SATISFACTION LEVEL OF FOREIGN TOURIST WITH REGRAD TO HOTEL SERVICES IN AGRA AND KHAJURAHO – A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract:

Having taken in to consideration the significance of hotels in the success of a destination, as also, the vitality of guest satisfaction in the sustained prosperity of a hotel, it was found imperative to work on the problem related to customer satisfaction with relation to hotel services of a popular destinations. Assuming that majority of foreign (Western) tourists stay in quality hotels, on account of the favorable exchange rates *vis a vis* the very way of life, it was considered pertinent to concentrate on at least two five star hotels for case study. The objective of this research work is to scrutinize the guest satisfaction level from the gaps existing between the expectation and the perception of different services received at the leading hotel chains for the destination Agra and Khajuraho. The researcher got 265 and 210 respondents from Agra and Khajuraho, and questionnaire sent by the e-mail was 170 and 150 in that order from the guests from leading hotel chains from two tourist destination network falling under the tourist category with superior and luxury facilities. The research work was carried out in two different stages one before check-in and another after check-out The outcome suggested that there was a slight difference in the ranking of attributes, whether by category, or by hotel. Simultaneously the Spearman test confirmed that the satisfaction level of the guest did not change much when the category of the hotel was changed. In general evaluation by guests, from the gaps calculated, in thirteen of the attributes the performance of the hotels surpassed customer expectations.

Key Words: Customer Satisfaction, hotel services, hotel chains, and tourist

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, tourism as an industry has been recognized as a strong economic force. Undoubtedly it has now assumed magnanimous propositions not only in economic terms but also as a strong influence on the Socio-cultural and environmental perspectives. Having had its genesis in primitive *nomadism*, tourism in the form of travel grew strength by strength through the ages along with the progressive civilization.

Obviously, due to the 'antiquated means of transport,' lack of way side facilities, safety and security' and, non-availability of 'discretionary money and time' during earlier phases of history, 'travel' largely remained the privilege of elite and well to do class of society who could afford to buy the conveniences (Kandari 1984).

In fact, the interplay of technological advancement and industrialization has made travel and tourism both a 'convenience', and 'compulsion' to the modern society (Kandari, 1984).

At a time, when world tourism trends are steadily tilting particularly towards the developing countries of Asia-Oceania region of the world where India is inherently the most favoured destination of the emerging tourist market – *increasingly inclined towards adventure, pure nature and old world culture, it obviously becomes high time to explore country's dramatic tourism potential, create infrastructural provisions on priority basis and effectively market its strengths in order to earn its rightful place in international market of tourism. This, in turn, makes it vitally important to initiate micro and macro level applied tourism research on all vital dimensions ranging from geographic, socio-economic, cultural and even ecological to destination planning and marketing. Realizing this fact vis-à-vis being resident of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are consequently the inherent basic knowledge on the various touristic aspects of the state complemented by the innate zeal to contribute in its steady betterment.*

Agra and Khajuraho are two prominent cultural destinations within the country in two different states, which have emerged as the most preferred destinations by the international and domestic travelers alike. The Taj Mahal at Agra and unique sculptures of Temples at Khajuraho attracts thousands of visitors every year. The monuments have been listed as Worlds Heritage Sites and perhaps due to the uniqueness in the tourism appeal several big and small hotel establishments have ventured to business at these destinations.

1.1 Selection of Problem:

▪ *In the light of the above discussion it was felt imperative to select an applied theme related to hospitality research. A study of Assessment of satisfaction level of foreign tourists visiting especially Agra and Khajuraho with regard to Hotel Services was conceived.*

▪ *It becomes imperative to ascertain the level of satisfaction that may be derived generally by the tourists, which in turn is the decisive factor for visiting a destination. The range and choice of attractions, amenities, products and services available at the destination happens to be core factor for guest satisfaction.*

▪ *The study of satisfaction level of the tourist with regard to various tourism related services, amenities and environments, directly denotes the degree of amendments required in the concerned perspectives. The levels of satisfaction of different group of tourists or individuals, in accordance to expectation, are bound to differ with the ingredients of the tourist plant. The study of satisfaction level enables to understand, at least, the major areas generally given higher importance by the tourist and thus may provide important clues on the part of tourist plant / services / environment that need greater and immediate attention. It has been observed that consistency in quality along with continuous efforts towards improvement in the existing products, services, amenities, facilities and, most importantly, human capital catering to the tourists, directly or indirectly, ensures an optimally higher degree of satisfaction of the tourists with regard to the destination which, in turn, guarantees its long-term success.*

▪ *The inter-relationship between expectation and satisfaction levels will be cross-examined with the objective of pragmatically understand the symbiosis and inter-relationship between these two factors, besides finding out the prevailing gap (if any) between the two with relation to various tourist plant facilities/amenities /appeal/environment in the context of the study area. Therefore, it was considered pertinent to study the satisfaction levels of foreign tourists visiting Agra & Khajuraho, so as to derive genuine conclusions.*

1.2 Objective of Study

The objective of the study is to assess the satisfaction levels of foreign tourist visiting Agra & Khajuraho, and as well explore the reasons for their respective satisfaction levels, identify the factors responsible for

their moderate satisfaction to dissatisfaction and accordingly suggest viable strategies to ensure an enriched overall touristic experience to them.

The overall objective can be:

- *to measure the satisfaction level of foreign tourists with relation to the goods, services, attractions, activities and inter-actions experienced by them,*

- *to survey and prepare an inventory of the cumulative capacity at Khajuraho & Agra in terms of rooms and other provisions, service packages, quality levels, location and tariff structure, etc.,*

- *make an assessment of the gap (if any) between demand and supply with regard to availability and quality levels of various services offered by hotels at Khajuraho and Agra vis-à-vis growth in tourist traffic,*

- *to understand and analyze the trends in occupancy percentage, in selected hotels of Khajuraho & Agra during different Seasons,*

- *to suggest feasible steps towards abridging the gap between tourist expectations and satisfaction through improvement of various supply components, but strictly within the framework of socio-cultural economic and ecological norms.*

2. STATE OF THE ART (REVIEW OF LITERATURE)

Several studies have been conducted on various aspects of satisfaction level across the globe by social scientist, but not many studies have so far been undertaken either on 'satisfaction' levels of tourists, which incidentally is the most vital aspects of hotel business both from academic and professional point of view. The extreme paucity of literature with regard to the present research problem, particularly in terms of an effective model research is a genuine constraint.

The analysis of services and satisfaction levels of guest has frequently been studied by academics. The service industry occupies a significant place in the world economy and customer satisfaction has been sought out by companies that want to survive in a field of fierce competition. Customer satisfaction is a response to a product or service offered, where the value of the characteristics of the product or service received is evaluated. In this sense, consumer satisfaction is seen as the producer of positive or negative consequences that can determine the weakness or the success of organizations. The tourism sector, formed primarily by services, is currently one of the largest growing sectors. This sector is composed of various

interdependent sub-sectors, such as transportation, accommodation, food, leisure, recreation, among others. The hotel market is considered the 'back bone' of the tourism system.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) define service quality as the result of a comparison between the customer's expectations before experiencing the services and their perception of the actual service experienced. Considering the differences between hotel categories and between hotels of the same category, it is important to investigate which service attributes are more important to guests and to what extent they are satisfied with the service they receive from the hotels of Agra and Khajuraho. Through questionnaires, 514 foreign guests from selected hotels of Agra and Khajuraho, falling into tourist categories, superior and luxury. The sample plan established two collection phases; the first in which guests were interviewed before checking into the hotel and secondly at check out.

Analysis and evaluation of tourism activities - and more specifically in the hospitality industry - are not easy due to the large number of attributes involved, their subjectivity and intangibility. This research represents an exploratory study conducted by one of the basic pillars of the service quality theory in which it can be measured by the difference between expectation (importance) and the actual service (performance). From the manager's perspective, the value of this research is in gaining the knowledge that hotels of a similar or superior category may offer the same service in a different way generating a positive service quality gap for the client. Moreover, the external evaluation provides benchmarking to identify best practices in competing hotels. Therefore, comprehensive understanding of customers' demands on the service quality of different types hotels would contribute to operating management improvement of the hotel industry.

Table - 1 Dimensions and Attributes used in empirical studies

Study	Attributes / Dimensions
Luk (1997), Hong Kong, China	Solving problems, agreeability of the rooms, promotional deals
Kandampully (2000), Austrália	Service, cordiality
O´Neill and Charters (2000), Austrália	Cordiality, level of knowledge of the staff
Juwaheer and Ross (2003), Ilhas Maurícios	Decor, appearance, publicity material, location, natural areas, service, solving problems, closing the bill, menu
Altigan, Akinci and Aksoy (2003), Turquia	Solving problems, agreeability of the rooms, promotional material, staff service, appearance external
Nadiri and Hussain (2005), Chipre	Installations, appearance, service, promotional material
Chen *et al* (2008), Taiwan	43 attributes in five dimensions: empathy, reactivity

	aspects, assurance, reliability and tangibles
Jonsson and Devonish (2007), Barbados	Cleanliness, courtesy, complaints, reservation, promptness, comfort, atmosphere, fixtures, sports, business center, room, price and items complimentary
Oliveira (2001), Foz Iguaçu, Brasil	Installations, service, solving problems, location
Veiga and Farias (2004),Aracaju, Brasil	Air conditioning, service, internet, appearance, structure
Ferreira (2004), Natal, Brasil	Service, cleanliness, environment, breakfast, location, solving problems
Wanderley (2004), SP, Brasil	Price, location, business center
Gonzales (2005) Natal, Brasil	Service, cleanliness, internet, restaurant, bar, breakfast
Robazzi (2006), São Paulo, Brasil	External appearance
Barbosa (2007), São Paulo, Brasil	Service, solving problems
Carvalho (2007), Camboriú, Brasil	Service, agreeability, cleanliness, safety, location, price
Lima (2008), Natal, Brasil	decor, restaurant, maintenance, natural environment, business center

Source: Author

The above table 1, depicts few empirical studies on Dimensions and Attributes pertaining to service and satisfaction guests. Alongside, *Lewis and Pizam* (1982) is indeed a model study as far as the satisfaction level of tourist is concerned. Among a few other studies directly or indirectly dealing with the similar perspectives are by *Pearce* (1982), *Crask* (1981), *Goodrich* (1978) and *Dommermuth* (1984). As far as the data collection and interpretation techniques in the present context are concerned *Daltas* (1971), *Ritchie and Goeldner* (1987), *W.T.O.* (1985), *Britton* (1979), and *Barff et al* (1982) in the subsequent phases of the proposed study.

2.1 Limitation of the Study

As is evident from the above discussion, only a few works are available on the subject of present research. Time, money and manpower again shall be a major constraint area in view of the comprehensively large framework of the present study.

Thus, while researching exclusively the expectation levels of the tourist, the results derived, seldom be always authentic, as such conclusions are likely to be influenced by the aptitude and generic psyche of the individual, and as much by the micro-situations and depending on the modes and chores of the person concerned. Such factors are bound to influence the responses of the respondents with regards to his/her satisfaction level. Since the satisfaction level of the tourists is directly or indirectly guided by the

expectation level, it may affect the complete behavioural pattern of the tourist at a particular time, depending on his current experience. For e.g., when the respondent is unhappy with the behavior of the taxi driver, he/she may negatively mark the attitude of host society or even the quality of the room/room service, though the same might have been positively marked by him/her had he/she been asked the question in a different situation. Thus, the varying degree of anomaly in the responses of the respondents was more or less, along the lines of expectation by the scholar.

In the present study the sample size should have been relatively larger in view of the magnitude of heterogeneity of the universe, as well as, the multiplicity of the variables. However, covering a fair number of samples has been a limiting factor, in the present studies. The same is true in selection of the sampling methods. The possibilities of bias are always prevalent in sampling and more so in convenient sampling. However, it too was not possible for the researcher to single-handedly use the other sampling methods owing to the limitations in terms of time, money, distance and manpower. Secondary data collected from various sources including the Department of Tourism reports, the WTTC and the WTO seldom be considered as technically authentic, since the methods of data collection used by the different agencies are invariables and do not match with each other. However, the scholar had no other alternative but to rely upon the readily available statistics.

3. EMPIRICAL RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Systematic studies needs to be carried out on tourist motivation, expectation and satisfaction level to formulate and implement viable strategies for sustainable development at a given destination. While motivation and the level of expectation of the potential tourists act as a deciding factor in his/her decision to visit, or not to visit, a particular destination or Hotel establishment, the satisfaction level speaks about quality of the composite tourist product i.e., attraction, services and prevailing socio-cultural, economic and ecological environment at the potential destination.

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3.1 Measures of Customer Satisfaction

Guest Comment Cards (GCC) are routinely used as guest satisfaction indices by most hotels. A guest comment card is the card commonly distributed in rooms allowing those guests who wish to do so to respond. Lewis and Pizam (1982) have indicated a growing trend in hotel chains throughout the United States using GCC's to make strategic managerial decisions. After assessing this development, the authors determined that the use of GCCs requires a more disciplined and scientific approach than is currently being used in most hotels. Recent studies in both the United States and the United Kingdom reveal that many hotel chains still use guest satisfaction evaluating methods based on inadequate practices to make increasingly important and complex managerial decisions (Barsky, 1992; Barsky and Huxley, 1992; DeVeau et al., 1996; Jones and Sasser, 1995; Jones and Ioannou, 1993). Despite the diversity of guest satisfaction systems in use, they tend to share a number of common faults (Gilbert and Horsnell, 1998). Common faults were divided into three main areas: quality of the sample, design of the GCCs, and data collection and analysis (Gibert and Horsnell, 1998). Gilbert and Horsnell (1998) developed a GCCs checklist criterion to assess whether current practices for measuring and managing customer satisfaction in mid to luxury UK hotels accurately reflects categories proposed in the checklist.

Owing to the large number of visitors at Agra, 265 responses were obtained from Agra and 210 respondents were at Khajuraho. Incidentally, for the both the only 170 out of the 1000 questionnaire and 150 out of the 1000 questionnaire sent by mail were received back respectively for destination. Among the foreign hotel guests over 20% comprises the French, 13% North America (USA & Canada), 12% British, 11% Italians, 5% Spanish, 3% Germans, 29% South East Asians, Japanese, Koreans and remaining 7% from other countries which includes Australia, South Africa, etc. Relatively higher number of South East Asians particularly Japanese, can be attributed to the fact that Khajuraho is directly connected with a direct flight to Varanasi, which in turn is a tourist destination for popular Buddhist circuit. Prevalence of French on the other hand seems to be their inherent affection for culture particularly art and architecture.

Generally speaking, the criteria with regards to the decision rests on the factors like availability, quality of services, and price structure. Value for money is an essential ingredient with regards to all the market segments – rich or poor. In the context of hotels take for the case study, about 35% respondents claim that they have selected particular hotel on account of range of facilities it claims to offer, followed by the staff efficiency (24%), advice of travel agent (13%), operational policy of the concerned hotel (12%), advertising

(9%), and availability (7%). Seemingly the travel agent's advice seems to have had decisive impact on the on the decision of the prospective customers. Putting it the other way round, the marketing strategy of the destination developer/promoter (DOT, state tourism organisations) come to a question mark! This also speaks comprehensively lesser volume of tourist visits to Khajuraho as against its overwhelming rich potential.

There seems to be strong relationship between the source of information and decision in favor of a hotel. Seemingly 35%, 24%, 13%, 12%, 9% and 7% decisions to occupy hotel have been made on the basis of additional organisation policy, staff, travel agent advice and availability and range of facilities respectively. While all the income groups have more or less similar criterion for selection of hotel the relatively higher income group seems to have gone on favour of facilities and staff performance or say in favour of brand name. Range of facilities seems to have eminent impact on the decision of the perspective hotel client to buy the services of hotel followed by the advice of travel agent 64%. Selection of hotel is as much closer related to income as the occupation of the respondents. Here again in addition to facility 35% and staff 24%, the travel agent advice 13% and organisation policy of the hotel 12% had lasting impact on the decision making of hotels. While as many of foreign guests checking in the hotel prior to their advance reservation, majority of remaining, were of the view that had they been aware of the appeal of this place or its time distance proximity with other tourist destination of India they would have Khajuraho in their original itinerary thus reserved hotel accommodation well in advance. The generic prospective of hotel taken for case study was assessed along 11 parameters i.e. reception- check in/ out, communication centre, housekeeping services, room amenities, heating /cooling provisions, safety and security, shopping arcade, food and beverage, public areas, hygiene and sanitation, recreation centre while there was heterogeneous responses with regards to the satisfaction level of hotel guests, it has been generally observed that communication centre, front office, housekeeping supplies, have been identified as important bottle head in case of concerned hotel. However while majority of foreign tourist rated the destination and the hotel services available there in to be quiet satisfactory, in common places hotel Taj Chandela has been rated to be one of better hotel properties at Khajuraho. Though Holiday Inn, a leading international brand has been operational at Khajuraho for quite some time now, it has been Clarks Khajuraho receiving wider appreciation from the hotel guests. Mainly on account of efficiency of hotel staff, spacious exteriors and relatively moderate tariff unlike, Holiday Inn there is no discotheque either in Chandela or Clarks apart these two multinational hotel chain, the major

bottleneck in case of Holiday Inn seem to be the staff performance and that greater dependence on the trainees coming from various institutions and hotel management located close by. (Table 6.8) provides the satisfaction level of the customer with regards to the various services extended by the three hotels taken for case study.

The Attributes

The composition of the final set of attributes used in this research obeyed the criteria of completeness, specificity and presence in relevant empirical studies. Some attributes were excluded for being juxtaposed or contained in other factors; others for not being compatible with the characteristics of local tourism, based on the binomial, sun and sea. The attributes were then submitted to the analysis of management of four hotels involved in the study, so that their contributions and adaptations to the characteristics of the local market were taken into account. Table 2 shows the set of the 34 factors used in this research.

Table - 2

List of attributes researched

Reception and check in	Pool (cleanliness, safety, agreeability)
Hotel Appearance -- external	Offer of Internet wi-fi
Location	Offer of business center
Safety of the surroundings	Offer of service of bar
Safety in all of the Installations	Offer of service of bar
Safety in all of the installations	Offer of service of restaurants
Staff Appearance	breakfast
Staff Service	Ease of problem solving
Pleasant rooms	Ease of access to higher management
Air conditioning (temp., noise, control)	Execution of service in the allotted time
Cleanliness of the rooms	Social responsibility (sexual tourism and minors)
Sheets, towels, pillow cases	Reduction, reuse and recycling of resources
Pleasant bathrooms	Access infrastructure for physically challenged
Cleanliness and hygiene of the bathrooms	Front desk service
Pleasant common areas	Closing the bill and check out
Cleanliness of common areas	Daily rate per room
Maintenance of green areas	Price of services and products

Source: Author

The universe corresponds to the customers accommodated in the hotels for 60 days, corresponding to the period of the collection of data, throughout the months of July and August of 2012. The only guests who could respond were those that stayed for a minimum of 3 nights in the hotel. In the establishment of the

guest universe the average values from hotel occupancy in 2006 to 2012 were considered, the average number of days stay and the average number of people per room for the hotel chain of the City of Agra and Khajuraho. The data also reveals that the occupancy levels of Hotels in Agra and Khajuraho have been consistently increasing over the years. The occupancy percentage at hotels of Agra have gone up to 96.66 % in year 2012 from 93.47 in the year 2006, similarly the average occupancy at Khajuraho have increased to 92.59 from 89.98 during the corresponding years.

The sample is characterized as non-probabilistic. The guests were chosen for convenience: in the first phase, before check in; in the second phase during or after check out. Deriving from the main objective of the research - to examine the quality of hotel service – two other important specific objectives arise: to understand the perceptions of the guests on the importance of the attributes and to evaluate the performance of each hotel within the same attributes.

Table - 3

Profile of the respondents in each phase: Age, Activity and Income

Age	F1	F2	Activity	F1	F2	Income	F1	F2
Less than 30	29.9	33.2	Self employed	17.6	9.9	< 2 wages	2.5	0.7
30 to 40	28.8	31.1	Business owner	16.7	19.6	2 to 5 wages	23.8	21.7
40 to 50	23.9	20.0	Employees	47.6	51.4	6 to 10 wages	38.2	38.8
More than 50	17.5	15.7	Others	18.1	19.2	> 10 wages	35.6	38.9

Source: Author

Table - 4

Profile of the respondents in each phase: Origin, Motive and Means of Transport

Origin	F1	F2	Motive	F 1	F 2	Transportation	F 1	F 2
North	2.1	2.1	Tourism	88.8	85.8	Car	9.2	6.9
North east	15.8	13.6	Business	6.4	4.2	Plane	90.6	88.2
Central West	11.8	17.2	Conferences	3.6	9.0	Bus	0.3	4.9
South east	55.5	50.5	Health	0.0	0.0	Ship	0.0	0.0
South	12.1	11.9	Other	1.3	1.0	Other	0.0	0.0
Abroad	2.8	4.7						

Source: Author

Hotel Performance by Attribute

Table 5 presents the averages of performance of the 34 attributes evaluated by the respondents. The averages vary from 1.56 (*promotional material*) to 10.00 (*breakfast, closing the bill and the business center*). Some items, such as *offer of business center, bar, restaurant, menu variety* and *access to higher*

management, were not evaluated in two situations: when the hotel does not have these services, in the case of hotel 3B and 3F, or when the guest did not use these services, as is the case of the *access to higher management* in hotel 5A.

Some aspects deserve highlighting, bye the rates of performance considered excellent, such as the attributes *cleanliness of bathrooms, cleanliness of bedrooms, staff appearance, quality of staff service,* and *closing the bill.* However, some attribute deserve highlighting for worst performance, such as the attributes *availability of promotional material, access infrastructure for physically challenged.* The attribute *availability of promotional material* occupies the thirty first place in the ranking of importance, therefore, it is one of the attributes considered least important by the guests of the hotels in this study. However, the attribute *access infrastructure for physically challenged* occupies the third place in the ranking of importance and the general average of performance was 6.28, reaching the rate of 3.85 for hotel 3F.

Table - 5

Averages of General Performance, by Category and by Hotel

ATTRIBUTES	G	C3	C4	C5	3B	3F	4C	4D	5A	5E
Staff appearance	9.51	9.35	9.51	9.68	9.47	9.22	9.62	9.40	9.90	9.46
closing the bill	9.47	9.71	9.71	9.32	9.75	9.66	10.0	9.68	9.43	9.16
Staff service	9.44	9.38	9.32	9.61	9.38	9.39	9.62	9.03	9.90	9.31
Cleanliness of common areas	9.44	9.45	9.43	9.45	9.49	9.40	9.57	9.29	9.50	9.40
maintenance of green areas	9.44	9.35	9.57	9.37	9.00	9.35	9.75	9.37	9.29	9.44
restaurant service	9.44	--	9.18	9.65	--	--	9.35	9.02	9.95	9.33
Cleanliness of bathrooms	9.42	9.42	9.17	9.67	9.60	9.25	9.29	9.05	9.87	9.46
Cleanliness of bedrooms	9.39	9.47	9.05	9.64	9.46	9.49	9.20	8.91	9.88	9.40
bar service	9.39	--	9.37	9.41	--	--	9.56	9.01	9.83	8.87
safety installations	9.28	9.11	9.36	9.36	9.53	8.70	9.48	9.25	9.42	9.29
front desk service	9.28	9.20	9.27	9.36	9.46	8.96	9.23	9.30	9.68	9.01
pleasant common areas	9.26	8.95	9.40	9.44	9.40	8.50	9.57	9.24	9.71	9.16
hotel location	9.20	9.40	9.35	8.85	9.50	9.30	9.44	9.27	9.41	8.30
sheets, towels, pillows cases	9.09	9.18	8.86	9.22	9.32	9.05	9.03	8.69	9.70	8.75
safety surrounding	9.08	9.07	9.11	9.06	9.27	8.87	9.07	9.16	8.70	9.41
reception and check in	9.05	9.26	8.56	9.32	9.19	9.34	9.13	7.99	9.80	8.85
hotel pool	9.04	8.39	9.09	9.58	8.92	7.82	9.17	8.98	9.75	9.44
agreeability of bedrooms	9.02	9.11	8.89	9.06	8.94	9.28	9.02	8.76	9.80	8.32
air-conditioning	8.99	9.18	9.13	8.66	8.70	9.64	9.18	9.09	9.60	7.71
external appearance	8.96	8.32	9.33	9.23	8.89	7.74	9.58	9.09	9.83	8.63
breakfast	8.96	8.14	9.21	9.53	7.41	8.89	9.24	9.17	10.00	9.06
pleasant bathrooms	8.81	8.69	8.74	8.99	9.20	8.19	8.87	8.61	9.41	8.57
service in the allotted time	8.80	8.46	8.84	8.95	7.66	8.52	9.08	8..25	9.54	8.38
combat sexual tourism	8.80	8.20	9.74	8.64	9.72	6.67	9.77	9.72	8.50	8.83
daily rate per room	8.80	8.95	9.09	8.37	9.54	8.35	9.14	9.04	9.03	7.70
menu variety	8.70	--	8.66	8.73	--	--	8.64	8.68	9.02	8.42
waste reduction	8.57	8.17	9.21	8.46	9.52	6.81	8.68	9.59	8.49	8.41
solving problems	8.10	8.32	8.10	7.88	6.83	8.52	8.38	7.03	9.80	7.05
Price for services /	7.82	7.94	8.14	7.41	9.49	6.52	8.11	8.16	7.34	7.48

products										
internet service	7.77	8.42	6.47	8.17	7.76	8.87	5.69	7.30	7.96	8.61
access for physically challenged	7.70	6.57	8.30	8.25	9.30	3.85	8.91	7.70	9.62	6.82
access of business center	7.62	--	9.50	6.68	--	--	10.00	9.33	6.64	7.00
promotional material	7.22	9.17	8.21	4.45	9.00	9.33	7.77	8.45	1.55	7.64
access to higher management	6.70	9.16	8.18	2.28	7.00	9.60	8.66	8.00	--	2.28

Source: Research Scholar

Table 6 presents the gaps in the perception between the guests' expectations and the performance of the attribute evaluated. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Bitner (1985) affirm that the quality of service has been defined as the result of a comparison between the expectations (degree of importance) of a service and what is perceived as received (degree of performance). The positive gap indicates that the performance surpassed expectations. Negative gaps would indicate that the quality of service received is below expectations.

The attribute *safety installations* presented negative gaps in all of the hotels. The greatest was in hotel 3F, with -0.71. In the ranking of importance, this attribute occupies seventh place. Other attributes that presented negative gaps in all of the hotel were: *menu variety, combat sexual tourism, waste reduction, access infrastructure for physically challenged*; highlighted is the last where the gap presented was -5.73 at hotel 3F. It is possible to observe that the greatest negative gap occurred at hotel 5E with the attribute *access to the higher management*. This attribute occupies the 27th place in importance in the ranking of this hotel, therefore making it a part of the least important attributes. The greatest positive gap occurred in the hotel 4C with the attribute *offer of business center*, where this attribute occupies the last place in the ranking of importance of the hotel.

Table - 6

Gaps between the Performance and Expectations

ATTRIBUTES	*G*	*C3*	*C4*	*C5*	*3B*	*3F*	*4C*	*4D*	*5A*	*5E*
Reception and check in	-0.29	0.07	-0.89	-0.07	-0.11	0.25	-0.52	-1.26	0.33	-0.47
external appearance	0.32	-0.03	0.52	0.47	0.37	-0.46	0.75	0.30	1.04	-0.08
hotel location	-0.15	-0.01	-0.08	-0.35	-0.00	-0.02	0.05	-0.21	0.37	-1.08
safety surrounding	-0.42	-0.31	-0.44	-0.52	-0.30	-0.32	-0.60	-0.27	-0.60	-0.44
safety installation	-0.36	-0.40	-0.24	-0.43	-0.08	-0.71	-0.17	-0.32	-0.26	-0.61
promotional material	-0.91	0.94	0.05	-3.58	0.35	1.53	0.53	-0.61	-6.45	-0.41
staff appearance	0.53	0.69	0.19	0.71	0.81	0.56	0.20	0.17	0.76	0.65
staff service	-0.25	-0.20	-0.40	-0.14	-0.33	-0.07	-0.21	-0.60	0.10	-0.39
agreeability of bedrooms	-0.07	-0.11	-0.45	0.34	-0.49	0.25	-0.30	-0.59	1.55	-0.86
Air conditioning	0.04	0.15	-0.04	0.03	-0.49	0.79	0.26	-0.34	1.07	-1.01
cleanliness of bedrooms	-0.40	-0.27	-0.75	-0.17	-0.30	-0.24	-0.63	-0.88	0.13	-0.48
sheets, towel, pillow	-0.09	-0.22	-0.43	0.37	-0.27	-0.16	-0.15	-0.71	1.39	-0.64
pleasant bathrooms	0.10	-0.25	-0.25	0.84	-0.17	-0.34	0.26	-0.78	2.55	-0.86
cleanliness of bathroom	-0.40	-0.34	-0.61	-0.24	-0.20	-0.48	-0.47	-0.75	-0.02	-0.45
pleasant common areas	0.31	0.26	0.09	0.58	0.52	0.00	0.20	-0.01	0.81	0.34
cleanliness common areas	-0.02	0.18	-0.07	-0.16	0.22	0.14	-0.05	-0.10	-0.24	-0.08
maintenance green areas	0.54	0.58	0.29	0.17	0.15	0.66	0.45	0.13	0.81	0.62

hotel pool	0.00	-0.10	-0.01	0.06	0.48	-0.73	-0.46	0.40	0.24	-0.08
internet service	-0.21	0.48	-1.40	0.02	-0.40	1.15	-1.69	-1.06	0.01	0.25
offer of business center	0.92	--	3.32	-0.12	--	--	5.19	1.79	0.92	-0.90
bar service	1.36	--	0.97	1.00	--	--	0.86	0.91	1.98	-0.09
restaurant service	0.68	--	0.17	0.55	--	--	-0.14	0.47	0.41	0.68
menu variety	-0.26	--	-0.63	-0.35	--	--	-0.90	-0.36	-0.52	-0.20
breakfast	-0.71	-1.41	-0.47	-0.22	-2.29	-0.52	-0.49	-0.45	0.25	-0.73
solving problems	-1.46	-1.19	-1.52	-1.67	-2.87	-0.81	-1.38	-1.54	0.34	-2.59
access high management	-1.98	0.57	-0.86	-6.16	-1.94	1.36	-0.25	-1.15	--	-6.50
service in the allotted time	-0.61	-0.73	-0.72	-0.53	-1.71	-0.48	-0.53	-1.27	0.03	-1.09
combat sexual tourism	-1.01	-1.49	-0.10	-1.26	-0.10	-2.88	-0.06	-0.13	-1.37	-1.10
waste reduction	-1.04	-1.17	-0.58	-1.26	-0.17	-2.16	-1.16	-0.15	-1.17	-1.35
access physical challenged	-2.11	-3.14	-1.54	-1.62	-0.55	-5.73	-0.97	-2.11	-0.22	-3.08
front desk service	-0.00	-0.00	-0.27	0.25	0.17	-0.17	-0.22	-0.32	0.63	-0.14
closing the bill	0.02	0.29	-0.26	-0.23	0.37	0.21	0.79	0.00	-0.01	-0.48
daily rate per room	0.02	-0.20	0.78	-0.48	0.25	-0.67	1.57	-0.01	0.96	-1.93
price for services/ product	-0.62	-0.95	0.50	-1.40	0.19	-1.97	1.62	-0.60	-0.63	-2.18

4. SUMMARY

The hotel market in the city of Agra and Khajuraho is highly competitive as tourism contribution is very high in these two cities. The results of a study of this nature can contribute significantly to the improvement of local hotel services and give value to this touristic hub as one of the most important in the country. As an initial objective, it was possible to outline a profile of respondents. As a highlight, the study revealed that the majority of respondents traveled by airplane and came with tourism as their objective.

Another major objective was to evaluate the importance of different attributes from the perspective of the guests. Analyzing the results obtained, it is clear that there was a slight difference in the ranking of attributes, whether by category, or by hotel. However, those that repeat on the highest level of importance, in the selected hotels, were: *cleanliness of the rooms; access infrastructure for physically challenged; combat sexual tourism; breakfast; ease in solving problems; safety within the hotel and in surrounding areas.* In general, the Spearman Test confirmed that the expectations of the guests did not change significantly when the category of the hotel was changed.

The nominal values of the performance measured were high. However, it is necessary to note that five of the nine attributes that were in the greatest negative gaps in quality (performance below expectations) are in the group of the most important attributes for guests: *access infrastructure for physically challenged; combat sexual tourism; breakfast; ease in solving problems;* and, *waste reduction.* The gaps in quality of these attributes vary among hotels and categories. On the other hand, none of the twelve attributes that had the

greatest positive gaps of quality (performance above expectations) are in the most important for guests; on the contrary, nine of them are among the least important to guests.

In the general evaluation by guests, from the gaps calculated, in thirteen of the attributes the performance of the hotels surpassed customer expectations. Of these, *closing the bill*, is found among the most important attributes. On the other hand, within the third with the greatest negative gaps (performance was below expectations), six were found among the most important to customers; these being: *cleanliness of the rooms; access infrastructure for physically challenged; combat sexual tourism; waste reduction; easy problem solving; safety within the hotel and in surrounding areas.*

The empirical study contributed in a significant way to the management of the hotels providing a set of information that revealed the factors most important to customers, the gaps in services offered by the hotels in each attribute and a baseline of best practices in the hotel market. It is fitting, nonetheless, to investigate more deeply to what measure these gaps are significant and through the elaboration of matrixes of opportunities, importance vs performance and importance vs gaps, position each hotel in relation to best practices be they general or within each category. It is important that the companies have an evaluation by their guests and evaluate the services of their competitors, looking for best practices, adjusting conduct and repositioning themselves in the market.

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