

# To Study Health and Fitness Motivation of Hotel Guests, and Its Influence on Hotel Buying Decision

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## Abstract

We are in the age that has witnessed a growth in health and fitness consciousness. The millennium has seen many stands taken to safeguard health and safety of people. Health and fitness is no longer for a few, elite, or athletes. It is understood and accepted as an everyday essential for one and all. This shift from blissful ignorance to consciousness to making lifestyle changes cannot be missed. This study is undertaken to understand the hotel customer better. With increase in travel, and an increase in health consciousness there is bound to be a conflict. Should one sacrifice personal fitness goals while on a travel or spending a social evening out? Perhaps no. This idea culminated in carrying out this research.

The study aims at gaining realistic and factual insight into growth of health and fitness consciousness that influences hotel stay buying decision. Primary data of travellers and frequent users of the hotel product, both rooms and restaurants, has been collected by means of a questionnaire. Extensive search for secondary data has been undertaken in order to determine the trends in the hotel sector in order to incorporate health and fitness needs of the traveller.

This study is an attempt to recognize the current upswing in health related requirement from hotel guests, a trend which is here to stay and grow.

**Keywords:** Health, Fitness, Hospitality / Hotel Industry

precedence over other engagements. Maintaining and investing in health is no longer a hobby or a luxury. It is now a lifestyle choice that is being consciously adopted by many at large. It is also a social phenomenon, and proven to influence others. This consciousness, along with array of offerings has created an upsurge of health and fitness activities as a part of everyday.

As the travellers are travelling more often than before, and with greater motivation to practise their fitness habits, it has become all the more essential for hotels to provide them with facilities that cater to health and fitness. Offerings that not only cater to the minimum expectation, but also exceed expectations. Herein lies a huge latent demand, a huge opportunity to create an array of health and fitness prospects that appeal to all. Also, keeping in mind the lifestyle of guests in order to get them hooked. There is huge potential to be tapped.

This vast opportunity is right now in its nascent stage, with a lot more that can be done and should be done. Health of individuals, when at home and also when they travel need not be compromised. For hotels to really be home away from home, guests should not have to sacrifice their fitness regime when travelling. To understand the motivation of travellers and identify offerings by hotels in order to gauge the gap - this study is an attempt to address the same.

## SCOPE

The purview of research paper is restricted to hotel travellers in Pune city, including Pimpri-Chinchwad. The profile of respondent is a varied mix of professionals,

## INTRODUCTION

India is witnessing a nation in transition. So is the case in many facets of our life and it including health as well. Owing to various factors that, health has rightfully taken

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business executives, entrepreneurs, home-makers and students, across both genders.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Yin Chu, (2014), studied upscale / luxury hotels in nine dimensions including marketing and strategic management. He expanded how based on the classification of the hotels, health and fitness facilities are provided. The thrust of higher end hotels is more offerings to suit the purpose.

Sara Dolnicar, (2003), explored the various attributes that hotel guests care about. These attributes call for high cost investments, hence, what the guests want, needs to be studied. Owing to the heterogeneous nature of the varied attributes, she attempted to study the importance of various attributes especially from the practical and pragmatic view of risk versus utility.

Hena Konu, (2010), laid emphasis on how the nature and surroundings should be used to promote health and in turn, tourism. By means of a case study, they devised how a new product / service could be developed by incorporating nature to create new extension to facilities and services with health benefits, and that too at minimum costs.

Kevin Patel, studied how growing numbers of business travellers have expressed desire in maintaining health, even during travels. Exercises and eating being key. The development of new health and fitness initiatives address the growing need which has to be met in order to have satisfied guests. He laid a case of a luxury sports club concept offering a wide array of sports facilities such as badminton, squash, tennis, golf, indoors, gymnasium, spas to name a few. The central idea was that hotels should either house such facilities. But owing to high maintenance costs, they can then opt for membership of the clubs where hotel guests can use the facilities.

Haruo Nogawa, (1996), researched the tourists behaviour and their indulgence in sports activities while traveling and staying at hotels. Glyptis (1991) stated that “sports and tourism have been treated by academic and practitioner alike as separate bodies of activity” (p. 166). But contrary to this, it is being increasingly witnessed that the two are infact inter-related. He studied sports tourism as an alternative and / or supplement to traditional tourism.

Michelle Bennett, (2003), deduced that health spa is essentially considered main stream tourism product, than medical treatment focus. They studied the concept of health tourism, and how health has gained importance and is the sole purpose of tourists to travel. It also analysed properties that provided wider health focus, such as: holistic health, fitness, lifestyle, pampering, rejuvenation and stress management.

Hansruedi Mueller, (2000), professed that the two aspects of wellness and cure are two aspects that have to used separately while marketing the hotel product. Though it is possible that the same hotel could provide cure, yet it is important that the separation is made between the two.

Said Ladki, (1998) studied the health and fitness awareness amongst the food service employees. They discovered interesting facts. One highlight was that the higher the designation or education, higher the awareness of overall health and fitness. Formerly placid observers have become more active participants. Increased health awareness has also reduced medical expenses, insurance claims and absenteeism. They also studied the importance of balance of diet and exercise.

Howard Feiertag, (2016), asserted that knowledge of what prospects want is power and is important when it comes to them making buying decisions. He added that a match of the need and want with the benefit has to be made, within the said budget in order to close a deal.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify health and fitness consciousness and ascertaining fitness requirements of guests.
2. To gauge success of customer buying decision based on health and fitness offerings by a hotel.
3. To study the latest health and fitness related offerings by Pune hotels.

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following key words are defined for better understanding of the hospitality and tourism organization.

**Fitness:** “The ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and respond to emergencies.” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

**Health:** Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948).

**Hospitality Industry:** Broad category of fields in the service industry, which includes: lodging, boarding, airlines, travel trade, event planning, transportation and additional sectors with the tourism industry.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This primary data is purely based on the information sourced from representative hotel frequenting population of Pune.
2. The study is conducted in the current scenario and the opinions, perception and expectations of the respondents may differ with time.
3. The study is purely on the basis of the sample. The sample's limitations in terms of their maturity, understanding and exposure.
4. Trends in hotel fitness is on the basis of secondary study and findings are limited to the data available. Hotel trends in India and abroad are studied.
5. Ascertaining if the respondent is a traveller, and how frequent a traveller should have been ascertained in the survey tool.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Collection of Data

The primary data required for the research was collected using the following technique:

- Data collection tool: Questionnaires

In order to cover the two of the three objectives, questionnaire bearing straight forward and relevant questions were drafted and handed over to the concerned sample to obtain their responses.

#### Sample Design

The nature each of the respondents is more or less homogeneous in nature. These are representative of Pune hotel going population.

Total Sample Size: 129 respondents

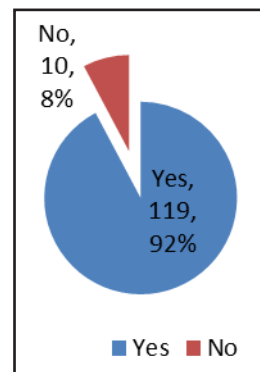
Apart from the above mentioned tools the relevant secondary data for the research was collected from journals, books & internet.

### FINDINGS

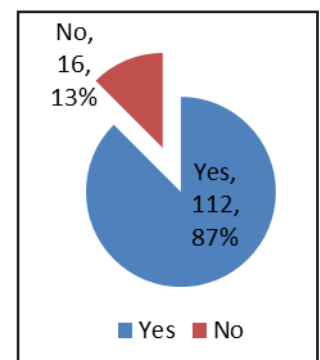
It is a known assumption that the millennium is marked with increased awareness of health and fitness. The population at large is getting more conscious and awareness is certainly spreading pertaining the same. Essentially, while on travel, since hotel is considered a home away from home, they travellers should be able to not have to sacrifice their routine.

The study also reflects that majority of the respondents are clearly conscious about their health, and practise it as part of their everyday. It also helps identify the likeliness and reasons they cheat on their health and fitness regimen. One of the reasons is travel, as it acts as a deterrent for various reasons. On the up-side, respondents seem satisfied with the offerings.

#### Health Consciousness and Health in the Everyday



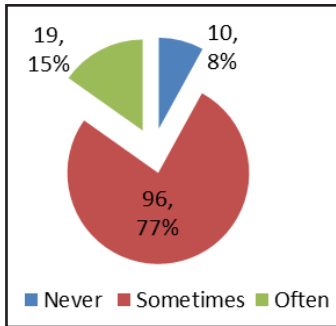
**Fig. 1: Health Consciousness**



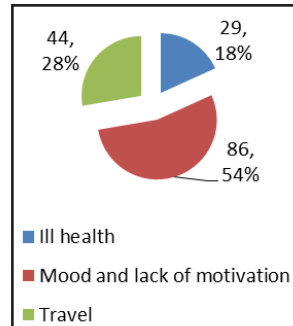
**Fig. 2: Health in the Everyday**

Out of the 129 respondents, 92% which 119 respondents agreed that they are conscious of their health and strive to be and remain fit. This shows that in today's times, health and fitness play an important part in the peoples' life. Again, out of the fitness conscious, 80% actively incorporate fitness in their everyday. This means that irrespective of other commitments, health and fitness is an integral part of their lifestyle.

## Frequency and Reasons of Cheating on Fitness Regime



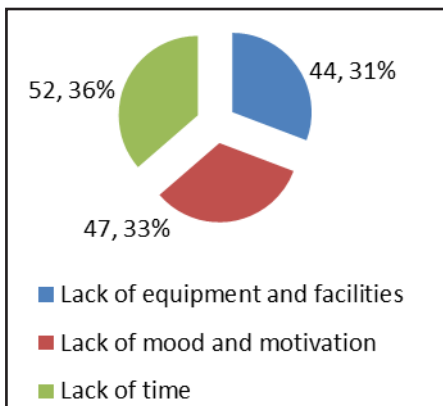
**Fig. 3: Frequency of Cheat on Fitness Regime**



**Fig. 4: Reasons for Cheating Fitness**

As much as the respondents strive to practise fitness in their everyday lives, a majority of them admitted that they sometimes cheat. Compared to this, the ones who rarely or frequently cheated is much lesser. So we can say that most are committed, and practise health most of the times. The main reason for cheating days is attributed to mood and lack of motivation, with the second highest reason being travel as a hindrance.

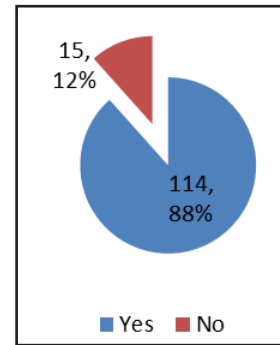
## Reason of Neglect while Travelling



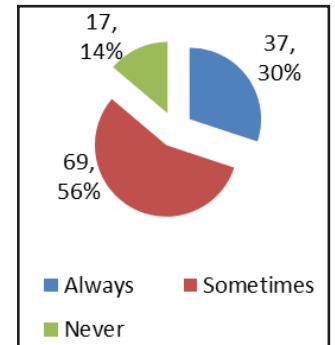
**Fig. 5: Reasons of Neglect while Travelling**

While travelling, it was understood that all three factors, namely – lack of equipment and facilities, lack of mood and motivation and lack of time prove to be deterrents that are responsible for neglect on health and fitness while on travels. A small surprise is that these reasons are equally responsible, as against one of them overpowering the other. This also reflects the reasons vary and are not unanimous.

## Expectation of Health and Fitness Facilities from Hotels and Their Usage



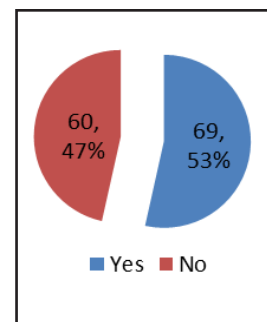
**Fig. 6: Expectations of Hotel Facilities**



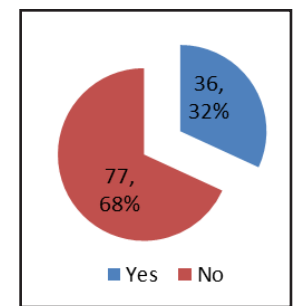
**Fig. 7: Usage of Hotel Facilities**

In a contradiction, it is seen that 88% expect hotels to provide for health facilities. But it is also seen that actually only 30% use them regularly. Most of them use the facilities sometimes with 14% not using them at all. This despite wishing for such facilities provided by hotels they stay.

Influence of hotel buying decision by availability of fitness facilities and the willingness to pay incremental cost



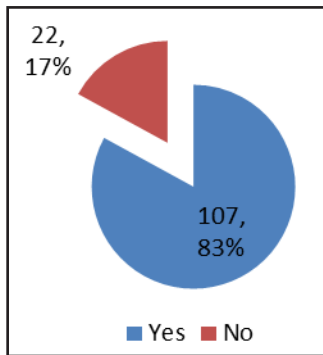
**Fig. 8: Influence on Hotel Buying Decision**



**Fig. 9: Willingness to Pay Extra**

Interesting finding that when asked if hotel buying decision is influenced by availability of fitness facilities, close to equal numbers agreed and disagreed. But when asked if they were willing to pay incremental, majority amounting 77 % said that they would not pay. Hence it was found that though people do take note of fitness facilities while making buying decision, they expect to avail them on no additional cost.

**Increased provision in hotel health and fitness offerings**

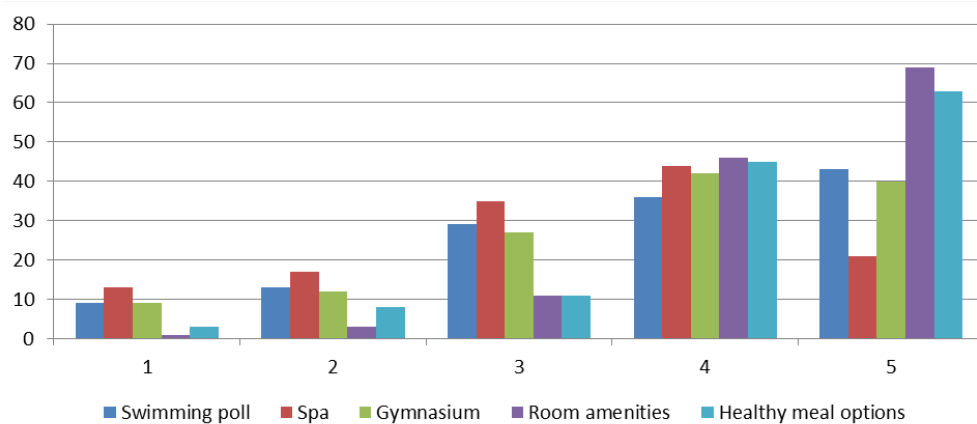


**Fig. 10: Increased Offerings by Hotels**

Also, majority of them agree that there is an increase in the offerings made by hotels. This is a positive progress and welcome by respondents as they are health conscious.

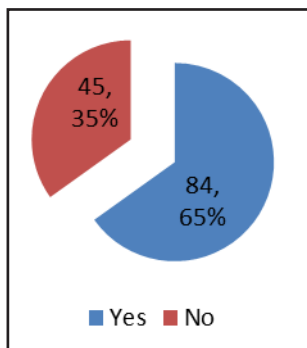
In a bid to understand the relative importance of various facility offerings, it became evident that respondents perceived room amenities as most important, closely followed by availability of healthy meal options.

**Importance of various facilities provided by hotels (1 being the least important and 5 being the most important)**



**Fig. 11: Importance of Various Hotel Health Facilities**

**Satisfied with Hotel Offerings**



**Fig. 12: Satisfaction with Hotel Offerings**

In a positive observation, it is understood that majority, in this case 65% are satisfied with the offerings made by hotels with regard to health and fitness.

**SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the responses received from frequent hotel visitors and travellers from Pune, it is suggested that:

1. There is an increased awareness of health and fitness consciousness. Even while on travel, there seems a gap, owing to time management, mood and limitations in hotel facilities.
2. Overall travellers are satisfied with hotel fitness offerings, but there is scope for more improvement in this regard. Healthy meal options and room amenities seem to be high of traveller priority when looking for health.
3. In order to cement “home-away-from-home” feeling, hotels should seek to match, and maybe exceed

health and fitness expectations of guests. These provisions should be an add-on than an additional cost, as most travellers, as much as they would like to use these facilities, are not likely to pay more during travel and stay.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the research can be concluded as under:

1. Importance of health and fitness has risen in the recent past. Studying the popularity trend, it will only grow.
2. Hotels should extend the offerings towards health and fitness. New and innovative ways to appeal to this segment will be an attractive sales proposition.
3. Health is no longer a luxury product, but is mainly sold as a lifestyle, rejuvenation and relaxation. This positioning has and might work with elite properties and resorts. But for city and budget options, no frills health and fitness activities will also have a huge appeal and following.

## FUTURE SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

A study can be undertaken to understand further the various needs of guests, and match it with the offerings. Currently it is the other way around, and hence needs a reversal.

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