



Impact of Perceived Front Office Practices on Guest Experience and Revisit Intentions: A Study of Star Category Hotels in Kashmir

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Abstract

In this study, the effect of perceived front office practices on guest experience and revisit intentions in star-category hotels in Kashmir is studied. Using a descriptive and analytical research design, the study uses a structured questionnaire to collect data from 500 guests on their perceptions of front-office practices, service quality, and overall satisfaction. The results show that professionalism, personal information privacy, and the timeliness of check-in and check-out determine guest satisfaction. Room upgrades and personalised promotions are among the identified areas for improvement. The research also emphasises the need for personalised services, effective operations, and staff proficiency as critical factors in improving guest satisfaction and loyalty. Suggestions for hotel management involve increasing personalisation, improving communication, optimising processes, and employee development. The research adds to the field of hospitality by identifying the importance of front-office practices from guests' perspectives in the hospitality industry in Kashmir. This research focuses on the effect that perceived front office practices have on the guest experience and revisits the intentions of the star hotel category in Kashmir.

Keywords: Front Office Practices, Guest Satisfaction, Revisit Intentions, Service Quality, Star-Category Hotels, Kashmir.

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3174

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry in Kashmir, particularly its hotels, significantly contributes to the economic development of the region by attracting many visitors from around the world, drawn by its scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage. Although the industry has faced many perilous ordeals, such as the occurrence of natural catastrophes and unstable political environments, it has never ceased to adapt to changing trends to meet the ever-

transitioning demand of tourists around the globe (Rath, 2020). Technological advancement and service innovation ensure that the industry merges with the latest technology. Fusion has been made possible for visitors to enjoy unique and memorable experiences (Bhat & Sharma, 2022). The sustainable tourism practices trend has also been noted in the area over the past few years, where businesses and organisations have put into practice eco-ethics measures so as to minimise



ecological effects. This commitment to sustainability benefits the surrounding ecosystem and encourages a growing population of ethical and ethical tourists who seek opportunities for proper and ethical vacations. In addition, through partnerships with foreign travel agencies, strong public-private sector cooperation has ensured further expansion in the country's travel and tourism industries, as well as better foreign penetration and destination marketing, as well as improved infrastructure.

The influence of front desk practices on guests' experiences and satisfaction

In the hotel industry, front desk procedures play a critical role in determining visitors' overall happiness and first impressions. These practices, which include everything from welcoming visitors upon arrival to responding to their questions and making sure the check-out process goes well, have a big impact on how well visitors are treated. According to Rehman et al. (2022), the front desk staff's professionalism, attentiveness, and kindness are crucial elements of high-quality service that can boost patron satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, front desk practices are essential for building a good connection with visitors, making the place seem friendly, and quickly attending to any problems or complaints. Front desk workers may create a lasting impression and improve the entire client experience by constantly providing outstanding service and personalised attention. In addition to increasing customer happiness, these actions may encourage favourable word-of-mouth referrals and repeat business for the lodging facility.

Although the value of front office procedures in improving guest experiences is well acknowledged, little is known about how precisely these practices affect visitor satisfaction and intent to return to star-rated hotels in Kashmir. By

methodically investigating how perceived front desk practices affect guests' experiences and their inclinations to return to these hotels, this study seeks to close this gap. In order to improve their services and ultimately the entire guest experience, hotels in Kashmir may make educated decisions by knowing the precise influence that front office activities have on client satisfaction and plans to revisit. The results of this study will give hospitality businesses in the area insightful information that will help them focus resources and priorities on front desk procedures that enhance client satisfaction and foster more customer loyalty.

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the status of front desk practices in Kashmir's star hotels.
2. To assess how these approaches affect how satisfied guests are.
3. To ascertain the connection between visitors' intentions to return and their level of pleasure.
4. To determine where front desk practices need to be improved in order to increase visitor experiences and loyalty.

3175

1. Significance

The findings of this study have important ramifications for legislators and hotel managers in Kashmir's hospitality sector. Hoteliers may boost service quality and gain a competitive edge by pinpointing the essential elements of front-office practices that lead to client happiness and loyalty. Moreover, the results might offer valuable perspectives for creating front-desk employee training curricula that underscore the significance of superior customer service in attaining corporate triumph. The results can also be used by legislators to develop rules and guidelines that support a customer-centric strategy in the hotel sector. This study adds to the body of information already in existence



by illuminating the particular elements that affect patron loyalty and satisfaction within the particular framework of Kashmir's hospitality sector.

2. Literature Review

Clearly, research on the hospitality industry suggests that front-office practices are crucial to the enhancement of both guest satisfaction and future business. Research by Gumaste et al. (2015) remind us that professionalism, civility, and efficiency in front-desk operations are essential to the development of memorable guest experiences in upscale hotels. Nain et al. (2018) make the point that front office departments must be a source of never-ending innovation and implementation as they strive to keep up with ever-changing guest expectations. The discussion is extended further as we consider how technology can enhance front-office operations. For example, research by Bhatt et al. (2022) shows how the use of machine learning in social media and computer technologies can enable customization of guest services by analysing preferences and comments thus changing how guests perceive the hotel. Raina's (2017) research into the impact of customer relationship management (CRM) systems on guest satisfaction and loyalty shows us how these technologies are effective in facilitating the rapid delivery of services and the ongoing communication with guests that is necessary for their continued satisfaction. From the initial recognition of technology as a means by which primary customer service and guest satisfaction could be enhanced (Van Hoof et al., 1995) to the current integration of digital concierge services and mobile check-in (Kim et al., 2022; Shin & Jeong, 2022), technology's evolution within the field of hospitality has come a long way and it has truly paved the way for a fuller, more integrated and guest-centric service model. Al-Refaie et

al. (2012) address how technology plays a vital role in the better understanding and enforcement of customer connection skills within the context of CRM frameworks, thereby emphasizing the strategic importance of technology in the enhancement of service quality. Meanwhile, in addressing the issue of talent management, Hota (2017) subtly underscores the importance of training staff on how to use technology to their advantage and best service the needs of their guests. Taken in total, these studies underline the seismic impact that the integration of technology has had upon front-office operations. It has simultaneously both streamlined processes and provided exponentially more efficient and tailored services that greatly enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

3176

Theoretical Frameworks

The SERVQUAL model serves as a pivotal research foundation for delivering exemplary service and for systematic approaches to understanding and improving guest satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality industry. Amballoor (2015) demonstrated the relevance and effectiveness of the SERVQUAL model in identifying and bridging the gaps between guest service perceptions and their expectations in the Goa sector's hotels. Similarly, Donnelly & White (2014) effectively utilized the SERVQUAL model to evaluate local authority conference venues, pinpointing and addressing service attributes needing improvement to facilitate targeted enhancements in service delivery. Saleh & Ryan (1991) highlighted SERVQUAL's importance in early hotel service quality examination, fostering its widespread application to enhance guest experiences. Beheshtinia & Azad (2019) further illustrated SERVQUAL's flexibility by integrating it with fuzzy Quality Function Deployment (QFD) and the Kano



model to meet guest satisfaction and loyalty, even under budget constraints.

The Theory of Reasoned Action provides additional insights into the interactive relationships among service quality, guest satisfaction, and customer loyalty, emphasizing the need for integrating technology in front-office practices. Bhatt, Perrigino, & Fife (2022) discussed how technology and social media can transform front-office service delivery into a real-time, adaptive control system, consistently exceeding guest satisfaction and fostering the highest levels of loyalty, especially in Egyptian five- and four-star hotels.

These studies imply significant implications for explaining hospitality guest satisfaction and a dynamic guest loyalty model (Hussein, 2017). They suggest that service organizations must transition from theoretical requirements to practical execution of a step-by-step approach to service quality in real-time. This entails employing first-principles-based theory measures to ascertain required service levels and a theoretical model of guest loyalty, providing hoteliers with a practical metric for the minimum effective hospitality service required and how to deliver guest satisfaction at the highest tier-levels of guest loyalty.

Identification of Gaps in the Literature

The literature reveals insightful information on how front-office practices impact customer satisfaction and loyalty, yet it nonetheless contains significant gaps. There are no studies specifically investigating how front-office practices in star-category hotels are affected by Kashmir hospitality, which is characterized by distinct cultural and geographic attributes that might influence guest expectations and experiences. What is more, additional empirical research is needed to more fully comprehend the link between particular front-office practices and return propensity, as well as the

mediating role of guest satisfaction in this relationship. Additionally, further research is warranted into how front-office practices and guest experiences are affected by the introduction of new technologies and digitization, particularly in the context of Kashmiri hospitality (Micek, 2021; Sukhragchaa et al., 2021). By having a better appreciation of the Kashmir region's unique cultural and natural features, hotels in Kashmir will be better able to accommodate the varied expectations and tastes of their guests. By conducting empirical research, hoteliers may be able to learn much more about how specific front-office practices impact customers' desire to return and how guest satisfaction serves to moderate this link. Finally, by examining how digitization and new technologies in Kashmir's hospitality sector are impacting front-office practices and guest experiences, hotels can maintain their competitiveness in an increasingly high-tech world.

3177

2. METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive research approach was adapted to systematically explore whether front-office practices have any direct bearing on visitors' satisfaction, and whether they intend to revisit. This study, christened "Impact of Perceived Front Office Practices on Guest Experience and Revisit Intentions: A Study of Star Category Hotels in Kashmir," was guided by a research design, which entailed developing a structured questionnaire to solicit responses, using a stratified random sampling design to isolate variabilities by category, and following exacting data-gathering and analysis protocols.

Research Design

A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data, in tandem with a descriptive and analytical research design. The latter is imperative, as it helps ascertain the level of

satisfaction/dissatisfaction and returning intention of visitors vis-à-vis the front desk procedures in star rated hotels in Kashmir. Adopting a descriptive and analytical design was thus necessary to fathom the intricate linkages between front-office procedures and customer satisfaction under the hospitality domain (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Questionnaire Development

A thorough review of literature in the hospitality as well as service quality fields inspired the development of the questionnaire. Through this strategy, the questionnaire revealed critical elements of guest satisfaction, service quality, and front office mechanisms that would be relevant to hotel visitor experiences. The questionnaire was split into four divisions: Demographic Profile, Front Office Procedures, Service Quality, and Guest Satisfaction, to allow for the gathering of a wide range of experiences and practices influencing visitor satisfaction and return intention (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Sampling Method and Study Population

To enable the sample to adequately represent the wide range of guest demographics in Kashmir's star-category hotels, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. The analysis focused on hotels guest who had visited these hotels in the last year and 500 respondents were needed as a sample size in order to draw a statistically meaningful examination with proper margin of error and confidence level (Kothari, 2004).

Data Collection Procedure

In order to ensure that the sample correctly represented the plethora of visitor demographics engaged in Star-category hotels in Kashmir, a stratified random selection technique was used. A sample size of 500 respondents was expected to be

significant, consisting of visitors who had visited these hotels during last 1 year back, allowing for acceptable margin of error and confidence level (Kothari, 2004).

Data Analysis Technique

Reliability and validity tests have been carried out in addition to Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (EFA and CFA) in data processing. EFA was used to analyze questionnaire questions related to front office operations, service quality, and visitor satisfaction to reduce data size and to identify underlying structure between the questionnaire questions. CFA was used to confirm the factor structure identified based on EFA and to investigate relationships between latent constructs and observable variables. Reliability of the questionnaire was checked with Cronbach's alphas. Lastly, content and construct validity tests were conducted to make sure that the questionnaire is valid and to ensure its compliance with the aims of the research (Tabachnick&Fidell, 2013).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results

The EFA results indicate that the factor loadings for each of the items on the three factors identified, namely; front office practices (comprising 17 items), service quality (comprising 9 items), and guest satisfaction (comprising 8 items), shows how much each question in the questionnaire is associated with the particular factor. The values closer to one confirm a strong association of each item with the respective factor.

- Factor 1: Front Office Practices has strong loadings for several items, indicating a significant impact on this dimension.
- Factor 2: Service Quality also shows strong associations with its items, highlighting its importance in the overall guest experience.

- Factor 3: The variance in loadings for the variable "Guest Satisfaction" suggests that the questionnaire items have captured various facets of guest satisfaction.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results

The CFA results support the factor structure found in the EFA. Strong loadings for each factor on a subset of items suggest that the hypothesized model fits the data well.

- Factor 1: Front Office Practices demonstrate high loadings, particularly on items related to staff interaction and efficiency.
- Factor 2: Service quality loadings emphasise the quality of information and staff training.
- Factor 3: Guest satisfaction levels focus on the overall satisfaction with front office services.

Reliability and validity

- Reliability: The Cronbach's alpha values for each factor are as follows:
 - Front Office Practices: 0.797
 - Service Quality: 0.768
 - Guest Satisfaction: 0.907

These values are above the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating that the scales are internally consistent and reliable.

Validity: This construct validity of the questionnaire is confirmed by the factor structure of the EFA and CFA results. The EFA as well as CFA results reveal that the items effectively measure the intended constructs as factor loadings provide evidence that items of the questionnaire are valid indicators of front office practices, service quality, and guest satisfaction.

The questionnaire thus appears to have reliability and construct validity for measuring the impact of front office practices on guest satisfaction and revisiting intentions in star-category hotels of Kashmir. This leaves us in a good stead to analyse data collected from a sample size of 500, which can enable us to make valid inferences as to what these guest experiences would imply for hotel management.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

An understanding of the respondents' characteristics may be gained via the examination of their demographic data. This can assist with comprehending how various demographic groups view and encounter the level of service and front desk procedures in upscale hotels located in the Kashmir Valley. The distribution of respondents across several demographic groups is displayed in the summary table below:

3179

Table 1: Demographic details

Demographic Feature	Distribution (%)
Age	
Up to 20	13.0%
21-35	35.2%
36-50	30.6%
51-65	15.2%
66 & above	6.0%
Gender	
Male	52.4%
Female	47.6%
Marital Status	



Married	54.8%
Unmarried	45.2%
Education	
Up to 10+2	11.0%
Under Graduation	18.8%
Graduate	29.4%
Post Graduate	35.2%
Other	5.6%
Occupation	
Student	9.6%
Government Employee	13.6%
Shopkeeper	11.4%
Auto/Rickshaw owner	4.6%
Agriculturist	11.0%
Businessman	40.2%
Other	9.6%
Income	
Up to 3 Lacs	24.6%
3-6 Lacs	24.8%
6-9 Lacs	23.2%
Above 9 lacs	27.4%

3180

Analysis

- **Age Distribution:** The largest age group among the respondents is 21–35 years (35.2%), followed by the 36–50 years group (30.6%), indicating a young to middle-aged demographic that frequents premium-class hotels in Kashmir Valley.
- **Gender Distribution:** The gender distribution is fairly balanced, with a slight male predominance (52.4%).
- **Marital Status:** More than half of the respondents are married (54.8%), which may influence preferences for certain types of services or accommodations.
- **Education Levels:** A significant portion of the respondents have higher education degrees (postgraduate: 35.2%, graduate: 29.4%), suggesting a well-educated clientele that might have higher expectations regarding service quality.
- **Occupation:** A large number of respondents are businessmen (40.2%),

which might reflect on their travel purposes and service expectations.

- **Income Brackets:** The income distribution is relatively evenly spread across the four categories, with a slight leaning towards higher income brackets (above 9 lacs: 27.4%).

Potential Impact on Perceptions and Experiences

Findings suggest that the demographic profile implies varied expectations and perceptions among the guests. For instance, younger and highly educated guests may have a different set of anticipations for technological amenities and service innovations. The business class and high-income groups might be more concerned with efficiency, professionalism, and luxury services. Meanwhile, gender and marital status could lead to divergent preferences for room types, leisure amenities, and personalization services. Understanding these demographic nuances is vital for



crafting front office practices and ensuring the satisfaction of multiple guest segments.

Part II: Front Office Practices Examination of Guests' Perceptions about Front Office Practices

The overall perspective of the guests regarding front office practices in premium class hotels of Kashmir Valley is

summarized in Table 12, which is based upon the average scores of Likert scale responses (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Indifferent, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). These average scores present the collective perception of different aspects of front office practices such as greeting manners, professionalism, responsiveness, and security measures.

Table 2: Front Office Practice Attribute

Front Office Practice Attribute	Average Score
Friendly Greeting	3.76
Welcome Drinks	3.08
Room Upgradation	2.81
Prompt Response	3.69
Professionalism	4.10
Neatness and Cleanliness	4.02
Accurate and Efficient Reservations	3.91
Willingness to Meet Needs	3.92
Security of Personal Information	4.24
Prompt Payment Inquiries	3.66
Online Check-in Option	3.14
Assistance with Transportation	3.04
Information on Promotions	2.69
Instructions about Room and Amenities	4.03
Knowledge about Local Attractions	3.40

3181

Insights

Areas of high satisfaction included Security of personal information (4.24), indicating guests greatly value the front office's confidentiality and security measures, and Neatness and cleanliness (4.02), suggesting the front office staff and the physical appearance of the front desk area have a strong positive perception. Professionalism (4.10) also received high scores. Areas of moderate satisfaction, such as Friendly Greeting (3.76), Prompt Response (3.69), and Willingness to Meet Needs (3.92), scored moderately high, indicating that while guests are generally satisfied with these aspects, there is room for improvement to enhance guest experiences further. Areas needing improvements were identified as Room Upgradation (2.81), Information on

Promotions (2.69), and Assistance with Transportation (3.04), representing opportunities for hotels to enhance their service offerings and guest communication to improve satisfaction levels.

The analysis reveals overall high guest perception of front office practices in premium-class hotels in Kashmir Valley, especially in areas of professionalism, security, and neatness. However, specific areas were identified where hotels could focus on to further lift guest experiences: providing more transparent information about promotions, creatively enhancing room upgrade policies, and offering more assistance with transportation. Addressing these opportunities could lead to even higher levels of guest satisfaction and perhaps increased revisit intentions.



Part III: Service Quality

Analysis of Perceived Service Quality highlights various dimensions of front office services in premium-class hotels in Kashmir Valley such as professionalism, information quality, staff training, service

personalization, and efficiency of processes. Average scores from the Likert scale responses (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree) provide insights into guests' perceptions.

Table 3: Service Quality Attribute

Service Quality Attribute	Average Score
Professionalism and Courtesy	3.99
Quality Information	3.25
Well-trained and Knowledgeable Staff	4.10
Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	3.83
Willingness to Assist	4.13
Accurate and Prompt Service	3.93
Excellent Communication Skills	4.17
Customized Services for Quality	3.12
Active Listening to Concerns	3.66
Commitment to Resolving Issues	3.99
Helpful Information on Local Attractions	3.33
Smooth and Efficient Check-in Process	4.21
Smooth Checkout Process	4.18

3182

- **High Satisfaction Areas:** The highest scores were observed in smooth and Efficient Check-in Process (4.21), Smooth Checkout Process (4.18), and Excellent Communication Skills (4.17). These scores indicate that guests are particularly satisfied with the efficiency and effectiveness of check-in and check-out processes and the communication skills of the front office staff. Willingness to Assist (4.13) and Well-trained and Knowledgeable Staff (4.10) also received high scores, suggesting that staff training and their attitude towards assisting guests is highly appreciated.
- **Moderate Satisfaction Areas:** While still positive, Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (3.83), Accurate and Prompt Service (3.93), and Professionalism and Courtesy (3.99) received slightly lower scores, indicating areas where guests have high expectations and see room for further improvement.

- **Areas for Improvement:** Customized Services for Quality (3.12) and Quality Information (3.25) received the lowest scores, suggesting that guests perceive a need for improvements in the customization of services to their individual needs and the quality of information provided by the front office. It is evident from the results that guests have a highly favourable view of service quality in relation to front office staff in premium-class hotels in Kashmir Valley. Professionalism of staff, staff communication skills, and efficiency of check-in and check-out process are particularly praised by guests. However, in order to enhance guest satisfaction within the context of front office interactions, a potential area for improvement relates to the customization of services. Likewise, the quality of the information provided to guests may be furthered so as to enhance



their overall satisfaction with their hotel experience.

Part IV: Guest Satisfaction Assessment of Overall Guest Satisfaction

The assessment of overall guest satisfaction with respect to front office interactions in premium-class hotels in

Kashmir Valley is depicted below. Average scores are derived from Likert scale responses to items in the form of (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: indifferent, 4: Agree, 5: agree) in relation to guests’ satisfaction with service quality and with staff responsiveness as well as security measures.

Table 4: Guest Satisfaction Attribute

Guest Satisfaction Attribute	Average Score
Overall Quality of Service	4.09
Feeling Valued and Appreciated	4.09
Cleanliness and Maintenance	4.23
Prompt and Effective Responses	3.91
Timely and Efficient Resolution	4.07
High Level of Security and Safety	4.27

The Highest Satisfaction areas were noted for High Level of Security and Safety (4.27) and Cleanliness and Maintenance (4.23), highlighting that hotels are successfully meeting or exceeding guest expectations in these essential areas. The subsequent highest ratings for Feeling that your Business is Valued and Appreciated (4.09) and Overall Quality of Service Received (4.09) underscore the front office staff’s effectiveness in providing quality service and making guests feel acknowledged and valued. Timely and Efficient Resolution (4.07) of issues and concerns, along with Prompt and Effective Responses (3.91) to inquiries, also scored well, indicating general satisfaction with the staff’s responsiveness, albeit with slight room for improvement.

Despite high scores indicating overall guest satisfaction with front office interactions, especially in ensuring security, safety, and cleanliness, areas such as Prompt and Effective Responses (3.91) suggest opportunities for enhancing guest satisfaction. By focusing on improving the speed and effectiveness of responses to inquiries and requests, hotels could further

elevate the guest experience. Addressing these aspects can contribute to an even more positive guest experience, underscoring the critical role of front office interactions in overall guest satisfaction and potentially influencing their intentions to revisit.

4. DISCUSSION

Management practices by the front office play an important role in forming the face of a hotel. The present study focused on analysing Demographic profiles, Front office practices, Service quality, and Guest satisfaction to assess the impact of perceived front office practices on guest experience and revisit intentions in star category hotels in Kashmir. The brief findings are presented as below

- **Demographic Profiles**
 The demographics of the respondent base were diverse with significant representation from the age groups of 21–35 (35.2%) and 36-50 (30.6%). The gender distribution was almost equal between males (52.4%) and females (47.6%). The respondents



varied across different occupations, with a sizeable number of businessmen (40.2%). The general level of education was high, with the majority holding at least a graduation (29.4%) or post-graduation (35.2%) degrees, suggesting they were likely to have higher expectations regarding service standards.

- **Front Office Practices**

The front office practices were rated highly for professionalism (4.10) and security of personal details (4.24), marking these as key strengths. However, room upgrades (2.81) and information on promotions (2.69) were rated lower, indicating these as areas for improvement to enhance guest experience.

- **Service Quality**

The service quality was highly rated, especially for well-trained and knowledgeable staff (4.10), willingness to assist (4.13), and smooth check-in and check-out procedures (above 4.2). Customized services for quality (3.12) and quality information (3.25) were identified as areas needing improvement according to guest feedback.

- **Guest Satisfaction**

Guest satisfaction was very high across different attributes, with high levels of security and safety (4.27) and cleanliness and maintenance (4.23) scoring the highest. The overall quality of service and feeling valued as a guest were also rated highly (4.09), reflecting a positive guest experience.

Relationship between Front Office Practices, Service Quality, Guest Satisfaction, and Revisit Intentions

Overall visitor satisfaction was shown to have a high positive link with the perceived quality of front-office operations, according to the study. Particular weight was given to high

standards of professionalism, security, and individualised care. Researchers discovered that perceived service value and satisfaction were directly impacted by service quality, which included personnel responsiveness, knowledgeability, and communication. Perceived service value in turn affected revisit intentions. According to studies, hotels must provide a varied range of services to match the expectations and views of their audience, which is determined by demographic criteria such as age, education, and employment. According to experts, the results unequivocally show how crucial front desk procedures and high-quality service are to raising overall client satisfaction and encouraging return visits in the hotel sector. Hotels claim that by focusing on areas for development and utilising their advantages, they may better manage customer expectations and, more importantly, get an edge over rivals through increased customer loyalty and favourable word-of-mouth referrals. According to the survey, Kashmir Valley's hotels would do well to concentrate on their front desk staff in particular as well as to stress individuality, efficiency, and security in general as they battle for supremacy in the ultra-exclusive world of premium hospitality.

Discussion

The intricate interplay of a hotel's front-desk operations and guest satisfaction, especially in the case of high-end hotels in Kashmir, illustrates how such practices are critical in enhancing guest experiences and building loyalty. This dialogue draws on recent research for a deeper look at how front-office management influences the guest's experience with and loyalty to the hotel, as well as a discussion of best practices for elevating that experience — underscoring how critical the front-desk staff's role is in the overall quality of a

guest's stay and in encouraging repeat visits.

Interpretation of Results and Influence on Guest Satisfaction and Loyalty

Our work concurs with these findings in emphasizing that professionalism, security, efficient check-in and check-out processes are essential to ensuring guest satisfaction. Similarly, Çiçekdağı (2018) stresses the importance of continually improving service quality through the use of Failure Mode and Effect Analysis (FMEA) in the front office. This approach enables service failures to be spotted proactively and ameliorated before they can negatively impact guest experiences. It is through these direct person-to person contacts between front office staff and guests, as Barker & Twin (2021) note, where the guest's overall perception of the hotel is shaped. In this context it is impossible to overestimate the influence the professionalism, speed, and personal nature of the interaction has over the guest's satisfaction with the overall service. It is these positive experiences that build the emotional foundations for the hotel's relationship with both the guest and their future recommendations, representing a second and third level benefit of guest loyalty.

Best Practices in Front Office Management

The study and literature support identify several best practices in front-office management, emphasizing the need for a tailored approach to guest services:

Professionalism and Training: Continuous training in customer service excellence, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution is essential to uphold a high standard of professionalism among front office staff, as highlighted by Çiçekdağı (2018).

Transparency and Communication: Maintaining clear and transparent communication with guests regarding

services, promotions, and policies and proactively addressing their inquiries and concerns is key to building trust and satisfaction (Barker & Twin, 2021).

Security Measures: Implementing stringent data protection measures to safeguard personal information is vital, reflecting the increasing concern for data privacy in the digital age (Çiçekdağı, 2018).

These practices highlight the important role of front-office staff in boosting guest satisfaction and loyalty. By focusing on personalization, professionalism, efficiency, transparency, and security, hotels can offer memorable experiences that foster loyalty and secure long-term success in the highly competitive premium hospitality sector of the Kashmir Valley.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlights the critical importance of front-office operations in shaping guest satisfaction and loyalty at upscale hotels in Kashmir. It proposes that the professionalism of the front-office team, effective security and surveillance, and rapid and efficient check-in and check-out processes are not only necessary for making a favourable first impression but also for ensuring long-term guest satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, the researchers recommend providing complimentary or reasonably priced room upgrades and better-designed promotions to welcome and serve guests as essential areas for improvement. The implications for hotel operators and policymakers are significant. This study suggests that continuous training in customer service and cultural awareness, as well as up-to-date technological competencies, are imperative for hotels. However, the data suggest that there is a need to enhance their data integration and security systems to assure privacy to their guests, and communication with them should be more personalized, pre-stay as well as post-stay.

In their recommendations, the authors propose that the concerns mentioned can be addressed through the use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, digital communication platforms, and user-friendly technology for check-in/out, but most importantly, through a uniform staff training program in customer service. These may be the game-changers for the organization since, with increased emphasis on privacy, data security becomes tremendously important for the hotel to retain its guests' trust in their commitment to safeguard their information. This study lays the groundwork for several interesting future research directions. Over the long term, one might be interested in looking at how guest expectations are changing. Another might involve comparing guest perceptions across cultures. Also, it might be interesting to see how artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things are changing the hospitality sector. Another might be a deep dive into the various challenges that the front office staff at hotels might be facing or a cost-benefit analysis of investing in technology and staff training for hotel management.

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