

Green Practices: A Study Of Consumer Perception And Preferences In 5 Star Hotels In Pune And Mumbai

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Abstract

This research study provides a brief review of environmental issues in hotels and identifies the green values of the consumers, their level of awareness about environmental issues, green products and practices. Though there are talks in circles about think luxury, think responsibly, being responsible without compromising on guest experience is rather a challenge. Non-Green hotels are not only practicing green initiatives but also encouraging guest's participation. This paper highlights the consumers' perception and preferences towards green practices and products that are currently adopted by 5 star hotels in Pune and Mumbai, with the help of a structured questionnaire.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism, which invariably is a major source of income and employment for many countries, depends heavily on environmental resources that include immaculate beaches, warm climate, clean air, landscape formation among others (Kasimu, Zaitun & Hassan, 2012). Among the various components of tourism, the hotel industry by its virtue of activities constitute a threat to the ecosystem due to its high consumption in energy, water and non-durable goods (Kasimu, Zaleha, & Hassan, 2012; Kasim, 2009). The hotel industry which plays a vital role in the expansion of tourism, is not considered to be the sole polluter of the environment, but does consume a sizable amount of the global resources.

The primary objective of the hotel industry is to provide its guest with a comfortable luxurious stay with ample amount of services and supplies. These services and supplies most importantly include provision of ample amount of water, optimum quality of linen and towels, exotic and good quality food, lighting, air conditioning and transport services. Organizations across the globe, in all sectors, try and develop products and services with reduced environmental impact as a part of socially accountable practices, however organizations additionally also follow safe environment practices so as to ascertain themselves in a very new niche for customers with environmental concerns. Similarly, hotel operators are also well aware of the benefits of Green Practices and the positive impacts of sustainability.

Of late as more environmental awareness in on the rise and newer rules and regulations have been established to protect the environment, hotel guests tend to prefer eco- sensitive hotels or “green hotels” as compared to conventional hotels. A “Green hotel” is defined as an eco-friendly hotel operation that performs various environmentally friendly practices/programs such as saving water/energy, using eco-friendly purchasing policies and reducing emission/waste disposals to protect the natural environment and reduce operational costs (Green Hotel Association, 2008).

Nonetheless conventional or non- green hotels are getting increasingly competitive by blending in with the positive attitude of hotel guests towards accepting green practices.

Unlike conventional hotels, green hotels follow a strict guideline when it concerns the operations of the property. Some of the basic operations adopted by conventional or green hotels with regards to conserving the environment as well are as follows:

- i. Linen reuse programs
- ii. Biodegradable and renewable products
- iii. Water and energy efficiency
- iv. Low emitting
- v. Serving of organic grown food
- vi. Use of renewable energy resources like solar or wind energy.
- vii. Use of non- toxic cleaning and laundry agents.

Since guest pay for high quality of hotel services, which include luxury and pampering, hotels satisfy their guests with a high amount of natural resource consumption in an effort to co relate with quality service. But with the changing trend, environmentally sensitive

customers value the utility of these natural resources and tend to support and preserve them, even if needed at an extra cost.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- I. The environmental concerns in India are increasingly alarming especially in the tourism industry. Guests who visit hotels in India are aware of the environment friendly practices that are adopted (Kamal Manaktola and Vinnie Jauhari,2007). They visit hotels that have adapted green practices without compromising on the quality of service. In their study they also mention that though they would like to use the services of green hotels, they are unwilling to pay an extra amount for the same. The research paper attempts to bring out facts regarding customer purchasing behavior towards green practices in the Indian hotel industry.
- II. Heesup Han et al (2011) in their study endeavored to answer the accompanying examination questions: Do eco-friendly customers who stay at hotels have expectations from green lodging are willing to spend more for the services as well as spread awareness through word of mouth? If things being what they are, which feature of guests attitudes has the best effect? How do their communicated aims contrast crosswise over sexual orientation, age, education, and family wage?; How do such communicated aims contrast with past experience staying at a green hotel? Their study showed that eco-friendly intentions of guests did not considerably change across sexual orientation, age, education, and family wage.
- III. Naresh Naik and Abhishek Rao(2014) state that India is a nation with long history and rich social legacies. It has bottomless tourism assets and an extensive variety of tourism offices, making it a standout amongst the most celebrated traveller destinations on the planet. Be that as it may, the proceeding with improvement of the tourism business and its contention with ecological assurance has turned into an issue for some nations. Creating green hotels could be one answer for the issue. Be that as it may, buyers' comprehension of green hotels is very constrained. It was found that customers were not clear about the attributes of a green hotel. Distinctive classifications of customers have diverse observations around a green lodging. Shoppers would like to help and enhance green utilization while lodgings want to fortify administration and offers of green hotels. This Study broke down the familiarity with the general population about Environment-accommodating projects in hotels and degree to which such projects impacted client's lodging choice.
- IV. Nor Azila Mohd Noor, Hasnizam Shaari and Dileep Kumar (2014): The accommodation business overall is being pressurized by numerous strengths to be more ecologically inviting. Lodgings are turning out to be more mindful of their effect and are taking an interest in green activities. As more travellers are turning out to be progressively concerned with regards to nature, it is essential for the lodging business to investigate this idea of green hotels in more detail. In the hotel business, green hotels are characterized as hotel foundations that have made a guarantee to assist in naturally stable practices, for

example, sparing water, vitality, and lessening strong waste. This study analyzes the impact of natural mentalities and inn credits on voyagers' aim to pick green inns as their favoured settlement. The study affirms past discoveries on the relationship between attitudes of guests and eco- friendly measures. The study found a positive and huge relationship of green hotel credits and stay at green lodging among vacationers.

- V. Yong Han Ahn and Annie R. Pearce (2007) in their study state that the hotel business is starting to actualize green configuration and development works which include sparing vitality, water, and assets and along these lines protecting the earth. Moreover, green building also can give strong and pleasant indoor circumstances to hotel tenants including guests and delegates. In any case, there is the potential for strife between green building practices and hotel guests' satisfaction and comfort, as the protection of benefits could detract from the way of a hotel guest's experience. This study speaks of a contextual analysis way to deal with aspects that make a green and rich environment without harming the hotel's money related position. From the point of view of the whole lifecycle of the building, this information was broke down to distinguish green configuration and development that give a green, extravagant environment as well as improve the lodgings' budgetary quality.
- VI. Kasim (2004) studied tourists to Penang Island, Malaysia and found that tourists were sensitive and cared about nature but they did not consider a hotel's environmental technique as a foundation for their hotel choice. This shouldn't imply that that they would not favor of room properties that were ecologically well disposed. Visitors were willing to acknowledge rooms with water sparing elements, reusing receptacles, fire-security features, energy sparing components, and data on nearby ecotourism attractions

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- i. To investigate the level of awareness of an Indian hotel consumers about green practices carried out in a hotel
- ii. The willingness of guests to pay for green practices and services.
- iii. To identify a list of green practices that hotel guests would prefer to have in their hotel.
- iv. To study how guests evaluate the performance of green practices implemented by the hotels.
- v. To study whether the green perceptions in the hotel are different based on the guest's demographic characteristics.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out using the survey strategy, where data was collected from guests who have stayed in 5 star hotels in the cities of Pune and Mumbai. The prime purpose of the study was to ascertain the guests 'awareness of green practices carried out in hotels and their willingness to pay for it. Awareness of customers about the various practices followed in the hotels were analyzed with the help of a closed ended questionnaire. This study selected environmental attributes based action programs. The sampling

population consisted of hotel guests, the questionnaire was also circulated online amongst travellers. The questionnaires were emailed as well to a set of contacts at random. Out of 197 distributed questionnaires, 110 complete questionnaires were analyzed. The respondents were asked to rate the statement on 'hotel green practices as per your preference' on a 5 point scale ranging from most preferred to least preferred. Since the neutral point on the scale was 3, those means above 3 suggests overall positive inclination with the statement.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire involved queries regarding the respondent's age, marital status, city in which they have stayed as guests in 5 star hotels (Pune and /or Mumbai), green practices observed, preferences for the green practices, and willingness to pay an extra amount for these eco-friendly measures.

I. Age Distribution

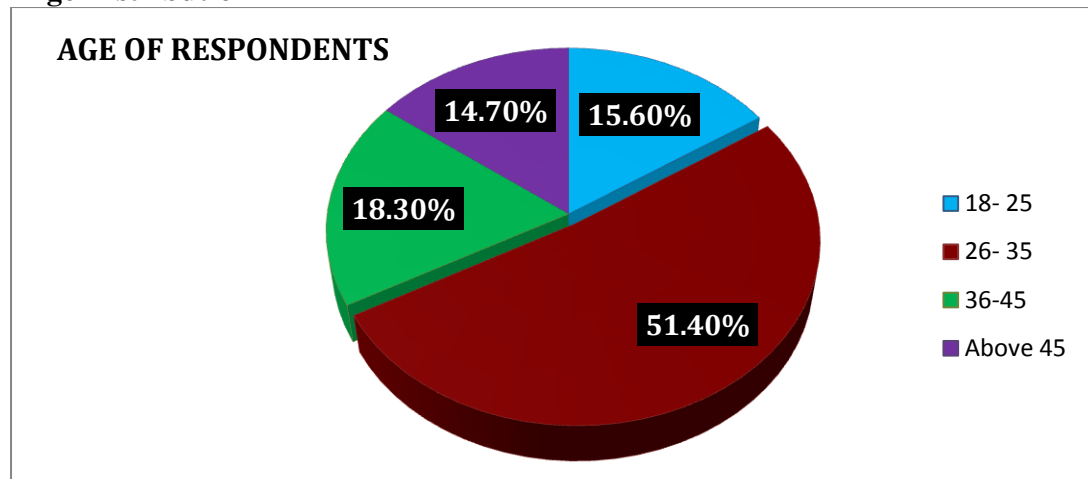


Figure 1: Distribution of sample according to age

According to the results, maximum numbers of respondents were from the age group of 26- 35 years. This shows that the said age group travels and stays most with 5 star hotels in Pune and Mumbai.

II. Gender and Marital Status

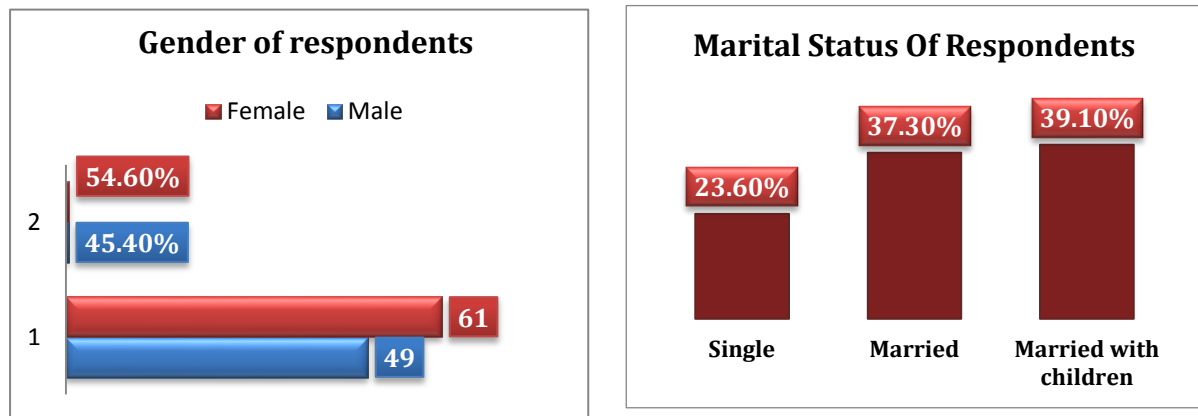


Figure 2: Distribution of sample according to Gender and Marital Status

The majority of the respondents were female (54.60%), as compared to male visitors (45.40%), while most of the respondents were married with children (39.10%). The single respondents were lesser in number (23.60%).

III. City In Which The Guests Have Stayed

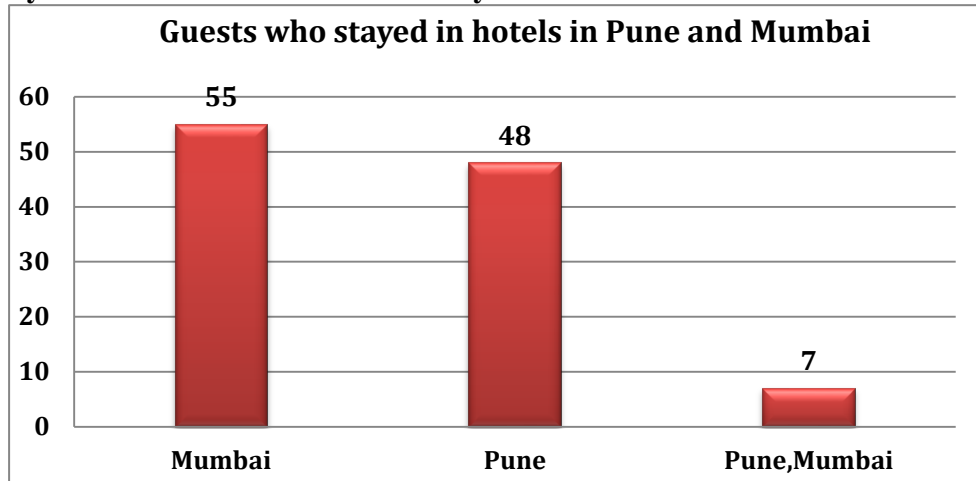


Figure 3: Distribution of sample according to City (Mumbai, Pune, both)

Majority of guests have resided in the city of Mumbai as compared to Pune, wherein 7 guests have resided in hotels in both the cities.



Figure 4: Do you feel that implementing green practices is need of an hour?



Figure 4: Hotels Implemented Green Practices in their day routine

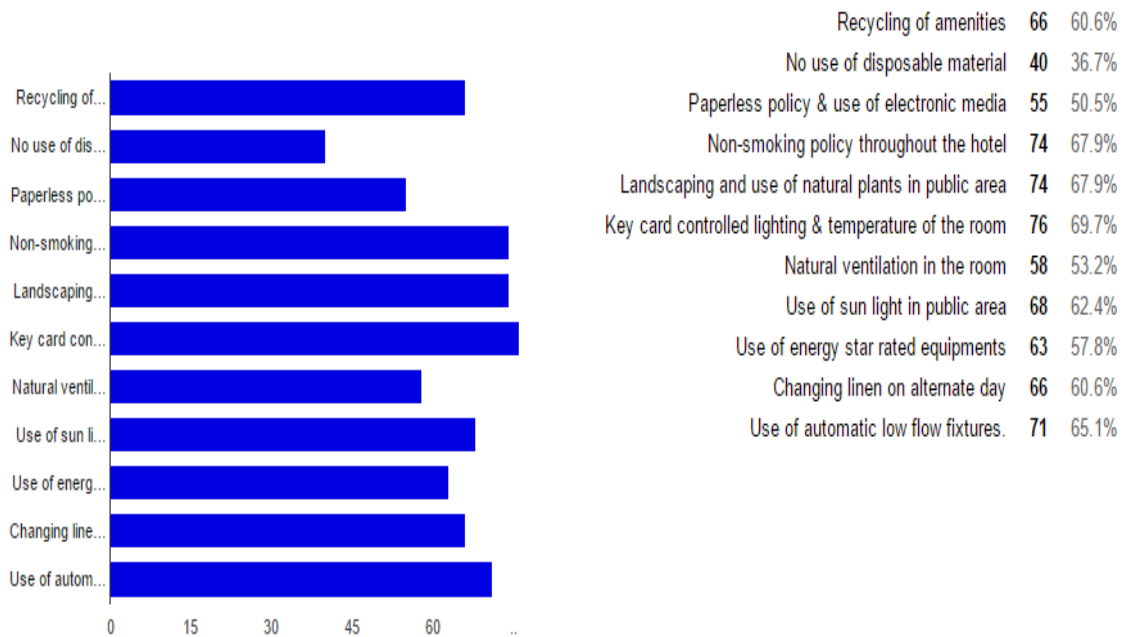


Figure 6: Green Practices preferred by guests

The above data shows that 99.1% respondents have mentioned that implementing green practices is the need of the hour for hotels in Pune and Mumbai and a considerable amount of 89.1% of hotels have implemented green practices in their daily operations.(Figure 4 and 5).

Table 1: Green Practices preferred by hotel guests rating based on Percentage

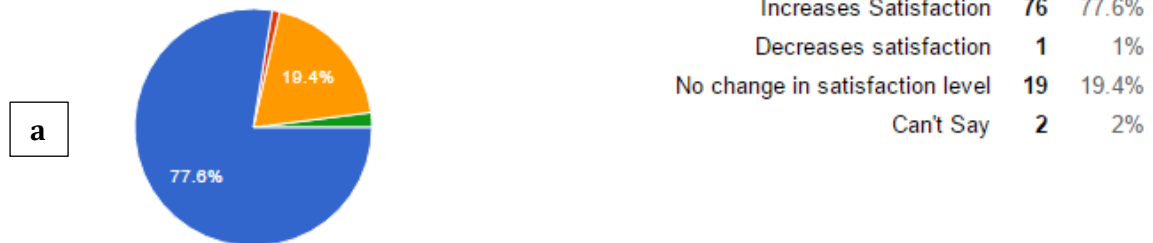
Sr. No	Green Practices preferred by hotel guests	Rating based on Percentage
1	Recycling of amenities	60.60%
2	No use of disposable material	36.70%
3	Paperless policy & use of electronic media	50.50%
4	Non-smoking policy throughout the hotel	67.90%
5	Landscaping and use of natural plants in public area	67.90%
6	Key card controlled lighting & temperature of the room (ECO)	69.70%
7	Natural ventilation in the room	53.20%
8	Use of sun light in public area (Skylight)	62.40%
9	Use of energy star rated equipment	57.80%
10	Changing linen on alternate day	60.60%
11	Use of automatic low flow fixtures.	65.10%

Of the 11 environmental friendly attributes, Key card controlled lighting & temperature of the room, commonly known as ECO, is most preferred by guests. This attribute has the highest rating of 69.70%, followed by non- smoking policy as well as Landscaping and use of natural plants in public area.

The concept of ECO helps in saving electricity. The ECO button is located at the bedside and when pressed by the guest, the air conditioner temperature in the room increases by 2 degrees for a period of about 2 hours. The amount of money saved by a guest is reflected on

the guest folio, and a certificate is issued to a guest for participating in this energy conservation activity voluntarily.

Does being a consumer of green practices hamper your satisfaction level?



Would you be paying an extra amount (if required) to the hotels in order to avail the green services?

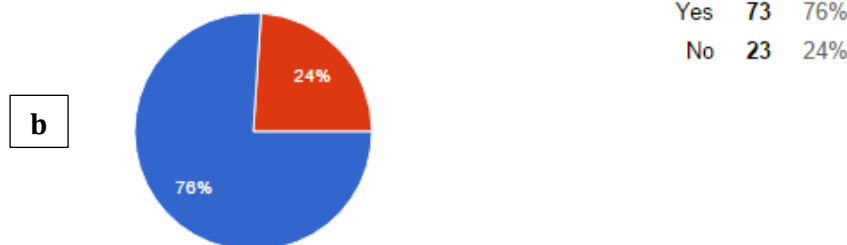


Figure 7(a, b): Green Practices Satisfaction level & opinion to avail green practices

The data suggests that hotel guests today have an extremely positive affiliation towards Green Practices carried out in hotels, majority of guests have stated that being a consumer of Green practices has increased their satisfaction level. Data also implies that hotel guests have a strong willingness to pay an extra amount with regards to hotels environmental initiatives.

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the level of awareness of green practices carried out in hotels, by guests. For most part of the study, the responses of guests who have stayed in 5 star hotels in Pune and Mumbai were favorable towards green attributes adopted by hotels. Generally, the younger respondents (26 to 35 years) of the study appeared to be more in support some of the green attributes, one of the reasons could be that youngsters today are more well-travelled and aware of the threats that pose the environment. The study shows that majority of respondents were Female (54.60%), and respondents Married with children (39.10%), demonstrates that the quantity of visitors going to hotels with kids is additionally on the ascent. Most part of the study with respect to green attributes such as Use of skylights, changing linen on alternate days, paperless policy to name a few, were well received by the respondents. The study also states that hotel guests are willing to pay an extra amount for these environmental attributes adopted by the hotels and by no means does it decrease their satisfaction levels.

The consequences of this study will help 5 star hoteliers in the city of Pune and Mumbai to start to comprehend that such green attributes are critical to their customers and that they can be consolidated into the visitor room. It additionally gives potential hotel guests an unmistakable picture of what a ‘Green Hotel’ would be like. Hoteliers again can utilize this study by taking advantage of the business sector, i.e. the younger traveller’s, female guests and those married with children.

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Ms. Meyola Fernandes is an Assistant Professor with over 10 years of teaching experience with AISSMS College of HMCT. She has also worked with hotel brands such as Intercontinental and Marriott’s in Mumbai. The author is currently pursuing her Ph.D. under the Faculty of Hotel Management from Savitribai Phule Pune University