

## **Hotel Reviews and Ratings and their Impact of Hotel Booking Behavior of Travelers: An Empirical Study**

**Divya Punj**

Asst. Professor, School of Management, Graphic Era Hill University,  
Dehradun Uttarakhand India

### **Abstract**

Travelers in India make substantial use of hotel reviews and ratings when making their reservations. In the current digital era, prospective customers significantly rely on online evaluations to research hotels before making a reservation. Travelers are more likely to pick one hotel over another when there are many favorable reviews and high ratings. When evaluating hotel reviews, visitors to India frequently take into account elements like cleanliness, service excellence, amenities, location, and value for money. Their decision-making process is significantly influenced by favorable evaluations that highlight exceptional customer service, cozy lodgings, and positive experiences. On the other hand, unfavorable evaluations can discourage prospective visitors from reserving a hotel due to worries about the establishment's cleanliness, subpar service, or other problems. Additionally, as a quick reference for assessing hotels, tourists rely on reviews posted by trustworthy websites or booking engines. The likelihood that a hotel will have more reservations increases with a higher average rating, which reflects the property's general quality and satisfaction level. Indian hoteliers are aware of the value of reviews and ratings, and they frequently work to preserve excellent visitor experiences in order to get positive evaluations and enhance their online reputation. Additionally, they take the time to respond to customer comments, immediately resolving any issues and exhibiting their dedication to ensuring that customers are satisfied.

**Keywords:** Hotel reviews, Hotel ratings, Behaviour of travelers, Online evaluations, Customer service, Online reputation, Hotel booking.

### **Introduction**

The impact of internet reviews' "helpfulness" and "representation" in foreseeing hotel booking intentions in the Indian setting, according to Ghosh (2018), was extensively addressed. Reviews and Ratings have a big impact on how people behave while traveling. It emphasized how important it was for Indian travelers to read online evaluations before making a booking. Hotel booking intentions were significantly influenced by the perceived "helpfulness" of reviews. Travelers largely depended on evaluations that were deemed "helpful" in supplying pertinent and important information. The service quality, cleanliness, amenities, and location of the hotel were just a few of the components of the hotel experience that were discussed in these evaluations. Potential guests were more persuaded to stay at a hotel by positive reviews that praised these aspects as good or excellent due to the impression they got of the property's comprehensive excellent service and value for money. Travellers were more likely to consider hotels that received such excellent recommendations because they thought they were more reputable and trusted options. It is impossible to overstate the influence of internet reviews as word-of-mouth recommendations since they provide potential customers with confidence and a sense of social proof. The effect of these variables on hotel reservation behavior implies that Indian tourists give consideration to other people's experiences and opinions while making judgements. Due to the availability of online evaluations and ratings, tourists can obtain information and base their decisions on the common experiences of past visitors. Positive evaluations and high ratings work as indicators of excellence and contentment, enhancing the attraction of hotels and boosting the possibility that guests would make reservations.

Litvin (2019), based on the significance of cultural diversity, found that cultural elements like autonomy and distance from power influenced the language and tone of hotel evaluations. It was shown that visitors

from India were more likely to post reviews that highlighted cultural elements like hospitality, cuisine, and local experiences. Reviews are a crucial tool for comprehending and respecting the preferences of potential travelers because these cultural quirks affect their perceptions and expectations. In addition, Chan et al. (2017) assessed the impact of reader-reviewer similarity on the relationship between online reviews and intention to book a hotel. They emphasized that reviews made by people who shared comparable demographic traits, such as age, gender, and nationality, were more likely to have an impact on Indian consumers. Travelers were more likely to trust and take the reviewers' thoughts into account when making a reservation when they felt more in common with them. This highlighted the significance of customization and targeted marketing techniques in meeting the unique demands and tastes of Indian travelers.

### **Literature Review**

According to Garg and Pandey (2020), personal identifying information moderating impact on travel-related decisions was shown. They focused on how individual identifying information, such as "age," "gender," and "occupation," affects how Indian travelers perceive hotels and make reservations. The responses to evaluations and ratings were significantly influenced by personal identifying information, they showed. Younger travelers, for instance, were more likely to be persuaded by hotel reviews that emphasized their fashionable and contemporary amenities, whilst older travelers tended to place a higher value on comfort and convenience. The "occupation" aspect also came into play, with business travelers emphasizing elements like closeness to facilities and business centers.

Siddiqi and Akhtar (2021) focused on the moderating effect of managers' responses in reducing the impact of inconsistent reviews. The effectiveness of managers' reactions, they claimed, was critical in resolving mindset uncertainty and affecting booking selections when there were contradicting reviews available. The potential visitors were more likely to have a favorable opinion of the hotel's service and feel confident making a reservation if managers responded promptly and satisfactorily to issues expressed in contradictory reviews. In contrast, insufficient or insensitive management created attitude ambivalence and raised the possibility that prospective guests would look for alternate lodging.

El-Said (2020) also assessed the moderating effects of "brand image," "star category," and "price" on the influence of internet reviews on hotel booking intention. The impact of online reviews was found to be significantly influenced by brand image. Positive-driven potential customers who used reviews to validate their impressions of the hotel's caliber were more inclined to choose hotels with a strong brand image. A hotel's "price" and "star category" both had a moderating impact. Positive online reviews increased the perceived value and allure of the hotel to potential customers, therefore hotels with higher ratings and those with competitive pricing were more likely to benefit. According to Amin et al. (2021), "website quality" had a significant impact on customers' decision to book. Potential guests' opinions of a hotel were positively influenced by a user-friendly website design, simple navigation, and educational content, which increased their propensity to make a reservation. A stronger intention to book is also a result of "social presence," which also includes interactive elements and the ability to communicate with the hotel through social media platforms. Additionally, "affective commitment," which denotes an emotional bond and devotion to a hotel, and "e-trust," the assurance in the safety and dependability of online transactions, had a big impact on booking intentions. Bookings for hotels in India were more likely to come from websites that created a sense of commitment and trust among prospective visitors.

With a focus on the mediating role of "brand image," Chakraborty and Biswal (2020) were aware of the ways in which customer reviews online affected Indian consumers' decision-making about bookings and whether brand reputation had any impact on this relationship. They found that consumers' perceptions and inclinations to make hotel reservations were significantly influenced by online reviews. Positive reviews

served as social evidence, boosting future visitors' trust and confidence in the hotel. A focus on "attitude ambivalence" and the behavioral effects of hotel reviews has been shown by Akhtar et al. (2020). To comprehend the effects of hotel reviews on the attitudes and subsequent actions of potential visitors. Negative hotel evaluations frequently cause "attitude ambivalence" in prospective visitors. There was ambiguity due to divergent viewpoints and varied assessments.

According to Blal and Sturman (2014), online reviews' "quality" and "quantity" both had a big impact on how many hotel rooms were sold. Positive reviews that emphasized the "quality" of a hotel's offerings, including service, amenities, and cleanliness, had a positive impact on prospective visitors' opinions and raised the likelihood that they would make a reservation. Furthermore, a greater "quantity" of reviews, which reflects popularity and social proof, had a favorable effect on hotel room sales. As a result of the confidence and validation that a high number of favorable evaluations offered regarding the hotel's caliber, prospective customers were more likely to believe in and select those establishments. The impact of online reviews on customers' assessments of the caliber of a hotel's service and their ability to affect these assessments was examined by Browning et al. (2013). They showed that consumer attributions were significantly influenced by online reviews. Customers' impressions of the quality of the services grew thanks to favorable reviews, which also reinforced their expectations for high levels of customer service. Negative evaluations, on the other hand, had the exact opposite effect, lowering expectations and perceptions of the quality of the services. They emphasized how online reviews can have a significant impact on how travelers perceive and anticipate the kind of service they would receive from hotels, which in turn affects how they make trip reservations. When making hotel reservations in India, Mitra and Khamkar (2021) looked into how guests perceive hotel amenities, service standards, and online reviews. They looked into how these elements affected the choices made by travelers. They observed that hotel "amenities," such as cozy beds, orderliness, and Wi-Fi connectivity, had a significant impact on prospective customers' opinions and reservation choices. These amenities were reinforced as important, and the likelihood of booking rose by favorable internet reviews that highlighted them.

**Objective:**

To measure the Impact of Hotel Reviews and Ratings on Hotel Booking Behavior of Travelers

**Methodology:**

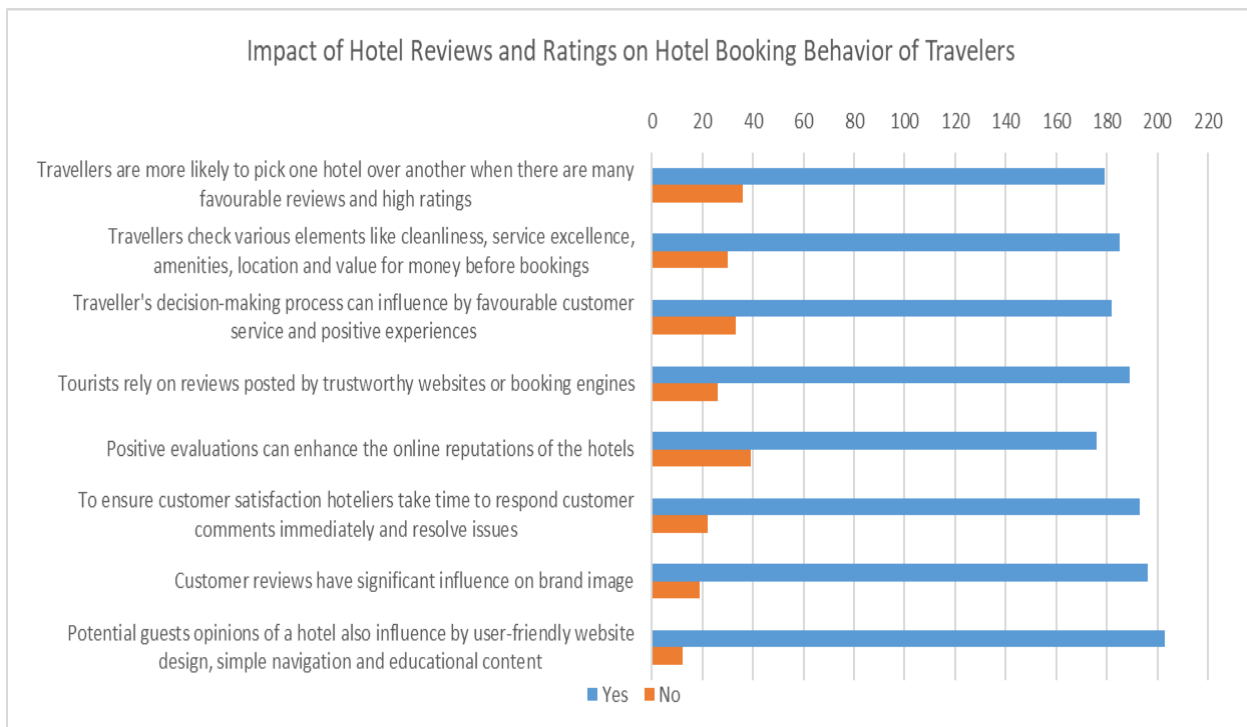
The nature of the study is descriptive where data is collected from the 215 respondents to examine the impact of hotel reviews and ratings on hotel booking behavior of travelers. A checklist technique was used to examine and depict the data. In a checklist technique, respondents designate “Yes” or “No” for all the questions.

**Data Analysis and Interpretations:**

**Table 1 Impact of Hotel Reviews and Ratings on Hotel Booking Behavior of Travelers**

SL No.	Impact of Hotel Reviews and Ratings on Hotel Booking Behaviour of Travelers	Yes	% Yes	No	% No	Total
1	Travellers are more likely to pick one hotel over another when there are many favourable reviews and high ratings	179	83.26	36	16.74	215

2	Travellers check various elements like cleanliness, service excellence, amenities, location and value for money before bookings	185	86.05	30	13.95	215
3	Traveller's decision-making process can influence by favourable customer service and positive experiences	182	84.65	33	15.35	215
4	Tourists rely on reviews posted by trustworthy websites or booking engines	189	87.91	26	12.09	215
5	Positive evaluations can enhance the online reputations of the hotels	176	81.86	39	18.14	215
6	To ensure customer satisfaction hoteliers take time to respond customer comments immediately and resolve issues	193	89.77	22	10.23	215
7	Customer reviews have significant influence on brand image	196	91.16	19	8.84	215
8	Potential guests opinions of a hotel also influence by user-friendly website design, simple navigation and educational content	203	94.42	12	5.58	215



**Figure 1 Impact of Hotel Reviews and Ratings on Hotel Booking Behavior of Travelers**

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the impact of hotel reviews and ratings on hotel booking behavior of travelers. It was found that around 94.4% respondents believe that potential guests opinions of a hotel influence by user-friendly website design, simple navigation and educational content, Customer reviews have significant influence on brand image (91.1%), To ensure customer satisfaction hoteliers take time to respond customer comments immediately and resolve issues (89.7%), Tourists rely on reviews posted by trustworthy websites or booking engines (87.9%), Travelers check various elements like cleanliness, service excellence, amenities, location and value for money before bookings (86.0%), Traveler's decision-making process can influence by favorable customer service and positive experiences (84.6%), Travelers are more likely to pick one hotel over another when there are many favorable reviews and high ratings (83.2%) and Positive evaluations can enhance the online reputations of the hotels (81.8%).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, hotel reviews and ratings significantly impact Indian travellers' decision-making regarding their bookings. These reviews have a huge impact on how prospective guests decide to stay, thus their significance should not be understated. For guidance and to guarantee a pleasant stay, travelers primarily rely on the experiences of past visitors. The purpose and significance of hotel reviews and ratings is in their capacity to give visitors real-world, unbiased perceptions of a hotel's features and services, including cleanliness, amenities, location, and overall guest satisfaction. Positive feedback frequently inspires trust and confidence, which motivates guests to reserve a specific hotel. On the other hand, unfavorable evaluations can turn away potential visitors and result in a cancellation. Online platforms and travel websites have made it simpler for travelers to read and exchange hotel evaluations and ratings in the digital era. In order to compare options before making a reservation, travelers can now access a plethora of information from other visitors. By democratizing information, travelers are given more power and a say in how hotels are perceived and perform. Positive evaluations are valued by hotels; thus they frequently work to uphold strict standards in order to get good reviews. Strong reviews help develop a strong brand image and foster client loyalty in addition to bringing in more reservations. In essence, travelers in India now rely on reviews and ratings of hotels as essential resources that affect the way they book hotels. In today's fiercely competitive hospitality sector, where travelers look for assurance and validation from other people's experiences, hotels must actively manage their internet reputation to draw in and keep customers.

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