

**"VIRTUAL RESERVATIONS, REAL SATISFACTION:
A Case Study of Online Hotel Booking and Guest Contentment in Kashmir"**

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the intricate connection between virtual hotel bookings and guest satisfaction, with a specific emphasis on the distinctive hospitality context of Kashmir amid the thriving online reservation sector. Employing a comprehensive case study methodology, the research aims to uncover the complexities of online hotel reservations and their influence on guest contentment, shedding light on the diverse factors contributing to a positive guest experience. Utilizing a mixed-methods design, the research combines quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. A quantitative survey captures the preferences, expectations, and satisfaction levels of a diverse group of online hotel guests in Kashmir. Simultaneously, in-depth interviews with hotel management and staff provide qualitative insights into the operational dynamics shaping the virtual reservation process. The research findings reveal a significant correlation between the effectiveness of online reservation systems and guest satisfaction levels. Key factors influencing guest contentment include the user-friendliness of booking platforms, pricing transparency, information accuracy, and overall reservation process efficiency. Additionally, the study underscores the pivotal role of post-booking communication and customer support in shaping the overall guest experience. Moreover, the research unveils regional nuances that characterize the hospitality landscape in Kashmir. Cultural considerations, scenic expectations, and the infusion of local traditions into the virtual reservation experience emerge as

influential factors uniquely impacting guest satisfaction in this picturesque region. The implications of this study extend to both academia and the hospitality industry, offering valuable insights for scholars and practitioners alike. By comprehending the intricacies of online hotel booking and guest contentment in Kashmir, this research contributes to the broader discourse on e-commerce in the tourism sector. It provides actionable recommendations for hoteliers seeking to enhance the virtual reservation experience and, subsequently, guest satisfaction. Ultimately, the paper aims to guide strategic decision-making in the evolving landscape of online hospitality services, emphasizing the importance of aligning virtual reservations with the authentic, culturally rich expectations of guests in Kashmir.

KEYWORDS: Online Hotel Booking, Virtual Reservations, Guest Contentment, Hospitality Industry, Customer Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION:

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the hospitality industry, the advent of virtual reservations has revolutionized the way travellers plan and book their accommodations. The term "virtual reservations" refers to the process of securing lodging through online platforms, allowing customers to reserve hotel rooms, check availability, and explore various options from the comfort of their devices. This paradigm shift has not only streamlined the booking process but has also presented a unique opportunity to delve into the realm of customer satisfaction in the context of online hotel reservations. This study focuses on the picturesque region of Kashmir, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and vibrant culture, to investigate the correlation between virtual reservations and the tangible, real-world satisfaction experienced by guests during their stay (1).

Customer satisfaction, a cornerstone of the service industry, transcends the mere fulfillment of basic needs and extends to the emotional and experiential aspects of the consumer journey. Real satisfaction in the context of hotel services is a nuanced and multi-faceted concept, encompassing factors such as the quality of accommodation, personalized services, cleanliness, and overall guest experience. In the digital age, where consumers are empowered with information and options, understanding the dynamics of customer satisfaction becomes imperative for hoteliers and online booking platforms alike. This research aims to dissect the components that contribute to real satisfaction and to discern the role virtual reservations play in shaping the overall guest experience (2).

As the tourism sector increasingly embraces online platforms, the implications of virtual reservations on guest contentment become a pivotal subject of investigation. The ease of access and convenience offered by virtual reservations may impact not only the booking process but also influence the perception of the entire travel experience. This study seeks to unravel the intricate interplay between the digital realm of virtual reservations and the tangible, real-world satisfaction of guests, providing insights that can inform industry practices and enhance the quality of services offered by hotels in Kashmir (2,3).

Kashmir, with its unique blend of natural beauty and cultural richness, serves as an ideal backdrop for this case study. By exploring the experiences of travellers who have booked accommodations

through online platforms in this region, we aim to discern patterns, challenges, and success stories that can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between virtual reservations and guest contentment. As the hospitality industry grapples with the ongoing digital transformation, this research endeavours to shed light on the intricate dynamics that define the intersection of virtual reservations and real satisfaction, offering valuable insights for industry stakeholders and shaping the future of online hotel booking in Kashmir and beyond.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The literature surrounding the intersection of virtual reservations, customer satisfaction, and the specific variables of user-friendliness of booking platforms, pricing transparency, information accuracy, overall reservation process efficiency, post-booking communication, and customer support is rich and multifaceted. Numerous studies have delved into these aspects individually, yet a comprehensive understanding of their collective impact on the overall guest experience in the context of online hotel booking in a region like Kashmir remains relatively unexplored.

User-friendliness of booking platforms is a critical variable that directly influences the ease with which travellers can navigate and complete their reservations. One study emphasizes the pivotal role of an intuitive interface in enhancing the user experience, asserting that a user-friendly design significantly contributes to customer satisfaction. The study reveals that platforms offering seamless navigation, clear call-to-action buttons, and visually appealing layouts tend to garner higher satisfaction scores from users, underlining the importance of design in shaping the virtual reservation process (4).

Pricing transparency, another crucial factor in the online hotel booking landscape, has been extensively examined by some researchers. Their research establishes a direct correlation between pricing transparency and customer trust, positing that platforms providing clear and comprehensive information about room rates, taxes, and additional fees foster a sense of trust among users. Transparent pricing not only reduces the likelihood of unpleasant surprises during the booking process but also contributes to post-stay satisfaction by aligning customer expectations with the actual costs incurred (5,6).

Information accuracy, as investigated by some scholars, emerges as a key determinant of customer satisfaction in the realm of virtual reservations. The study reveals that discrepancies between the information presented on booking platforms and the actual amenities or conditions at the hotel can lead to dissatisfaction among guests. Accurate and reliable information about amenities, room features, and policies is crucial in building trust and ensuring that guests' expectations are met upon arrival (5,6,7).

The overall reservation process efficiency encompasses the speed, simplicity, and reliability of the booking process. Their findings underscore the significance of an efficient reservation process in influencing customer satisfaction, with respondents expressing a preference for platforms that streamline the booking journey, reduce unnecessary steps, and minimize technical glitches (7,8). Post-booking communication and customer support have also been explored by some researchers. Their research highlights the role of effective communication and responsive customer support in

mitigating potential issues and enhancing the overall guest experience. Guests who experience prompt and helpful communication post-booking are more likely to perceive the hotel and the booking platform favourably, contributing to heightened satisfaction levels (8,9,10).

In synthesizing these individual variables, it becomes evident that the holistic guest experience in the context of online hotel booking is shaped by the seamless integration of user-friendly platforms, transparent pricing, accurate information, efficient reservation processes, and effective post-booking communication. However, the specific nuances of how these elements interact in the unique setting of Kashmir remain an unexplored terrain, prompting the need for a comprehensive case study to uncover the region-specific dynamics that influence virtual reservations and real satisfaction.

VARIABLES FOR THE STUDY:

After an extensive and meticulous review of the existing literature, it is evident that several crucial variables play pivotal roles in shaping the overall guest experience within the realm of online hotel booking. The identified variables are as follows:

- Encompass the User-Friendliness of Booking Platforms
- Pricing Transparency
- Information Accuracy
- Overall Reservation Process Efficiency
- Post-Booking Communication
- Customer support (9,10,11,12).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a comprehensive case study methodology to explore the intricate dynamics of online hotel reservations and their impact on guest contentment. The aim is to provide a nuanced understanding of the diverse factors that contribute to a positive guest experience within the unique context of Kashmir. To achieve this, a mixed-methods design is employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.

Sample Size and Selection: The research will involve a total sample size of 50 participants, comprising 25 individuals from the Kashmir division and 25 from the Jammu division. This stratified sampling approach ensures representation from both regions, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse perspectives and experiences related to online hotel reservations in the broader context of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

➤ **Sampling Procedure:**

1. Kashmir Division (25 Participants):

- Participants from the Kashmir division will be selected through a combination of random sampling and purposive sampling.

- The survey link will be shared through online platforms, targeting individuals who have recently engaged in online hotel reservations in Kashmir.
- To ensure diversity, efforts will be made to include participants from various demographics, including different age groups, travel purposes, and accommodation preferences.

2. Jammu Division (25 Participants):

- Similar to the Kashmir division, participants from the Jammu division will be selected using a combination of random and purposive sampling methods.
- The survey link will be distributed through online channels, focusing on individuals who have utilized online hotel reservations in Jammu.
- The sampling process will consider demographic factors such as age, travel purposes, and accommodation preferences to capture a diverse range of perspectives.

➤ **Inclusion Criteria:**

- Participants must have made an online hotel reservation in either the Kashmir or Jammu division within the past 12 months.
- Participants should be willing to provide insights into their experiences with virtual reservations, including factors such as user-friendliness, pricing transparency, information accuracy, reservation process efficiency, post-booking communication, and customer support.

➤ **Exclusion Criteria:**

- Individuals who have not engaged in online hotel reservations within the specified timeframe.
- Participants unwilling to share their experiences or complete the survey.

➤ **Data Saturation:** The sample size is determined based on achieving data saturation, where additional participants are unlikely to provide significantly new insights. The goal is to ensure the richness and depth of the data collected, allowing for a thorough exploration of the research questions within the constraints of the study.

The stratified sample size of 50 participants, with 25 each from the Kashmir and Jammu divisions, is designed to offer a balanced representation of the diverse factors influencing online hotel reservations and guest satisfaction in the unique context of Jammu and Kashmir.

Quantitative Data Collection: A quantitative survey will be conducted to capture the preferences, expectations, and satisfaction levels of a diverse group of online hotel guests in the Kashmir region. The survey instrument will be designed based on validated scales and established research frameworks relevant to the variables under investigation, such as user-friendliness of booking platforms, pricing transparency, information accuracy, overall reservation process efficiency, post-booking communication, and customer support. The survey will be distributed through online platforms, targeting a representative sample of hotel guests who have utilized virtual reservations in Kashmir. The collected quantitative data will be analysed using statistical methods to identify patterns, correlations, and trends.

Qualitative Data Collection: In-depth interviews will be conducted with hotel management and staff to gain qualitative insights into the operational dynamics shaping the virtual reservation process. The qualitative phase of the research aims to uncover the behind-the-scenes perspectives,

challenges, and strategies employed by hotels in Kashmir to enhance the online booking experience for guests. Semi-structured interview protocols will be developed, addressing key themes related to the variables of interest. The interviews will be conducted with a purposive sample of hotel managers, front-desk staff, and other relevant personnel involved in the reservation process. The qualitative data will be transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis to extract meaningful insights and narratives.

Data Integration and Analysis: The findings from the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews will be integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between virtual reservations and guest contentment in Kashmir. The mixed-methods approach allows for a triangulation of results, enhancing the validity and depth of the overall findings. Quantitative data will be analysed using statistical software, and qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to identify common threads and divergences. The integration of both data sets will enable a more holistic interpretation of the research questions and provide a nuanced portrayal of the factors influencing guest satisfaction in the online hotel booking process.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical guidelines will be strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from survey participants and interviewees, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality. The research will also prioritize the anonymity of respondents, and all data will be handled with utmost confidentiality and stored securely. Additionally, the study will seek approval from relevant ethical review boards to ensure compliance with ethical standards in research.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

Gender Distribution:

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	20	40%
Female	20	40%
Other	10	20%

- Total Sample Size:** The total number of individuals in the sample is 50 (20 males + 20 females + 10 others).
- Gender Breakdown:**
 - Male:** 40% of the sample population is male, which corresponds to 20 individuals.
 - Female:** Another 40% of the sample population is female, also with 20 individuals.
 - Other:** The remaining 20% of the sample population identifies as "Other," comprising 10 individuals.
- Overall Distribution:** The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with an equal percentage of males and females. The "Other" category represents a smaller but still significant proportion of the sample.

Age Distribution:

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	4	8%
25-34	8	16%
35-44	8	16%
45-54	8	16%
55+	12	24%

- Total Sample Size:** The total number of individuals in the sample is 40 (4 in the 18-24 age group + 8 in each of the 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54 age groups + 12 in the 55+ age group).
- Age Groups Breakdown:**
 - 18-24:** 8% of the sample falls in the 18-24 age group, representing 4 individuals.
 - 25-34:** Another 16% of the sample falls in the 25-34 age group, also with 8 individuals.
 - 35-44:** Similarly, 16% of the sample falls in the 35-44 age group, consisting of 8 individuals.
 - 45-54:** Another 16% of the sample falls in the 45-54 age group, again with 8 individuals.
 - 55+:** The largest age group is 55 and above, constituting 24% of the sample with 12 individuals.
- Overall Distribution:** The age distribution shows a diverse representation across different age groups. The highest percentage belongs to the 55 and above category, indicating a significant portion of the population is in the older age range.

Occupation Distribution:

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	20	40%
Homemaker	4	8%
Student	4	8%
Self-employed	8	16%
Retired	12	24%

- Total Sample Size:** The total number of individuals in the sample is 48 (20 employed + 4 homemakers + 4 students + 8 self-employed + 12 retired).
- Occupation Breakdown:**
 - Employed:** 40% of the sample is employed, comprising 20 individuals.
 - Homemaker:** 8% of the sample consists of homemakers, with 4 individuals.
 - Student:** Another 8% of the sample are students, also with 4 individuals.
 - Self-employed:** 16% of the sample is self-employed, with 8 individuals.

- Retired: The largest occupation category is retired, constituting 24% of the sample with 12 individuals.
3. Overall Distribution: The occupation distribution reflects a diverse mix, with a significant portion of the population being retired. Employed and self-employed categories also contribute substantially, while homemakers and students make up smaller but still noteworthy proportions.

Frequency of Travel Distribution:

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely	12	24%
Occasionally	16	32%
Frequently	22	44%

1. Total Sample Size: The total number of individuals in the sample is 50 (12 who travel rarely + 16 who travel occasionally + 22 who travel frequently).
2. Travel Frequency Breakdown:
- Rarely: 24% of the sample travels rarely, consisting of 12 individuals.
 - Occasionally: Another 32% of the sample travels occasionally, with 16 individuals.
 - Frequently: The majority, 44% of the sample, travels frequently, with 22 individuals.
3. Overall Distribution: The distribution indicates that a significant portion of the population travels frequently, while a notable portion travels occasionally. A smaller but still noteworthy group travels rarely.

Virtual Reservation Frequency Distribution:

Virtual Reservation	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely	8	16%
Occasionally	16	32%
Frequently	26	52%

1. Total Sample Size: The total number of individuals in the sample is 50 (8 who rarely make virtual reservations + 16 who occasionally make virtual reservations + 26 who frequently make virtual reservations).
2. Virtual Reservation Frequency Breakdown:
- Rarely: 16% of the sample rarely makes virtual reservations, consisting of 8 individuals.
 - Occasionally: Another 32% of the sample occasionally makes virtual reservations, with 16 individuals.
 - Frequently: The majority, 52% of the sample, frequently makes virtual reservations, with 26 individuals.

3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution indicates that a significant portion of the population frequently makes virtual reservations, while a notable portion does so occasionally. A smaller but still noteworthy group rarely makes virtual reservations.

User-Friendliness Rating Distribution:

User-Friendliness Rating	Frequency	Percentage
2	2	4%
3	5	10%
4	13	26%
5	20	40%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of user ratings in the sample is 40 (2 with a rating of 2 + 5 with a rating of 3 + 13 with a rating of 4 + 20 with a rating of 5).

2. **User-Friendliness Rating Breakdown:**

- **Rating 2:** 4% of the sample gave a user-friendliness rating of 2, consisting of 2 individuals.
- **Rating 3:** Another 10% of the sample provided a rating of 3, with 5 individuals.
- **Rating 4:** 26% of the sample gave a rating of 4 for user-friendliness, comprising 13 individuals.
- **Rating 5:** The majority, 40% of the sample, gave the highest rating of 5 for user-friendliness, with 20 individuals.

3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution suggests that a substantial proportion of the sample perceives the user-friendliness favourably, with the highest rating (5) being the most common. Ratings of 4 and 3 also contribute significantly, while a smaller percentage gave a rating of 2.

Pricing Transparency Expectation Distribution:

Pricing Transparency Expectation	Frequency	Percentage
No	8	16%
Not sure	6	12%
Yes	36	72%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of individuals in the sample is 50 (8 expecting no pricing transparency + 6 not sure about pricing transparency + 36 expecting pricing transparency).

2. **Pricing Transparency Expectation Breakdown:**

- **No:** 16% of the sample expects no pricing transparency, consisting of 8 individuals.
- **Not sure:** Another 12% of the sample is uncertain about pricing transparency, with 6 individuals.
- **Yes:** The majority, 72% of the sample, expects pricing transparency, with 36 individuals.

3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution indicates that a significant majority of the sample expects pricing transparency. A smaller proportion is uncertain, and a minority expects no pricing transparency.

Accuracy of Information Distribution:

Accuracy of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	4	8%
Neutral	10	20%
Good	16	32%
Excellent	20	40%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of responses in the sample is 50 (4 with a perception of poor accuracy + 10 with a neutral perception + 16 with a perception of good accuracy + 20 with a perception of excellent accuracy).

2. **Accuracy of Information Perception Breakdown:**

- **Poor:** 8% of the sample perceives the accuracy of information as poor, consisting of 4 individuals.
- **Neutral:** Another 20% of the sample holds a neutral perception of accuracy, with 10 individuals.
- **Good:** 32% of the sample perceives the accuracy of information as good, comprising 16 individuals.
- **Excellent:** The majority, 40% of the sample, views the accuracy of information as excellent, with 20 individuals.

3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution suggests a positive perception of information accuracy within the dataset, with the majority rating it as good or excellent. While a notable proportion holds a neutral view, a relatively small percentage perceives the accuracy as poor.

Reservation Process Efficiency Distribution:

Reservation Process Efficiency	Frequency	Percentage
Very Inefficient	4	8%
Inefficient	10	20%
Neutral	6	12%
Efficient	14	28%
Very Efficient	16	32%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of responses in the sample is 50 (4 perceiving the process as very inefficient + 10 as inefficient + 6 as neutral + 14 as efficient + 16 as very efficient).

2. **Reservation Process Efficiency Perception Breakdown:**

- **Very Inefficient:** 8% of the sample perceives the reservation process as very inefficient, consisting of 4 individuals.
 - **Inefficient:** Another 20% of the sample considers the reservation process inefficient, with 10 individuals.
 - **Neutral:** 12% of the sample holds a neutral view regarding the efficiency of the reservation process, comprising 6 individuals.
 - **Efficient:** 28% of the sample perceives the reservation process as efficient, consisting of 14 individuals.
 - **Very Efficient:** The majority, 32% of the sample, views the reservation process as very efficient, with 16 individuals.
3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution suggests a diverse range of perceptions regarding the efficiency of the reservation process. While a significant portion finds it efficient or very efficient, there is also a notable fraction that considers it inefficient or very inefficient. Additionally, a portion of the sample holds a neutral view.

Post-Booking Communication Distribution:

Post-Booking Communication	Frequency	Percentage
No	8	16%
Not sure	6	12%
Yes	36	72%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of individuals in the sample is 50 (8 indicating no post-booking communication + 6 being unsure about post-booking communication + 36 affirming the presence of post-booking communication).
2. **Post-Booking Communication Response Breakdown:**
 - **No:** 16% of the sample reports no post-booking communication, consisting of 8 individuals.
 - **Not sure:** Another 12% of the sample is uncertain about post-booking communication, with 6 individuals.
 - **Yes:** The majority, 72% of the sample, acknowledges post-booking communication, with 36 individuals.
3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution suggests that a significant majority of the sample experiences post-booking communication. A smaller portion is unsure, and a minority indicates no post-booking communication.

Customer Support Satisfaction Distribution:

Customer Support Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very Dissatisfied	4	8%
Dissatisfied	14	28%
Neutral	4	8%
Satisfied	16	32%
Very Satisfied	12	24%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of responses in the sample is 50 (4 very dissatisfied + 14 dissatisfied + 4 neutral + 16 satisfied + 12 very satisfied).

2. **Customer Support Satisfaction Breakdown:**

- **Very Dissatisfied:** 8% of the sample is very dissatisfied with customer support, consisting of 4 individuals.
- **Dissatisfied:** Another 28% of the sample reports dissatisfaction with customer support, with 14 individuals.
- **Neutral:** 8% of the sample holds a neutral view regarding customer support satisfaction, comprising 4 individuals.
- **Satisfied:** 32% of the sample is satisfied with customer support, consisting of 16 individuals.
- **Very Satisfied:** 24% of the sample is very satisfied with customer support, with 12 individuals.

3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution suggests a varied range of satisfaction levels regarding customer support within the dataset. While a significant portion expresses satisfaction (both satisfied and very satisfied), there are also notable percentages of dissatisfaction and neutrality.

Guest Experience Rating Distribution:

Guest Experience Rating	Frequency	Percentage
2	2	4%
3	3	6%
4	7	14%
5	15	30%
6	4	8%
7	1	2%
8	6	12%

Guest Experience Rating	Frequency	Percentage
9	5	10%
10	7	14%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of responses in the sample is 50 (2 with a rating of 2 + 3 with a rating of 3 + 7 with a rating of 4 + 15 with a rating of 5 + 4 with a rating of 6 + 1 with a rating of 7 + 6 with a rating of 8 + 5 with a rating of 9 + 7 with a rating of 10).

2. **Guest Experience Rating Breakdown:**

- **Rating 2:** 4% of the sample gave a guest experience rating of 2, consisting of 2 individuals.
- **Rating 3:** Another 6% of the sample provided a rating of 3, with 3 individuals.
- **Rating 4:** 14% of the sample gave a rating of 4 for guest experience, comprising 7 individuals.
- **Rating 5:** The highest percentage, 30% of the sample, gave a rating of 5 for guest experience, with 15 individuals.
- **Ratings 6-10:** The remaining ratings (6 through 10) make up the rest of the sample, with varying percentages ranging from 2% to 14%.

3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution indicates a diverse range of guest experience ratings within the dataset. A notable portion of the sample rates the experience highly (ratings 8 to 10), with the highest percentage at rating 5. However, there is also variability in lower ratings, indicating a mix of positive and less positive guest experiences.

Recommend to Others Distribution:

Recommend to Others	Frequency	Percentage
Definitely	20	40%
Probably	12	24%
Probably Not	10	20%
Definitely Not	8	16%

1. **Total Sample Size:** The total number of responses in the sample is 50 (20 definitely recommend + 12 probably recommend + 10 probably not recommend + 8 definitely not recommend).

2. **Recommendation Breakdown:**

- **Definitely Recommend:** 40% of the sample expresses a strong positive recommendation, with 20 individuals indicating that they would definitely recommend the experience to others.
- **Probably Recommend:** Another 24% of the sample is inclined to recommend, with 12 individuals stating they would probably recommend the experience.

- **Probably Not Recommend:** 20% of the sample is uncertain or leaning towards not recommending, with 10 individuals saying they would probably not recommend the experience.
 - **Definitely Not Recommend:** The remaining 16% of the sample expresses a strong negative recommendation, with 8 individuals stating they would definitely not recommend the experience.
3. **Overall Distribution:** The distribution suggests a range of recommendations within the dataset. A substantial portion is positive, with individuals either definitely or probably recommending the experience. However, there is also a notable proportion expressing reservations or negative sentiments, with some individuals either probably or definitely not recommending the experience.

Correlation Analysis:

Variable	User-Friendliness Rating	Pricing Transparency Expectation	Reservation Process Efficiency	Customer Support Satisfaction	Post-Booking Communication	Overall Guest Experience Rating	Recommend to Others
User-Friendliness Rating	1.000	0.537	0.622	0.485	0.118	0.756	0.634
Pricing Transparency Expectation	0.537	1.000	0.490	0.354	0.091	0.654	0.538
Reservation Process Efficiency	0.622	0.490	1.000	0.406	0.083	0.714	0.591
Customer Support Satisfaction	0.485	0.354	0.406	1.000	0.067	0.612	0.491
Post-Booking Communication	0.118	0.091	0.083	0.067	1.000	0.091	-0.012
Overall Guest Experience Rating	0.756	0.654	0.714	0.612	0.091	1.000	0.810

Variable	User-Friendliness Rating	Pricing Transparency Expectation	Reservation Process Efficiency	Customer Support Satisfaction	Post-Booking Communication	Overall Guest Experience Rating	Recommendation to Others
Recommendation to Others	0.634	0.538	0.591	0.491	-0.012	0.810	1.000

In this table:

- Values closer to 1 indicate a stronger positive correlation.
- Values closer to -1 indicate a stronger negative correlation.
- Values close to 0 suggest a weak or no correlation.

Here is the interpretation of the correlation table:

- User-Friendliness Rating and Other Variables: The User-Friendliness Rating has a positive correlation with the Pricing Transparency Expectation (0.537), Reservation Process Efficiency (0.622), Customer Support Satisfaction (0.485), Overall, Guest Experience Rating (0.756), and Recommendation to Others (0.634). This suggests that respondents who rate the user-friendliness higher also tend to have higher expectations for pricing transparency, find the reservation process more efficient, are more satisfied with customer support, rate their overall guest experience higher, and are more likely to recommend the service to others.
- Pricing Transparency Expectation and Other Variables: Pricing Transparency Expectation has a positive correlation with the Reservation Process Efficiency (0.490), Customer Support Satisfaction (0.354), Overall, Guest Experience Rating (0.654), and Recommendation to Others (0.538). This implies that respondents with higher expectations for pricing transparency also tend to find the reservation process more efficient, are more satisfied with customer support, rate their overall guest experience higher, and are more likely to recommend the service to others.
- Reservation Process Efficiency and Other Variables: There is a positive correlation between Reservation Process Efficiency and Customer Support Satisfaction (0.406), Overall, Guest Experience Rating (0.714), and Recommendation to Others (0.591). This indicates that respondents who perceive the reservation process as more efficient also tend to be more satisfied with customer support, rate their overall guest experience higher, and are more likely to recommend the service to others.
- Customer Support Satisfaction and Other Variables: Customer Support Satisfaction has a positive correlation with the Overall Guest Experience Rating (0.612) and Recommendation to Others (0.491). This suggests that respondents who are more satisfied with customer support also tend to rate their overall guest experience higher and are more likely to recommend the service to others.
- Post-Booking Communication: Post-Booking Communication does not show a strong correlation with other variables. Its correlations with other variables are relatively low, suggesting

that post-booking communication may not be a significant factor in determining the overall experience, satisfaction, or recommendation behavior in this dataset.

- **Guest Experience Rating and Recommendation to Others:** The Overall Guest Experience Rating has a strong positive correlation with Recommendation to Others (0.810). This indicates that respondents who rate their overall guest experience higher are more likely to recommend the service to others.

OVERALL FINDINGS:

Following is the brief Summary of Statistical Analysis Findings:

1. Demographics:

- **Gender:** The sample shows a balanced gender distribution, with 40% male, 40% female, and 20% identifying as "Other."
- **Age:** The sample is diverse in age, with the 55+ age group being the largest at 24%.
- **Occupation:** Retirement is the most prevalent occupation at 24%, followed by employment at 40%.
- **Travel Frequency:** A significant portion of the sample (44%) travels frequently.

2. User Feedback:

- **User-Friendliness Rating:** A majority (40%) gave the highest rating of 5, indicating positive perceptions.
- **Pricing Transparency Expectation:** Most respondents (72%) expect pricing transparency.
- **Accuracy of Information:** A majority (40%) perceives the accuracy of information as excellent.
- **Reservation Process Efficiency:** A diverse range of perceptions, with 32% finding it very efficient.
- **Post-Booking Communication:** 72% of respondents experience post-booking communication.
- **Customer Support Satisfaction:** Varied satisfaction levels, with 32% satisfied and 24% very satisfied.
- **Guest Experience Rating:** Diverse ratings, with 30% giving a rating of 5, indicating positive experiences.
- **Recommendation to Others:** A range of recommendations, with 40% definitely recommending and 16% definitely not recommending.

3. Correlation Analysis:

- **User-Friendliness and Other Variables:** Positive correlations with pricing transparency, reservation process efficiency, customer support satisfaction, overall guest experience rating, and recommendation to others.
- **Pricing Transparency and Other Variables:** Positive correlations with reservation process efficiency, customer support satisfaction, overall guest experience rating, and recommendation to others.

- **Reservation Process Efficiency and Other Variables:** Positive correlations with customer support satisfaction, overall guest experience rating, and recommendation to others.
- **Customer Support Satisfaction and Other Variables:** Positive correlations with overall guest experience rating and recommendation to others.
- **Post-Booking Communication:** Low correlations with other variables, suggesting it may not strongly influence overall experiences.
- **Guest Experience Rating and Recommendation to Others:** Strong positive correlation, indicating higher overall ratings lead to a higher likelihood of recommendation.

Overall, the findings highlight diverse perceptions and experiences among respondents, with user-friendliness, pricing transparency, and guest experience being significant factors influencing recommendations. The correlation analysis provides insights into the interplay between different aspects of the user experience.

CONCLUSION:

This research delves into the intricate relationship between virtual hotel bookings and guest satisfaction, particularly within the unique hospitality context of Kashmir, set against the backdrop of a flourishing online reservation sector. Employing a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study unfolds the complexities of online hotel reservations and their impact on guest contentment.

The implications of this research extend to both academia and the hospitality industry, providing valuable insights for scholars and practitioners. By unraveling the complexities of online hotel booking and guest contentment in Kashmir, this study contributes to the broader discourse on e-commerce in the tourism sector. For hoteliers and service providers, the findings emphasize the importance of prioritizing user-friendliness, pricing transparency, and post-booking communication to enhance guest satisfaction and increase the likelihood of positive recommendations. Understanding the regional nuances, including cultural considerations and scenic expectations, is crucial for aligning virtual reservations with the authentic, culturally rich expectations of guests in Kashmir. In navigating the evolving landscape of online hospitality services, this research underscores the significance of strategic decision-making informed by a nuanced understanding of guest preferences. By acknowledging and addressing the diverse factors influencing the guest experience, service providers can not only meet but exceed expectations, fostering a positive and memorable interaction with their virtual reservation systems. Ultimately, this study contributes to the ongoing evolution of online hospitality services, recognizing the unique dynamics of the Kashmiri hospitality context (13,14,15,16, 21,22,23).

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

The comprehensive study on virtual hotel bookings and guest satisfaction in the context of Kashmir provides valuable insights into the intricacies of the online reservation sector. However, there remain several avenues for further research that could deepen our understanding of this dynamic field. The following are potential areas for future investigation:

1. Cross-Cultural Analysis:

- Explore how cultural nuances impact guest expectations and satisfaction in virtual hotel bookings, not only in Kashmir but also in other regions with distinct cultural characteristics.

2. Technological Innovations:

- Investigate the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, in shaping the user experience during online hotel reservations.

3. Regional Variances in Pricing Transparency:

- Conduct a comparative analysis of pricing transparency expectations in different regions, considering economic factors, industry practices, and regional consumer behaviors.

4. Impact of Online Reviews:

- Examine the influence of online reviews and ratings on guest decision-making processes, exploring how these factors contribute to trust and satisfaction in virtual hotel bookings.

5. Sustainability in Virtual Reservations:

- Investigate how eco-friendly and sustainable practices in the hospitality industry impact guest satisfaction and decision-making during online reservations.

6. Mobile Booking Trends:

- Explore the growing trend of mobile bookings and assess how the shift to mobile platforms influences user experiences and satisfaction levels.

7. Comparative Study with Other Tourism Hubs:

- Conduct a comparative study between Kashmir and other popular tourism destinations to identify commonalities and differences in guest preferences, satisfaction, and virtual reservation experiences.

8. Long-Term Impact of Post-Booking Communication:

- Analyze the long-term impact of post-booking communication on guest loyalty and repeated bookings, considering its role beyond the immediate reservation period.

9. Psychological Aspects of User Satisfaction:

- Investigate the psychological aspects influencing user satisfaction during virtual hotel bookings, including the impact of expectations, perceptions, and emotions.

10. Evolving Trends in Guest Preferences:

- Stay abreast of evolving trends in guest preferences, considering factors such as contactless check-ins, personalized experiences, and the integration of smart technologies.

Exploring these areas could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the evolving landscape of virtual hotel bookings, ensuring that industry practices and academic research remain attuned to the changing needs and expectations of guests in an ever-evolving digital era (17,18,19,20).

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