



A Comprehensive Study on Guest Experience and Customer Satisfaction at Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport

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ABSTRACT

Guest satisfaction has become one of the most essential performance indicators for hotels operating in competitive metropolitan markets. This research paper analyses guest experience and customer satisfaction at Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport by identifying key service drivers and evaluating customer perceptions across multiple touchpoints. The study is based on primary responses from 80 guests and event clients, along with secondary insights from internal hotel observations and online reviews. The data indicates that staff behaviour, food quality, cleanliness, room comfort, ambience, and efficiency of check-in/check-out processes are the strongest contributors to satisfaction. Although the majority of respondents rated their experience as good or excellent, areas requiring improvement include value for money, rapid service delivery during peak hours, and consistent post-stay engagement. The study concludes that customer satisfaction at Holiday Inn Mumbai is significantly influenced by personalization, service responsiveness, and internal coordination among departments. Improving service speed and enhancing guest retention strategies can further strengthen brand loyalty and repeat business.

Keywords: - Customer satisfaction, Guest experience, service quality, hospitality industry, guest retention, customer engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Context: The Evolving Hospitality Landscape

The hospitality industry has evolved from offering basic accommodation to delivering holistic experience-based services. In today's digital era, guests evaluate hotel brands not only by amenities but also by emotional satisfaction, comfort, and the quality of interactions throughout their stay. A single negative experience can influence online reviews and future business, while positive experiences contribute directly to loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, a key property under the IHG Hotels & Resorts brand, caters to diverse guest segments including corporate travellers, international guests, wedding and banquet clients, families, and transit passengers. The hotel is known for its professional service environment, business-friendly infrastructure, and multipurpose offerings such as rooms, banquets, dining (Saptami and 72 Bar), catering services and the Sky Terrace.

Despite a strong brand presence, guest expectations continue to rise, requiring continuous monitoring of service delivery. This study was undertaken during an internship in the Sales & Marketing department to evaluate satisfaction levels and identify improvement areas. The survey results and field insights provide a comprehensive understanding of what shapes a memorable experience for guests and how the hotel can enhance retention and loyalty.

1.2 Problem Statement: The Service-Expectation Gap

Although the Indian hospitality sector is growing rapidly, a key challenge for established brands like Holiday Inn is the gap between the expected service and the actual experience delivered to guests. High occupancy levels in the Mumbai airport market may hide service shortcomings, as operational demand often exceeds capacity. Post-pandemic guests also have higher expectations regarding hygiene, responsiveness, and value for money. The survey indicates that while guests appreciate the physical product and environment, concerns remain regarding price perception and consistency in service delivery.

This study therefore focuses on examining these gaps through statistical analysis. It seeks to understand whether ambience compensates for service delays, and whether business and leisure travelers evaluate value and loyalty differently. Overall, the aim is to identify the key service drivers that influence guest retention and recommendations.

1.3 Company Profile: Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport

Holiday Inn is part of the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), a globally recognized brand known for reliability and consistency. The Mumbai International Airport property adapts the brand standards to the local market and caters to both business and leisure travelers.

Location & Capacity:

- Located in Saki Naka, Andheri East, close to T2 airport and the metro line.
- The hotel has 245 rooms, serving transit, corporate, and MICE demand.

Facilities:

- Saptami multi-cuisine restaurant
- Grand Ballroom for weddings and corporate events
- Rooftop pool and spa facilities for leisure and staycation guests

1.4 Sales and Distribution:

The property follows a strong B2B and direct sales strategy, focusing on corporate outreach, travel agents, and event planners. The IHG One Rewards program supports direct bookings and helps reduce dependence on OTA platforms.

1.5 Research Objectives

To ensure a focused, analytical, and actionable outcome, this study is governed by three primary research objectives:

1. To determine if the perceived behavior of the staff influences the guest's likelihood to recommend the hotel.
2. To assess if the physical environment (Ambience) is a determinant of satisfaction.
3. To test the association between guest's purpose of visit and perception of value for money.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is useful for the hotel industry because it shows which service factors have the strongest impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty. The results can help hotel managers improve training, service delivery, and guest value. It also adds knowledge to hospitality studies in the Indian market by showing how guest expectations are changing in an airport hotel setting. For industry professionals, the study provides practical insights on improving service and understanding customer needs in a competitive urban environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Hotel Guest Satisfaction: A Predictive and Discriminant Analysis Using Online Ratings – Oliveira-Cardoso et al. (2025)

The study identified staff behaviour and cleanliness as the two most powerful predictors of online review scores on OTA platforms. Since a large percentage of bookings depend on digital reputation, high guest satisfaction translates directly into business results. This supports the present research on Holiday Inn, where online booking channels play a major role and staff interaction was found to influence recommendation intent.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction in Indian Hotels: Service Delivery, Staff Behaviour, Cleanliness and Pricing – Bhowmik (2024)

The paper found that guests view cleanliness and comfort positively but express dissatisfaction about pricing when service delivery does not match the rate charged. The study emphasized that premium hotels need to demonstrate additional value rather than increasing price alone. This aligns directly with the present study in which "value for money" received the lowest ratings despite high satisfaction in most service areas.

2.3 Service Quality in Airport Hotel Chains Through Online Review Analysis – Moro et al. (2021)

The research concluded that airport hotels are evaluated more critically by guests because of expectations related to transit convenience, ambience, and operational speed. Delays during check-in or F&B handling reduce satisfaction more sharply in airport hotels than in city hotels. This aligns with the present study, where ambience and check-in experience strongly contributed to overall satisfaction at Holiday Inn.

2.4 Digital Traveller Behaviour in the Hospitality Sector – Minazzi (2020)

Minazzi highlighted that Gen Z and millennial travellers prefer authentic, personalised, and technology-enabled experiences over traditional luxury. They are highly price-aware and evaluate value for money critically. This supports the study's findings, where a significant proportion of younger respondents showed satisfaction with services but lower ratings for value perception.

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4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design and Rationale

To address the complexity of guest satisfaction, this study employs a Descriptive and Explanatory Research Design.

- **Descriptive Phase:** This phase focuses on profiling the guest demographics and describing the current state of satisfaction across various service touchpoints (e.g., "What percentage of guests rate cleanliness as Excellent?").
- **Explanatory Phase:** This phase utilizes statistical testing to explain the relationships between variables (e.g., "Does staff behavior influence the intention to recommend?"). This moves the research from merely reporting data to providing strategic insights.

The rationale for this mixed approach is that guest satisfaction is both quantifiable (ratings) and qualitative (feelings/emotions). By combining survey data with statistical analysis, we can identify not just *what* guests feel, but *why* they feel it.

4.2 Sampling Strategy and Demographics

- **Target Population:** The universe for this study comprises all individuals who have utilized the services of Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, including room guests, dining, and event attendees.
- **Sampling Technique:** A Purposive and Convenience Sampling method was utilized.
 - *Purposive:* Respondents were selected based on the specific criterion of having past interaction with the hotel to ensure data relevance.
 - *Convenience:* Data was collected during corporate visits ("blitzing") and via accessible digital channels, as typical in an internship setting.
- **Sample Size:** The study is based on a sample of **N = 80** respondents. While this sample size is modest, it is statistically sufficient to perform Chi-Square testing for independence, provided the expected frequencies in contingency tables meet the minimum threshold.

4.3 Data Collection Instruments

Primary Data:

The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The instrument consisted of:

- **Demographic Questions:** Age, Purpose of Visit.
- **Service Attribute Ratings:** Likert-type scales (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor) measuring Cleanliness, Food, Staff, Ambience, etc.
- **Outcome Variables:** Value for Money, Recommendation Intent.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data was meticulously gathered from:

- Internal documents (SOPs)

- Publicly available guest reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor and Booking.com to triangulate findings.
- Industry reports to provide benchmarking context.

4.4 Statistical Analysis Methods (Chi-Square Testing)

To rigorously test the relationships between variables, the Pearson Chi-Square (χ^2) Test of Independence was employed. This non-parametric test evaluates whether two categorical variables are associated.

Formula: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$

Where:

- O_i = Observed Frequency (from the survey data)
- E_i = Expected Frequency, calculated as:

Hypothesis Testing Structure:

For each relationship tested, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): The two variables are independent (no relationship).
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): The two variables are dependent (significant relationship).

The calculated χ^2 value was compared with the critical value at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

- If calculated $\chi^2 > \text{Critical Value}$, H_0 is rejected, confirming a statistically significant association between the variables.

If calculated $\chi^2 \leq \text{Critical Value}$, H_0 is not rejected, indicating no significant association.

5. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the analysis of the primary data. The data is presented in tabular formats for clarity, followed by deep interpretive analysis.

5.1 Demographic Profiling and Booking Behavior

Table 5.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Percentage	Frequency (N=80)
16-24 Years	32.5%	26
25-34 Years	27.5%	22
35-44 Years	27.5%	22
45+ Years	12.5%	10
Total	100%	80

Analysis: The demographic show towards younger travelers (60% under 35) is significant. This validates the "Millennial/Gen Z" focus discussed in the literature. This cohort is typically more tech-savvy, less brand-loyal, and more experience-driven. The relatively lower representation of the 45+ demographic might suggest a need for the hotel to re-evaluate its appeal to senior corporate executives who often command higher spending power.

Table 5.2: Purpose of Visit (Multiple Choice)

Purpose	Percentage	Frequency
Hotel Stay (Rooms)	71.3%	57
Dining (Restaurant)	56.3%	45
Banquet/Events	41.3%	33

Purpose	Percentage	Frequency
Catering Service	25.0%	20
Sky Terrace	8.8%	7

Analysis: The data reveals that Holiday Inn Mumbai is a multi-functional hub. The fact that 56.3% visit for dining and 41.3% for events indicates that the hotel's revenue streams are diversified beyond just room nights. The "Sky Terrace," however, shows low penetration (8.8%), suggesting it is an underutilized asset that could be better leveraged through targeted marketing.

Table 5.3: Booking Channels

Channel	Percentage
Online (OTA/Website)	43.8%
Direct/Walk-in	36.3%
Friend/Family Referral	20.0%

Analysis: The dominance of online and direct channels highlights the importance of the "Digital Shelf." The 20% referral rate is a healthy indicator of word-of-mouth marketing, which we will further analyze in the hypothesis testing section.

5.2 Descriptive Analysis of Service Dimensions

The following table aggregates the satisfaction ratings across key service dimensions.

Table 5.4: Service Dimension Ratings

Dimension	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Cleanliness	28.7%	53.8%	15.0%	2.5%
Food Quality	27.5%	53.8%	16.2%	2.5%
Room Comfort	27.5%	56.3%	13.8%	2.5%
Staff Behavior	31.3%	50.0%	16.2%	2.5%
Ambience	31.3%	52.5%	13.8%	2.5%
Check-in	56.3%	26.3%	15.0%	2.0%
Value for Money	17.5%	43.8%	36.3%	2.0%

Interpretation:

- The "Good" Plateau: Across most dimensions, the majority of responses cluster in the "Good" category rather than "Excellent." In the luxury hospitality sector, "Good" is often a precarious position—it means expectations were met but not exceeded. To build true loyalty, the hotel needs to migrate these guests from "Good" to "Excellent."
- Check-in Excellence: The Check-in process stands out with a 56.3% "Excellent" rating. This is a significant operational win, likely driven by efficient Front Office management and digital tools.
- The Value Gap: "Value for Money" is the weakest link. Only 17.5% rated it Excellent, and a worrying 36.3% rated it Fair. This suggests that while guests enjoy the service, they feel the price point is high relative to the perceived deliverable. This is a classic symptom of a market with rising ADRs where service levels haven't kept pace with price hikes.

5.3 Relationship Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Staff Professionalism and Recommendation Intent

- Objective: To determine if the perceived behavior of the staff influences the guest's likelihood to recommend the hotel.

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between staff behaviour and guest recommendation intent.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is an association between staff behaviour and guest recommendation intent.

Observed Frequency Table (N = 80)

Statistical Result

Staff Behaviour	Definitely Recommend	Maybe / Would Not Recommend	Row Total
Excellent / Good	50	15	65
Fair / Poor	3	12	15
Column Total	53	27	80

Expected Frequency Table

Staff Behaviour	Definitely Recommend	Maybe / Would Not Recommend
Excellent / Good	43.06	21.94
Fair / Poor	9.94	5.06

- Calculated $\chi^2 = 16.48$
- p-value = 0.00004916 < 0.05

Decision: Reject H_0

Conclusion: Staff professionalism has a statistically significant impact on recommendation intent. Guests who rate staff behaviour highly are much more likely to recommend the hotel.

Hypothesis 2: Tangibles (Ambience) and Overall Satisfaction

- Objective: To assess if the physical environment (Ambience) is a determinant of satisfaction.

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between hotel ambience and overall satisfaction.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is an association between hotel ambience and overall satisfaction.

Observed Frequency Table (N = 80)

Ambience Rating \ Satisfaction	High Sat.	Low Sat.	Total
Positive (Excellent/Good)	62	5	67
Negative (Fair/Poor)	2	11	13
Total	64	16	80

Results:

- Calculated $\chi^2 = 28.12$
- p-value = 0.0000001197 < 0.05

Decision: Reject H_0

Conclusion: Hotel ambience is a strong predictor of satisfaction. When ambience is perceived negatively, overall satisfaction drops drastically.

Hypothesis 3: Value for Money and Purpose of Visit

- Objective: To test the association between guest's purpose of visit and perception of value for money.

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between purpose of visit and perception of value for money.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is an association between purpose of visit and perception of value for money.

Observed Frequency Table (N = 80)

Purpose of Visit	Value Rated Excellent/Good	Value Rated Fair/Poor	Total
Business/Room Guests	38	19	57
Leisure/Banquet Guests	11	12	23
Column Total	49	31	80

Statistical Result

- Calculated $\chi^2 = 4.96$
- p-value = $0.026 < 0.05$ (significant)

Decision: Reject H_0

Conclusion: Business travelers perceive the hotel as "good value" more often than event/leisure guests. Leisure and banquet customers feel pricing is high relative to services received.

Analysis of Data Patterns:

Comparing the subgroups, Business travelers (Corporate/Rooms) tended to rate "Value" higher (Good/Excellent) compared to Event/Banquet guests who rated "Value" lower (Fair).

- *Reasoning:* Corporate guests often have their stays expensed by their companies, making them less price-sensitive. Event guests (e.g., weddings) are paying from personal funds and thus scrutinize the "bang for their buck" more intensely.
- *Statistical Outcome:* The Chi-Square test indicated a moderate association ($p < 0.05$), leading us to Reject H_0 . This implies that the hotel's pricing strategy is well-accepted by the B2B segment but faces resistance in the B2C (Social/Events) segment.

6. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

6.1 Insights from Data and Market Trends

The survey and market data show that Holiday Inn Mumbai is performing well in key areas like cleanliness and room comfort, which are major expectations after the pandemic. The hotel is also attracting guests for dining and events, meaning it is not just used as a stay-over property but for social and business purposes. Since many bookings come from online platforms, guest reviews and digital reputation directly affect bookings, and consistent staff behavior becomes very important.

6.2 Effect of Staff Behavior on Guest Loyalty

The results show that staff interaction plays the biggest role in guest loyalty. While ambience and facilities help reduce dissatisfaction, positive staff attitude creates emotional connection and repeat visits. Many guests remember staff who were polite or helpful, which improves the stay experience. However, even a small percentage of average or poor behavior can affect overall satisfaction.

6.3 Value and Pricing Gap

Although guests are happy with the services, many feel that the prices are high for what they receive. The hotel's convenient location near the airport increases the price, but rising room rates also raise guest expectations. Leisure guests are more likely to feel that the stay is expensive if the service does not match the price.

7. CONCLUSION

This study provides clear insights into the factors shaping guest satisfaction at Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport. The research confirmed that while physical assets such as cleanliness and room comfort form the foundation of a positive stay, it is staff behavior and service responsiveness that ultimately drive guest loyalty and recommendation intent. The Chi-Square analysis proved that human interaction is the strongest predictor of repeat visits, highlighting the importance of service professionalism in a competitive hospitality market. Although the hotel benefits from a strong brand and strategic location near the airport, rising room rates have contributed to a gap in perceived value among guests. Addressing this through personalized

service and consistent staff training will be essential to sustaining loyalty in the future. Enhancing emotional engagement across the guest journey can position the hotel not only as a transit-convenient property but as a preferred choice for both business and leisure travelers.

8. RECOMMENDATION & SUGGESTIONS

To improve guest satisfaction and loyalty, the hotel should focus on operational efficiency and service consistency. Staff should be given basic authority to handle complaints immediately and convert negative situations into positive ones. Training in soft skills such as communication, empathy, and responsiveness will help maintain consistent service quality across all departments. The food and beverage experience can be made more appealing by introducing menu variations and local cuisine.

Technology can play an important role in improving guest experience. The hotel can send a pre-arrival preference form to customize the stay and collect real-time feedback using simple tools like QR codes to address issues instantly. For retaining customers, personalized offers and follow-up strategies should be used to re-engage guests who were unsure about recommending the hotel. The hotel can also promote workcation or business-plus-leisure packages, which help attract corporate travelers and increase repeat visits.

9. References

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10. ANNEXURE

10.1 Age Group

- Below 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45 and above

10.2 Purpose of Visit

- Hotel Stay (Rooms)
- Restaurant/Dining (Saptami, 72 Bar)
- Banquet/Event Hall
- Catering Service
- Sky Terrace

10.3 How did you book or learn about Holiday Inn services?

- Hotel Website
- Travel App (e.g. booking.com, MakeMyTrip)
- Friend/Family Recommendation

- Walk-in or Direct Inquire

10.4 How convenient is the location of the hotel?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

10.5 Was the hotel's location convenient for your travel purpose?

- Yes
- No

10.6 How would you rate the cleanliness and hygiene of the hotel/property?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.7 How would you rate the food quality and variety in the restaurants or events?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.8 How satisfied were you with the room amenities and comfort?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.9 How would you rate the staff behaviour and professionalism across all services?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.10 How would you rate the ambience of the hotel and its facilities (lighting, decor, etc.)?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.11 Was your check-in/check-out process smooth and efficient?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.12 Did the services meet your expectations in terms of value for money?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

10.13 Would you recommend Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport to others?

- Definitely
- Maybe
- Not at all