 respondents were from Germany, 23 respondents were from India, 5 respondents were from Ireland, 1 respondent was from Kyrgyz, 8 respondents were from the Netherlands, 5

respondents were from Scotland, 1 respondent was from Spain, 4 respondents were from Sweden, 13 respondents were from the UK, 1 respondent was from ZAR and the remaining 6 respondents were from Australia. Altogether we had a majority of our respondents from Germany which consisted of almost 30.3% of the total respondents, and we had a minority of respondents from Kyrgyz, Spain and ZAR.

If we observe Czech Republic and Germany results of data survey show that German participants were using internet more frequently. Also, we can extract the data using different filters and found out proportion based on country where participant live and their gender.

4. How often do you book a hotel online?

- Only once
- Once a year
- 2 - 4 times a year
- Never

4. How often do you book hotel online?
152 responses

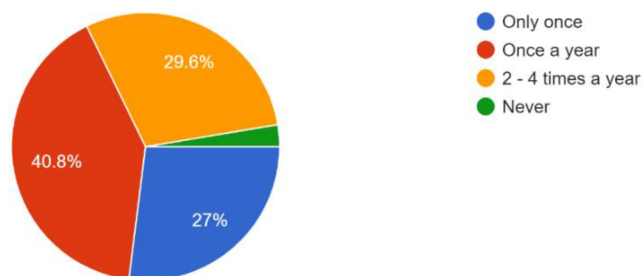


Figure 8: Frequency of online booking

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 4: Frequency of online booking

Options	Responses	Percentage
Only once	41	27
Once a year	62	40.8
2 - 4 times a year	45	29.6
Never	4	2.6

Analysis

On asked them their regularity of booking a hotel online, 41 respondents choose only once, 62 respondents choose to book a hotel online once a year, 45 respondents choose 2-4 times a year, and the remaining 4 respondents choose never to book a hotel online. Altogether a majority of them (40.8% of the total respondents) choose to book a ticket once a year and a few of them (2.6% of the total respondents) choose to book a hotel never. Keeping in mind about booking the hotel online, now people are becoming advance and using smart gadgets to book it online. Supporting the objectives of importance of online reviews here matters the most and people analyse their needs as per that and make their relevant decisions.

This result was expected since it shows that people are using internet very frequently to find a service online and search for information which could support their decision process.

5. For what purpose do you travel the most?

- Business
- Family trip/ Holiday
- Pleasure
- Other

5. For what purpose do you travel the most?
152 responses

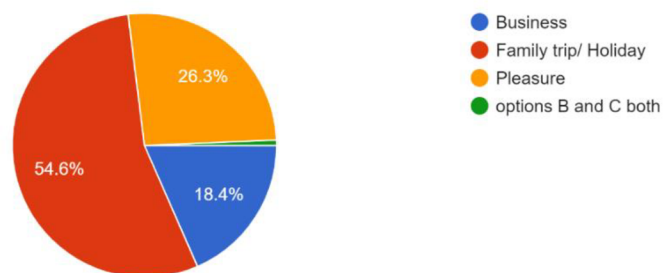


Figure 9: Purpose of travel

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 5: Purpose of travel

Options	Responses	Percentage
Business	28	18.4
Family trip/ Holiday	83	54.6
Pleasure	40	26.3
Other	1	0.7

Analysis

On asked them their purpose for travelling to which 28 respondents selected business (i.e. they tend to travel mostly due to business meetings), and 83 respondents selected Family trip/ Holiday (i.e. they tend to travel majorly to spend time with family on holidays), 40 respondents choose pleasure (i.e. they tend to travel for achieving pleasure) and 1 respondent choose other reason to travel. Altogether, most of them choose to travel for a family trip/holiday. Here, the question stated that, for what purpose people travel most, so there are many reasons like for business, pleasure, holidays, and other options. Stating the objective here, importance of online reviews matters here because businesspeople review to conduct meetings with their clients, for family and pleasure, people consider it for safety, amenities, etc.

6. Generally, which platforms do you prefer to use for online bookings?

- Trip Advisor
- Booking-dot-com
- Airbnb
- Others

6. Generally, which platforms do you prefer to use for online bookings?

152 responses

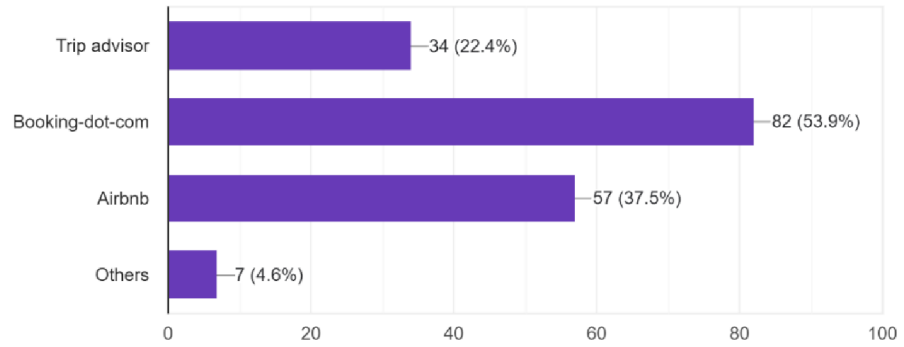


Figure 10: Online platform booking preference

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 6: Online platform booking preference

Options	Responses	Percentage
Trip Advisor	34	22.4
Booking-dotcom	82	53.9
Airbnb	57	37.5
Others	7	4.6

Analysis

On asked about the platforms used for booking their hotels, 34 respondents choose a trip advisor, 82 respondents choose Booking-dot.com, 57 respondents choose Airbnb as their preferred mode of booking hotels and 7 respondents choose other ways of booking hotels. Altogether a majority of them prefer to book their tickets from Booking-dot-com. Keeping in mind that online bookings matter the most in the hospitality industry, as huge amounts of guests are involved, and they come for amenities and prefer to live and so forth. The objective of importance of online reviews in the hospitality industry help to enhance customer service and market their services

Among people who participated in the survey, 53.90% are visiting Booking.com when they want to check the business or offerings. Airbnb as one of the largest booking networks is also very popular and 37.50% people said that they are checking businesses on internet to

find out more information and read online review and comments left by other users. For them it is very convenient since most of them are using that network on regular basis and it is very easy and simple to check out what they want.

Trip advisor is also very popular 22.40%, People were able to write down their own reviews sites that they are most likely to check before making purchase decision.

Business should consider this information when considering different markets, they expand to and they should know where they should be present to have greater visibility and get more customers.Booking.com enables properties all over the world to reach a global audience and grow their businesses.

7. Do you like to visit the same hotels or not?

- The same Hotel booked online
- A variety of different hotels booked online
- Always want to try new
- Doesn't matter

7. Do you like to visit the same hotels or not?
152 responses

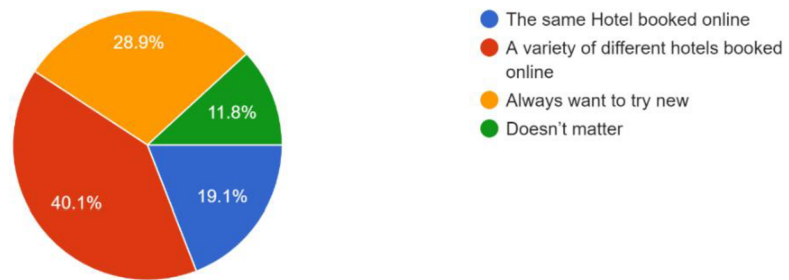


Figure 11: Preference to visit the same hotel again

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 7: Preference to visit the same hotel again

Options	Responses	Percentage
The same Hotel booked online	29	19.1

A variety of different hotels booked online	61	40.1
Always want to try new	44	28.9
Doesn't matter	18	11.8

Analysis

On asking them about revisiting the hotel for the next time they travel, 29 respondents choose to stay in the same hotel booked online, 61 respondents choose to stay in a variety of different hotels booked online, 44 respondents choose to stay in a new property every time they revisit the same place, for 18 respondents it doesn't matter to stay in the same hotel again or to choose a new one every time they visit the same place. Altogether, most of them choose to visit various hotels booked online. Keeping in mind that online bookings matter the most in the hospitality industry, as huge amounts of guests are involved, and they come for amenities and prefer to live and so forth. The objective of the importance of online reviews in the hospitality industry helps to enhance customer service and market their services.

8. Do you find the online hotel booking process convenient?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't bother most of the times

8. Do you find the online hotel booking process convenient?
152 responses

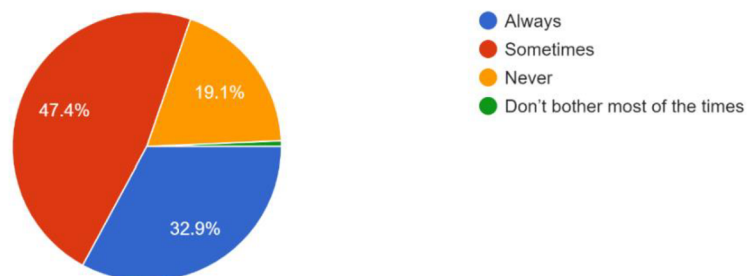


Figure 12: Convenience in the online hotel booking process

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 8: Preference to visit the same hotel again

Options	Responses	Percentage
Always	50	32.9
Sometimes	72	47.4
Never	29	19.1
Don't bother most of the times	1	0.7

Analysis

On enquiring them about the lenience in the online procedure of booking a hotel, 50 respondents selected always convenient, 72 respondents choose sometimes convenient, 29 respondents were never satisfied with the online mode of booking tickets and 1 respondent it doesn't bother so much most of the times to book the ticket online or offline. Overall, most respondents (47.4% of the total respondents) found that booking tickets online is sometimes convenient for them. Since there are so many visitors and they come for facilities and like to live there, internet reservations matter the most in the hotel sector. The goal of using internet reviews to their full potential in the hotel sector is to improve client relations and market offerings.

9. From where do you collect the reviews related to online Hotel bookings?

- Friends
- Family
- Office Colleague
- Online Reviews
- From the hotel websites
- Others

9. From where do you collect the reviews related to online Hotel bookings?

152 responses

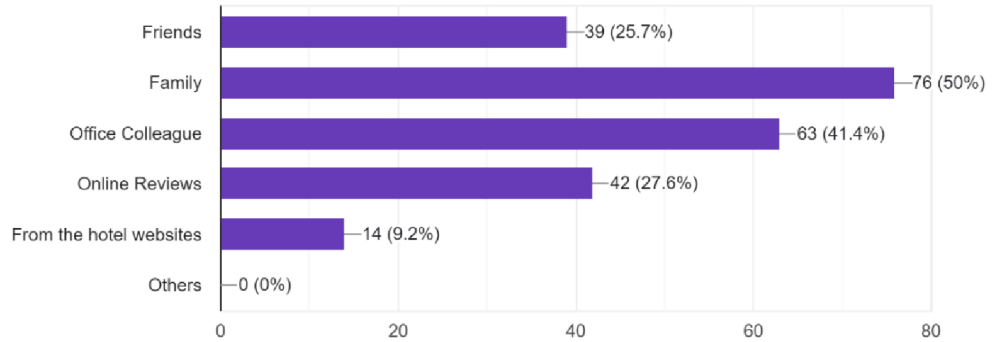


Figure 13: Review preference

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 9: Review preference

Options	Responses	Percentage
Friends	39	25.7
Family	76	50
Office Colleague	63	41.4
Online Reviews	42	27.6
From the hotel websites	14	9.2
Others	0	0

Analysis

On asking them about the source of reviews taken for online hotel bookings, 39 respondents choose friends, 76 respondents choose family, 63 respondents choose office colleagues, 42 respondents choose online reviews, 14 respondents choose hotel websites, and no one chooses another way of reviewing online hotel bookings. Collectively a majority of them choose taking reviews from family as their preferred way of analysing online hotel bookings. Keeping in mind the locations where you gather the internet evaluations for online hotel reservations, where respondents choose various possibilities, Online booking is a terrific tool to remind customers of their appointments, but its significance in the hotel sector depends mostly on word-of-mouth marketing.

10. What are the reasons for choosing online hotel booking?

- Convenience
- Feedbacks or Reviews
- Pricing discounts
- Variety of options and other benefits
- Instant booking and cancellation benefits
- Others

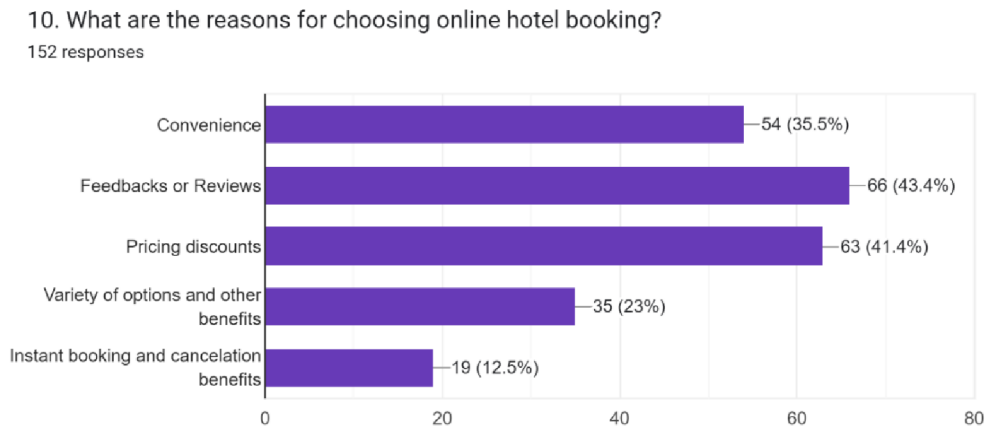


Figure 14: Reasons for choosing online booking

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 10: Reasons for choosing online booking

Options	Responses	Percentage
Convenience	54	35.5
Feedbacks or Reviews	66	43.4
Pricing discounts	63	41.1
Variety of options and other benefits	35	23
Instant booking and cancellation benefits	19	12.5

Analysis

On asked about the reason for booking hotel tickets online, 54 respondents choose online bookings for convenience, 66 respondents found feedback and reviews helpful in

booking any hotel, 63 respondents choose pricing discounts appealing while booking any hotel online, and 35 respondents found a variety of options and other benefits while booking any hotel online, 19 respondents choose instant booking and cancellation benefits. Altogether, most respondents prefer online booking for feedback and reviews and pricing discounts. Keeping in mind where you select the reasons for choosing online hotel booking, in which respondents picked different options. Here, the importance of online booking in the hospitality industry is most and highly dependent on mouth publicity where online booking is a great way to remind clients of their appointments.

11. Do you have complete faith in online reviews?

- Yes
- Neutral
- No

11. Do you have complete faith in the online reviews?
152 responses

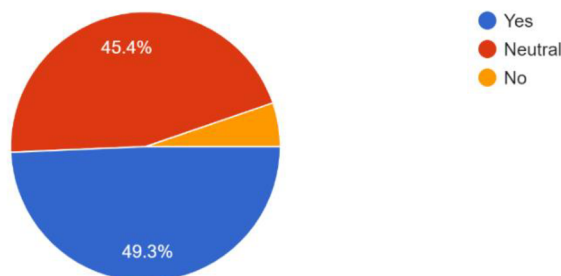


Figure 15: Trust in online reviews
Source: Author’s work (Google forms)

Table 11: Trust in online reviews

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	75	49.3
Neutral	69	45.4
No	8	5.3

Analysis

On asking the respondents about their faith in the online reviews, to which 75 respondents said that they were completely satisfied with the online reviews, 69 respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the online reviews as they reacted neutrally to the above questions and 8 respondents were dissatisfied by the online reviews. Altogether a majority of the respondents believe that online reviews are reliable for booking tickets online. Keeping in mind that complete faith in online reviews, in which respondents picked different options. Here, challenges arising online and their effect on the hospitality industry is most and highly dependent on mouth publicity where online booking is a great way to remind clients of their appointments.

Businesses should know what is the average number of online reviews that customers read, most of the people 49.30 % said they consider even one online review is enough when making decision. This is important for management of online reviews on designated sites. Businesses should pay attention to those online reviews which are displayed on the top because customers will read them first and make their impressions about business services.

12. Do you think authentic customers do online Hotel reviews?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Usually
- Always

12. Do you think the online Hotel reviews are done by authentic customers?
152 responses

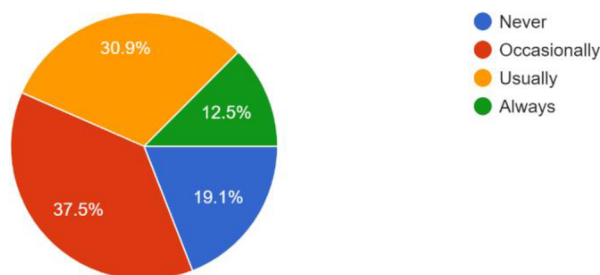


Figure 16: Authenticity of online reviews

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 12: Trust in online reviews

Options	Responses	Percentage
Never	29	19.1
Occasionally	57	37.5
Usually	47	30.9
Always	19	12.5

Analysis

On asking the respondents about whether the online reviews are done by authentic customers or not, to which 29 respondents found that it was never correct (i.e., the review is not made by the authentic customers), 57 respondents found that it was somewhat occasionally done by authentic customers, 47 respondents found that the reviews were usually done by authentic customers and 19 respondents found that authentic customers always did it. Altogether a majority of them think that it was occasionally authentic customers while reviewing a hotel. Considering that real consumers write evaluations of hotels online, where respondents provided a range of answers. Here, issues and issues of relevance have emerged online, and the hotel sector is heavily reliant on evaluations, suggestions, and recommendations that are updated on internet platforms.

13. Do you prefer online hotel booking or offline hotel booking?

- Online hotel booking
- Offline hotel booking
- Both

13. Do you prefer online hotel booking or offline hotel booking?

152 responses

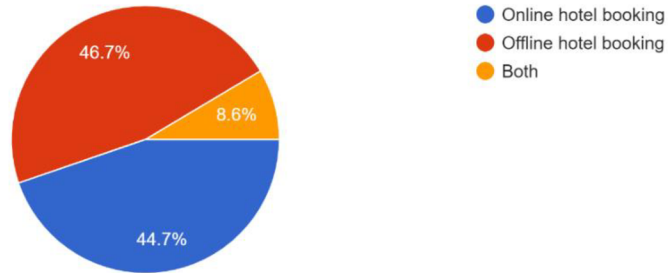


Figure 17: Hotel booking preference: online v/s offline

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 13: Hotel booking preference: online v/s offline

Options	Responses	Percentage
Online hotel booking	68	44.7
Offline hotel booking	71	46.7
Both	13	8.6

Analysis

On asked whether they preferred booking a hotel online or offline, 68 respondents were comfortable with booking a hotel online, 71 respondents were comfortable with offline hotel bookings and 13 respondents chose both hotels booking modes. Altogether a majority of them were comfortable booking hotels offline. Keeping in mind that online hotel booking or offline hotel booking, in which respondents picked different options. Here, the importance of online reviews in the hospitality industry and their effect on the hospitality industry is most and highly dependent on reviews and suggestions, recommendations that are updated on online platforms.

14. Are you aware of cases where consumers have suffered financial loss or other damages as a result of misleading and fake hotel reviews?

- Yes
- Neutral

- No

14. Are you aware of cases where consumers have suffered financial loss or other damages as a result of misleading and fake hotel reviews?

152 responses

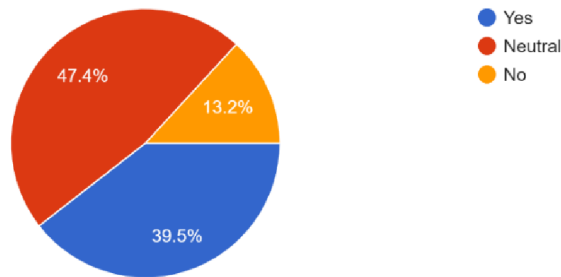


Figure 18: Loss from fake reviews

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 14: Loss from fake reviews

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	60	39.5
Neutral	72	47.4
No	20	13.2

Analysis

On asking them about the cases where consumers have faced several financial losses or any other damages because of misleading and fake hotel reviews, 60 respondents were aware of such activities, 72 respondents were neutral to this and 20 respondents were not aware of any such activities. Considering that consumers have experienced monetary loss or other harm as a result of false and misleading hotel reviews. The issues that emerged online in this case had an impact on the hotel sector and their company as well, and they heavily rely on reviews, suggestions, and recommendations that are updated on online platforms.

15. Do you follow the starred reviews instead of the non-starred reviews?

- Yes
- Neutral

- No

15. Do you follow the starred reviews instead of the non-starred reviews?

152 responses

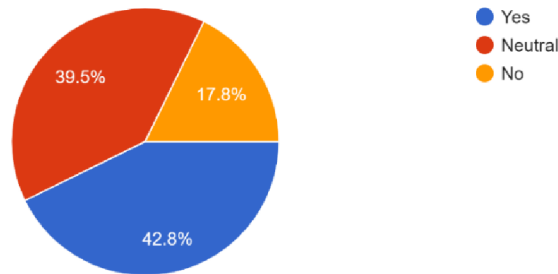


Figure 19: Starred reviews v/s no or fewer star reviews

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 15: Starred reviews v/s non starred reviews

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	65	42.8
Neutral	60	39.5
No	27	17.8

Analysis

On asking them about their preference for starred reviews over non-starred reviews, 65 respondents believed in starred reviews rather than non-starred, 60 respondents were not bothered by any of these starred or non-starred reviews and 27 respondents believed that they would not prefer starred reviews instead of non-starred. Keep in mind that you should follow starred reviews rather than unstarred reviews and bogus hotel reviews. Here, the significance of online reviews in the hotel sector is of the highest importance to guests, as are their effects on the hospitality industry and their businesses, which are largely dependent on online evaluations, suggestions, and recommendations.

People are generally skeptical when it comes to average rating of 5 stars because they believe no business is perfect, and it would be difficult to have all people agreed that some service is without any negative feature. Average star rating plays very important role in general since

that is usually first thing displayed next to the service. Potential customer will look at it to get general picture of product characteristics.

16. If online reviews are available, do the negative reviews of a brand/hotel on the internet affect your booking decision?

- Yes
- No
- Somehow yes but depends on the cost and benefits

16. If online reviews available, does the negative reviews of a brand/hotel on the internet affect your booking decision?
152 responses

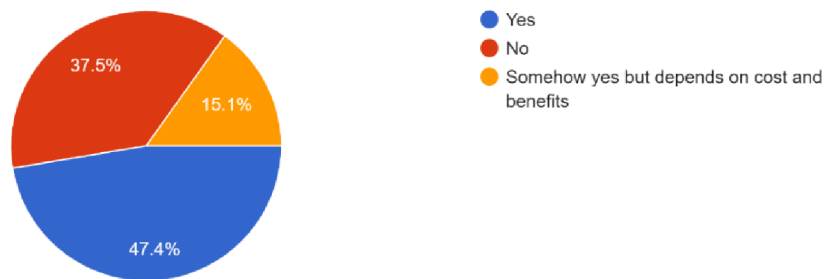


Figure 20: Impact of negative online reviews

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 16: Impact of negative online reviews

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	72	47.4
No	57	37.5
Somehow yes but depends on the cost and benefits	23	15.1

Analysis

On asked while booking any hotel online whether the negative reviews affect their decision of booking a hotel, 72 respondents agreed that their decision may get affected by

noticing the negative reviews about the hotel they are looking for, and 57 respondents were not at all affected by the negative reviews about the hotel while booking it online and 23 respondents were somehow distracted but ultimately it was totally upon the cost and benefits, they are going to receive, recognising that poor online evaluations of a company or hotel influence your choice to book. Yes, they had difficulties from the perspective of the visitors, which also had an impact on their business. They heavily rely on evaluations, comments, and recommendations that are posted on web forums.

17. What is your opinion about the future of online hotel booking systems?

- Will grow and be helpful to all
- Will not grow in future
- Can support the whole travel and tourism industry
- Neutral

17. What is your opinion about the future of online hotel booking systems?
152 responses

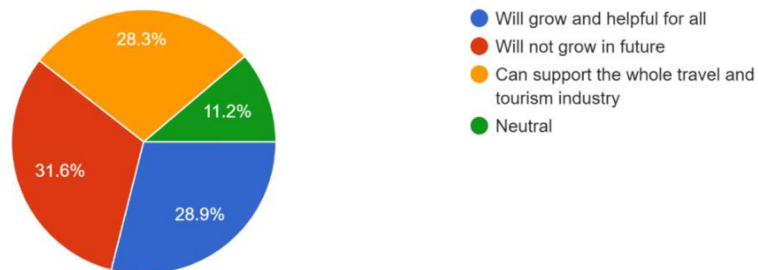


Figure 21: Perception towards an online hotel booking

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 17: Perception towards an online hotel booking

Options	Responses	Percentage
Will grow and be helpful to all	44	28.9
Will not grow in future	48	31.6
Can support the whole travel and tourism industry	43	28.3

Neutral	17	11.2
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Analysis

On asking about the future of online hotel booking systems, to which 44 respondents said that it will grow and will be helpful for all who are willing to book a hotel, 48 respondents said that it will not grow in the future, 43 respondents believed that it can support the whole travel and tourism industry and 17 respondents reacted neutrally to the above prediction. Altogether, most of them found that online hotel booking would not grow much in the future. Keeping in mind that the future of online hotel booking systems. Yes, importance of online reviews in the hospitality industry, effect their business and they're highly dependent on future bookings systems that are updated on online platforms.

18. Is there any specific brand in Prague you like the most?

- Marriott
- Hyatt
- Four Seasons
- Boutique Hotels
- Hilton Hotels
- Other

18. Is there any specific brand in Prague you're like the most?
152 responses

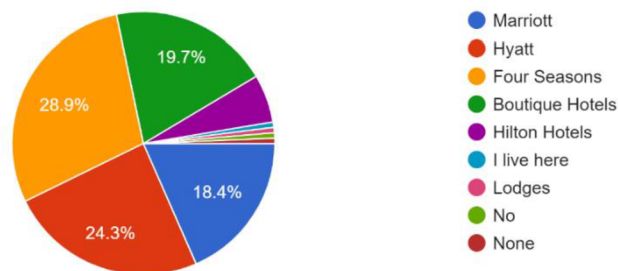


Figure 22: Brand preference

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 18: Brand preference

Options	Responses	Percentage
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Marriott	28	18.4
Hyatt	37	24.3
Four Seasons	44	28.9
Boutique Hotels	30	19.7
Hilton Hotels	9	5.9

Analysis

On asking them about their preference of any specific brands in Prague that they liked the most, to which 28 respondents selected Marriott as their preferred brand, 37 respondents choose Hyatt as their preferred brand, 44 respondents choose four seasons as their preferred brand, 30 respondents choose boutique hotels as their preferred brand, 9 respondents choose Hilton hotels as their preferred brand and few respondents choose others. Keeping in mind that brand in Prague. As effect their business and they're highly dependent on bookings systems, and people are very possessive for their choices.

19. The hotel industry in Prague implements suitable measures and strategies to enhance its sales.

- Yes
- No
- No idea

19. The hotel industry in Prague implements suitable measures and strategies to enhance their sales?

152 responses

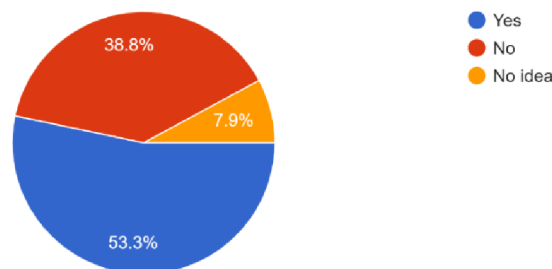


Figure 23: Measures and strategies to enhance sales

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 19: Measures and strategies to enhance sales

Options	Responses	Percentage
Yes	81	53.3
No	59	38.8
No idea	12	7.9

Analysis

On asked about whether the hotel industry in Prague implements suitable strategies to enhance their sales or not, 81 respondents agreed to this, 59 respondents disagreed with this and 12 respondents were unaware of any such suggestions. Keeping in mind that hotel industry in Prague implements suitable measures. As effect their business and they're highly dependent on bookings systems, and people are very possessive for their choices.

20. According to you, what future strategies or technologies can enhance the online hotel booking experience of customers in Prague?

- Implementation of advanced technologies like AI, Big Data, Analytics etc.
- Enabling effective marketing and sales practices
- Working on internal development
- Focusing on customer needs and satisfaction
- Understand market competition and needs

20. According to you, what can be future strategies or technologies to enhance the online hotel booking experience of customers in Prague?

152 responses

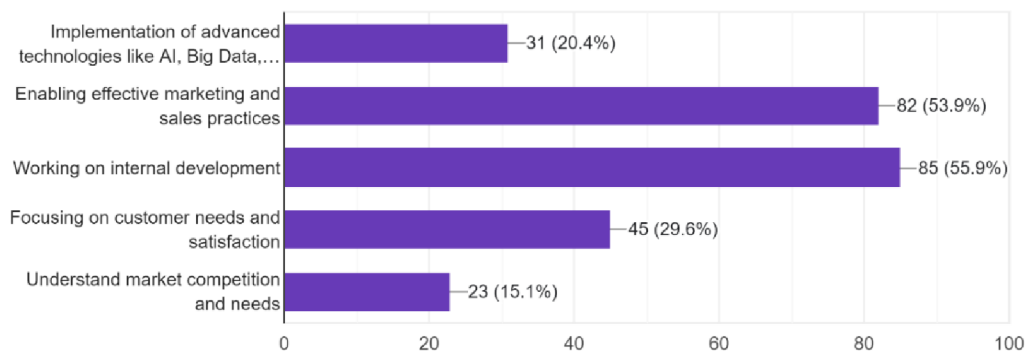


Figure 24: Future strategies for enhancing the online booking experience

Source: Author's work (Google forms)

Table 20: Future strategies for enhancing the online Booking experience

Options	Responses	Percentage
Implementation of advanced technologies like AI, Big Data, Analytics etc.	31	20.4
Enabling effective marketing and sales practices	82	53.9
Working on internal development	85	55.9
Focusing on customer needs and satisfaction	45	45.6
Understand market competition and needs	23	15.1

Analysis

On asking them to suggest them some future strategies or technologies that can enhance the online hotel booking experiences of customers of Prague, to which 31 respondents suggested implementing advanced technologies like AI, Big Data, Analytics etc., 82 respondents believed that enabling effective marketing and sales practices would enhance the hotel booking experiences of customers. 85 respondents believed that working on internal developments would help in enhancing the services, 45 respondents chose to focus on customer needs and satisfaction, and 23 respondents chose to understand the market competition and need to help the company enhance its online booking experiences. Keeping in mind that future strategies or technologies can enhance the online hotel booking experience of customers in Prague. As effect their business and they're highly dependent on bookings systems, and people are very possessive for their choices.

Fake reviews

Fake online reviews contain false information, and they are untruthful, or they must deceive or be likely to deceive the average consumer in some way even if the information is factually

correct. When asked if they have ever thought that online review, they had read is fake 39.50% of participants answered with yes. They gave different examples when they thought that online review is fake and in which situations, they consider online reviews as fakes ones. Some of their answers are listed below.

- 1) Yes, especially the positive ones. Too much excitement and only positive things without saying any negative makes me think that something is wrong with the reviews.
- 2) Yes, multiple times. When people write something so amazing about some place and I have been there multiple times and I know that is not correct. Reviews with pictures are more authentic.
- 3) Yes, too negative comments and recommendation of other similar service at the same time.
- 4) Yes, when they are too general. Or person who wrote them is exaggerating, Amazing, Super powerful, the best of the best.
- 5) Yes, to negative statement and too many posts from same person.
- 6) Of course, I did, online reviews are easily manipulated. Usually, I become suspicious when the review is strongly positive or negative.

4.2 Secondary Data analysis

4.2.1 Literature Review Analysis

The literature review conducted primarily focuses on discussing the impact of online reviews on hotel businesses in a detailed manner. It is noted that in today's world online customer reviews have become increasingly important, and if a customer focuses on the online reviews given, then they would notice that it has a major impact on the overall reputation of a hotel. The primary aspect of a hotel or any business is to make a positive impression on customers while interacting with them. customer reviews are also considered a big part of online marketing and most businesses rely on the same. Also, customer feedback is primarily based on Hotel's appearance, the staff behaviour, the services that they offer, and the food that they serve (Anagnostopoulou et al., 2019). Therefore, it is deduced that there is a significant connection between online customer reviews and business performance. the literature review

has been divided into different sections wherein, customer review and its importance in the hospitality industry, the basis of customer review, the impact of positive and negative customer review, factors affecting positive feedback on the hospitality sector, and many other headings have been discussed effectively.

It is known that customer reviews are primarily feedbacks and suggestions that they share on the online platform of the hotel that they stayed in through the experience that they had. It has also been discussed that in a particular hotel, credibility can act as one of the reasons for understanding the importance of customer reviews. With ever-changing technology, the feedbacks or suggestions provided by the customers act as an important measure for hotels to improve their operations so that they could maintain their foothold in the market (Langvinienė & Daunoravičiūtė, 2015). The outgrown technology has enabled hotels to provide a video, which, a view of different areas of hotels, can help customers in understanding it in a better way. It can be understood that a positive customer review can act as a positive weapon for the hotels to gain new customers and their work. Also, customer reviews are shown on the hotels. The website also helps other new customers to decide which hotel to book effectively. Other than this, the overall brand image of a hotel depends on customer reviews, and to achieve higher reviews from different customers hotels focus more on the services that they provide.

Interaction can also act as a great base for getting positive customer reviews in the hospitality industry. The hotel sale can also be boosted through positive guest reviews. Moreover, a hotel can also fail in attracting new customers if they do not have enough reviews as usually many customers do not provide a review frequently. It has been analysed that customers are usually inclined to share their experiences and knowledge through online review platforms as the popularity of the internet developed. On a different website such as TripAdvisor, customers can share their opinion, shopping experience, etc. Which helps other new customers (Geetha et al. 2017). Also, the customers are inclined to believe EWOM. compared to commercial information as customer reviews usually provide immense information on the experiences lived by individuals. It has also been analysed that hotel with better star ratings and lesser local competition have made more money online compared to others.

An example of Hotel Grandium in Prague has also been analysed above it is a popular hotel in the country and the rooms are quite spacious and have different facilities to offer. The hotel has a 4.5 rating and positive review which is primarily based on its service, cleanliness,

amenities, and location. Moreover, even though the hotel has been reviewed positively, people tend to expect more from the hotel as they might have some complaints to be resolved. Further, the positive and negative impacts of customer reviews on the hospitality business have been discussed above effectively. It has been assessed that there is an ethical relationship between numerical ratings and reviews which are included for the hotel. A study had been conducted on Online Customer Reviews (OCR) combined with Positive Review Valence (PRV), which showcases that there is an increase in customers' likelihood to book a particular hotel. Customers usually believe that OCR and PRV majorly influence how they look at services offered by hotels.

Usually, guests are more receptive to a favourable OCR recommendation and book hotels accordingly. It can also be understood that there is a major effect of previous online reviews on the attitude of the new customer base in the hospitality industry. As this aspect can help new customers in knowing the hotel better and understanding the ambience, services, and other amenities that they provide (Somohardjo, 2017). Different studies have also been conducted on the same, which explains that customers using online information and feedback through understanding the images of tourist destinations, and other tourist spots can influence people's judgment while searching for or booking a particular hotel. Also, there is a potential relationship between different characteristics and two crucial variables our trust in the target entity and the likelihood of a hotel purchase.

Moreover, it is reduced that various factors affect positive feedback in the hospitality industry, which includes technology, customer relationship, management, internal marketing, empowered employees, value, proposition, and innovation. All these factors have a major impact on the feedback that is positive and provided in the hospitality sector into homes of attracting new customers and retaining the old ones. Lastly, the literature review has been closed by understanding the measures that can help in tackling bad feedback and enhancing overall customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. The measures include a cycle wherein, first, the issue must be reported, then it must be investigated, corrective action must be taken against it,

Customer follow-up should be made, understanding the root cause analysis, preventive action should be taken, come again, customer follow-up should be, verification of effectiveness and finally a customer survey should be conducted to understand customers in a better manner (Zhong et al., 2014). The literature review conducted above helps in understanding the impact of customer reviews, feedback, or suggestions in the overall

hospitality sector. it can be noted that customer reviews and suggestions play a crucial part in building a hotel's reputation. Be it positive or negative and therefore it becomes important for hotels to understand the importance of customer feedback and work on the same.

5 Results and Discussion

Results of the research shows that there is a huge interest in Online Customer reviews from the customer side. Most of the survey participants are using this form of online customer feedback while making decision.

It can be determined from the above thesis that services provided within the hospitality sector are considered to be the most crucial factor for any hotel. As the customer pays for the services, their expectations are always high. Customer reviews provide insight into the hotels, restaurants, resorts, etc. about the quality of services they are providing.

Table 11 shows that 49.30 % of survey participants think that online customer reviews are relevant factor when making decision. This information is very important for business since they must know which factors are influencing customer behaviour and how to successfully manage and find ways to attract new customers.

Table 4 shows that online customer review is being used at a regular basis. 27 % of total survey participants are using regularly, However, we can see that there is difference between survey participants based on the country.

Table 16 shows different impact of online customer review on business, Hotel industry is considered as sector where customer review play very important role. This result was expected. When visiting new places people are more likely to use reviews to find out more information. Since, they don't have previous information or experience from people they know, and they don't know the ability of offered services and this is very important as business they want to boost popularity and promotability. 47.40 % of people think that terrible reviews even have the potential of closing business power. That's why it is crucial for hotel business to understand the impact of reviews and different review websites and the role they play the performance of a business.

Table 16 shows loss of business from fake reviews. It shows the action that survey participants usually take when they see that business have too many negative reviews. 39.50% of survey participants are saying that the customers are facing financial loss. This

means that business risk to lose almost half of its potential customers if they have too many negative online reviews. Therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to online reviews since they obviously impact customer behaviour and therefore business as well. This result was expected since they are afraid of future loss if they make wrong decision.

12.50% of survey participants say always and 37.50% of participants of survey say occasionally that the reviews are done by the authentic customers which increase their trust in business. Therefore, it's more likely they will use their services.

Table 15 shows the star rating or non-star rating comparison. Here, 42.80% of survey participants present most trustful star rating interval. Online star rating is very important as part of online customer review. That is usually first thing customer checks to find out feedback about business. Most trustful star rating interval according to 42.80% of participants having interval from 3.5 stars to 4.5 stars. Most popular reviews websites according to survey results are www.booking.com and www.Airbnb.com.

60% of participants are expecting response from business when they leave review, while 40% of participants don't expect response. Participants were asked to give recommendation to business when they leave the hotel, 29% of them said they will expect response specially if their review was negative. While 40% of customer don't expect any response from business.

Participants were asked to give recommendations to business. Most of the participants were suggesting that business should response as soon as possible or up to three days and should take appropriate actions to solve the issues and the reasons for having non-satisfied customers.

When asked how they usually react when business asked them to leave right review total 29% of customer said that they will leave the review. 30% of them will leave the review only if they're really satisfied. Knowing that happy customers are ready to leave the review if asked for. Attracting new and keeping old customers is very important for every business, because without customers there is no business.

Nowadays, customers are not only attracted by the photos and videos of the hotel available on the internet but also look for genuine feedback provided by other customers as poor service can eliminate all the beautiful crafts within the hotel.

Bad feedback can create a blunder for any hotel. Customer satisfaction and interaction with the help of their feedback and reviews are very crucial for the business. It can be brought up from the above thesis that the key to success for any hotel business is customer satisfaction and good reviews provided by the clients. This could be proven by the fact that a new customer can be easily attracted by positive feedback while negative feedback can easily wash away the possibilities of new customers.

From the thesis, it can be concluded that positive feedback is directly correlated with the satisfaction they receive from the services. The transaction of services drives the customer to return for the services again and have positive word-of-mouth publicity for the hotel. A hotel has to maintain various positions that enhance the guest experience, such as housekeeping, front desk, restaurant, room service, maintenance services, budgeting and financing, conferences, etc. These are the minimal services that are needed to be maintained by the hotels. Meeting customer expectations is a very important tool to enhance service quality and encourage positive feedback for the hotel. These practices make the brand stand out from others in the industry. Positive feedback encourages customers to encourage more customers to visit the hotel while it motivates the hotels as it acts as a motivation for them.

Being available on the internet and social media is also very important for the hotels that create their urge to maintain their reviews and feedbacks positive for upcoming customers. Various hotels at tourist destinations are dependent on new customers who book their vacations through online sites and the feedback and reviews play a vital role in the hotels that get booked. These factors describe the importance and power of the reviews and feedback for the hotel industry and how new customers react to them as well.

Before paying for the service, people review it online. Before making a reservation, ideal clients would examine reviews for both rivals. Positive online reviews will raise their propensity to select hotels. When a prospective customer sees a favorable review on their

results page, they will immediately click on the website for more information. First of all, that implies having more opportunities to convince them to make a reservation.

Negative reviews of a brand that seriously affect a brand's reputation and reduce customer dependability. Online bookings from hotels and restaurants that have few or numerous bad ratings are less common, which reduces revenue. For example, when a customer complained about how the waiters treated them. Even though that was a single error or misunderstanding, potential customers will automatically infer that and provide a terrible customer experience in your restaurant.

6 Conclusion

Online customer review has very popular feature on many websites. They have become one of the most important factors after analysing survey data collection.

49.30% of survey participants think that online customer reviews are a relevant factor. This confirms statement from Survey that they represent impactful factor while making decisions. However, we must keep in mind that when visiting new places people are more likely to choose online hotel booking to use review to find out more information. Since, they don't have previous experience or personal recommendation from people they know, and they don't know the quality of offered services. Online reviews are widely used by male and female population So, this illustrates the significance of online reviews.

27% of total participants are using online customer reviews on a regular basis, difference in consumption of online reviews exist between different group of participants. People who are in Germany have higher percentage of travelling and booking hotels when compared to participants who live in Czech Republic and Ireland.

Online reviews are considered as important in situations when customer is involved in complex decision or in other words in those situations when customers are choosing highly brand hotels and they need a lot of information before the decision is made. Their mentioned situations like what they have choose it depend on quality, budget and service. Customers want to decrease uncertainty about service they choose since they are afraid of the loss if they make wrong decision.

Internet booking is now the most common way to make a reservation in the hospitality industry because of the digitisation of this modern age. Hotel reviews, feedback, and comments provide valuable insight into the level of service and value they provide to other travellers. Multiple sources of reviews must be used effectively by the hotel to improve the guest experience.

Depending on the nature of a guest's visit, their stay can be short or long. As a result, the staff is responsible for ensuring guests receive preferential treatment and are fully satisfied

with their stay. A review offers detailed information about a Guest's experience with a specific arrangement. Hoteliers can use this information to understand how their guests behave, what they like, dislike, and what they prefer. Upon staying with them and experiencing the services they provide; two main possibilities emerge. A guest's review may be positive or critical, depending on how they feel about services. A key component of this polite and professional response is required from hotel executives. It is important to let them know that their voices and inputs are being acknowledged, regardless of whether you can change their perspective at this point.

Most guests are asked to give reviews and give feedback to the organisation. They need to be emailed, messaged, and notified about their experiences for hotels to try to get their attention. By getting more insight from the guest, one will achieve better results. Hotels and other establishments need to make sure the reviews are distributed in every way to attract more guests. In addition to enhancing your hotel's reputation and giving customers assurance of quality service, these reviews are used strategically for SEO and social media.

A hotel's revenue stream must be profitable in many ways to remain profitable. A hotel's reputation can be best determined by its online presence and reputation and online reviews are often an excellent indicator of its reputation. The hotel sector could earn more over the next decade by paying more attention to online reviews. Ratings often balance themselves out across all hotels because people consider their expectations when posting reviews. Managing online reviews might seem too time-consuming and irrelevant to your property's success. But it's crucial to your property's success. Over time, it has become more and more important.

Limitations / Future Research

I would like to compare three different industries which I can consider for online customer reviews, Hotels, Fashion, and Restaurants. I will try to collect the survey from the same number of participants but from different people like Family, Students, and businessman. So that I can get a better understanding as how the online system works. I would like to ask the survey participants how often that they like to book online hotels example once a week or

once a month and compare how many people are using the online review system from 2020 to 2022.

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8 Appendix

Survey questionnaire

1. Please specify your gender.
 - Male
 - Female
 - Don't want to specify

2. Please select your age group (in years)
 - 20-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51 and above

3. Please mention your nationality.
 - Czech

- Germany
- Indian
- Ireland
- Kyrgyz
- Netherlands
- Scotland
- Spanish
- Sweden
- UK
- ZAR
- Australia

4. How often do you book a hotel online?

- Only once
- Once a year
- 2 - 4 times a year
- Never

5. For what purpose do you travel the most?

- Business
- Family trip/ Holiday
- Pleasure
- Other

6. Generally, which platforms do you prefer to use for online bookings?

- Trip Advisor
- Booking-dotcom
- Airbnb
- Others

7. Do you like to visit the same hotels or not?
 - The same Hotel booked online
 - A variety of different hotels booked online
 - Always want to try new
 - Doesn't matter

8. Do you find the online hotel booking process convenient?
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Never
 - Don't bother most of the times

9. From where do you collect the reviews related to online Hotel bookings?
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Office Colleague
 - Online Reviews
 - From the hotel websites
 - Others

10. What are the reasons for choosing online hotel booking?
 - Convenience
 - Feedbacks or Reviews
 - Pricing discounts
 - Variety of options and other benefits
 - Instant booking and cancellation benefits
 - Others

11. Do you have complete faith in the online reviews?
 - Yes
 - Neutral

- No

12. Do you think authentic customers do the online Hotel reviews?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Usually
- Always

13. Do you prefer online hotel booking or offline hotel booking?

- Online hotel booking
- Offline hotel booking
- Both

14. Are you aware of cases where consumers have suffered financial loss or other damages as a result of misleading and fake hotel reviews?

- Yes
- Neutral
- No

15. Do you follow the starred reviews instead of the non-starred reviews?

- Yes
- Neutral
- No

16. If online reviews are available, do the negative reviews of a brand/hotel on the internet affect your booking decision?

- Yes
- No
- Somehow yes but depends on cost and benefits

17. What is your opinion about the future of online hotel booking systems?

- Will grow and helpful for all

- Will not grow in future
- Can support the whole travel and tourism industry
- Neutral

18. Is there any specific brand in Prague you like the most?

- Marriott
- Hyatt
- Four Seasons
- Boutique Hotels
- Hilton Hotels
- Other

19. The hotel industry in Prague implements suitable measures and strategies to enhance its sales.

- Yes
- No
- No idea

20. According to you, what future strategies or technologies can enhance the online hotel booking experience of customers in Prague?

- Implementation of advanced technologies like AI, Big Data, Analytics etc.
- Enabling effective marketing and sales practices
- Working on internal development
- Focusing on customer needs and satisfaction
- Understand market competition and needs