Ibis Styles London Heathrow Hotel

What Guests Really Think of Your Hotel? An Analysis of Online Reviews of The Guests. A Case of Ibis Styles London Heathrow Hotel

Name: Hammad Qureshi
ID: 1712624
University Of Wales- Trinity Saint David
Lecturer: Allison Wylde

Introduction

- Progressively, online customer reviews are gaining importance amongst hotels.
- Previously, these reviews were mostly about luxury hotels but with time budget hotel reviews are gaining significance as well
- Qualitative in-depth research was chosen, as online reviews were analyzed from TripAdvisor. Moreover, respondents were interviewed informally for additional data.
- Ibis Styles London Heathrow (ISLH)
- To understand customer insights, to study the factors that affect customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and to offer recommendations to managers for further improvement.

Literature Review

- The way tourists search for travel information has changed because of the dominant role of the Internet in today's society (Arsal, Bacman and Baldwin, 2009)
- Electronic word of mouth has a wider scope and creates more rapid exchanges; therefore, it has a much superior consequence on inducing demand than traditional word of mouth (Cantallops and Salvi, 2014).
- The relationship between online customer reviews (OCRs) and customer perceptions about them is that positive OCRs increase purchase intentions and negative OCRs decrease purchase intentions (Karakaya and Barnes, 2010)
- Core attributes such as cleanliness, location, F&B, fitness center and internet service, are the fundamental for customers. Peripheral attributes such room service, friendliness and efficiency of staff are like add-ons for the customers (Hutchinson, McCleary and Weaver, 2013)
- OCRs on core attributes have a more significant effect on lowering the level of consumers' perceived risk associated with online leisure hotel booking than OCRs on peripheral attributes (Hutchinson, McCleary and Weaver, 2013)
- According to Gu and Ryan (2008), there are seven key features of a hotel that positively impact customers' overall gratification; bed comfort, room size, and sanitation of bathroom services, approachability and locality, worth of F&B, add on services, and performance of the hotel staff.
- Sparks and Browning (2011), used four variables to design an experiment: the target of the review, positive or negative reviews, framing of reviews that come first (positive or negative), and whether the clients produced numerical rating along with the qualitative comments.

Literature Review (continued)

- It was found that consumers get affected if the negative reviews are displayed before the positive reviews. They are even more influenced if the overall rating is negative. However, if the overall rating is positive and the framing is such that positive reviews are displayed before the negative reviews, consumer confidence is constructed.
- The results showed that consumers depend upon easily understandable data when assessing online hotel reviews (Sparks and Browning, 2011).

Research Objectives

- Hotels must recognize the customer needs and customer's frame of mind, so that they not only meet those prospects but exceed them, in order to prosper within the hotel businesses (Lu et al., 2015). To understand the mass market's insights, online comments and reviews must be focused upon. Commonly these reviews target the full-service and luxury hotels, although they have been multiplying progressively. The discernments towards budget hotels like Ibis Styles London Heathrow Hotel (ISLH) are hence unidentified. This study circles around the following objectives:

- To recognise customer's perception of the ISLH through online reviews.
- To study the aspects that add to the contentment and discontentment of ISLH guests during their visit; and
- To deliver appropriate recommendations for ISLH managers to evolve the value of the services provided.

Methodology

- In order to achieve better understanding of the suggested objectives, the qualitative research method has been used due of the exploratory nature of the study.
- **Research Approach**
  - Inductive approach is used to analyze the results, it is because, the inductive research approach is considered to be one of the flexible approaches with a reason of no condition of pre-determined theory for gathering information (Kothari, C.R., 2004)
- **Research Philosophy**
  - Interpretivism Philosophy
- This study was limited to online reviews as well as informal interviews for Ibis Styles London Heathrow (ISLH) hotel.
- **Research Technique and Data**
  - Secondary and primary data technique has been used for this study in the form of online reviews (secondary) and guest's interviews (Primary)
- The researcher has used content analysis to examine the text without any influence from previous theories or models, which would aid in discussion of the finding exclusive to this study.

Source of Data

- Most of the data were in textual form and was gathered mainly from comments posted on one of the largest travel site called TripAdvisor (http://tripadvisor.com).
- **TripAdvisor** consist of 456 million monthly average website visitors with 661 millions reviews of hotels exclusively, covering 7.7 million hotels, airlines and restaurants around the globe (tripadvisor.com, 2016)
- TripAdvisor has its own distribution system which allow its user to book their holidays (accommodation, flights, car rentals etc) and provide a platform to its user to leave comments after staying in any hotel which was booked through their website.
- TripAdvisor was considered appropriate for this study because of two main reasons. First, reviews on TripAdvisor were consistent, reliable and suitable for the analysis as well as website has sufficient comments to support this study and secondly, Ibis Styles London Heathrow hotel which is the main target of this study, has linked TripAdvisor's comments directly on their official website.
- Other source of data has obtained by conducting informal interviews of the five guests staying in ISLH hotel. The answers were recorded during the informal open ended conversation. All the questions were directly related to the keywords selected from the online comments so both data sources could complement each other as well as triangulate the findings of this study

Data gathering and Study Site

- Only comments on Ibis Styles London Heathrow (ISLH) hotel were analysed, which is an airport hotel and located very near to Heathrow Airport and considered one of the most busiest airports in the world.
- An airport hotel was selected for its greater level of maturity in term of greater numbers of guests who come for a short stay, mostly during their transact flights and due to this reason, more travellers choose to stay in budget hotels like ISLH rather than luxurious hotels (Nazir et al., 2014)
- Due to précised nature of this study, only 20 comments on the Ibis Styles London Heathrow hotel were used for the analysis, which were not older than ten months and two random comments from each month were selected
- Interviews

Data Analysis and Findings

- The data was compiled in the form of positive and negative online comments
- Keywords from comments such as cleanliness, comfort, location, rooms, facilities, staff, value for money and services were picked.
- For instance, the positive feedback of the guest in the comment expresses the attributes of the services, features of the room, quality of the food and facilities which include elevator, WIFI, taxis, and behavior of staff members.
- As the customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction depends on the keywords which highlight the positive and negative vibe of the hotel

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Data recorded through online reviews

	Positive response	negative response	Positive %
Cleanliness and Comfort	19	1	95%
F&B	9	11	45%
Location	20	0	100%
Rooms	16	4	80%
Facilities	9	11	45%
Staff	16	4	80%
Value for Money	18	2	90%
Services	3	17	15%
Total Responses	20		

It can be deduced that Ibis Styles' online reviews reflected satisfaction of clients with the core features of a hotel such as location, rooms and cleanliness. However, due to it being a budget hotel, peripherals were reviewed negatively such as services and facilities.

Data Analysis and Findings

- Five guests were informally interviewed to assess their satisfaction. The questionnaire consists structured questions which include customer background and information, services and customer satisfaction with regard to the Ibis Styles hotel, factors of services of Ibis Styles hotel, and open discussion questions.

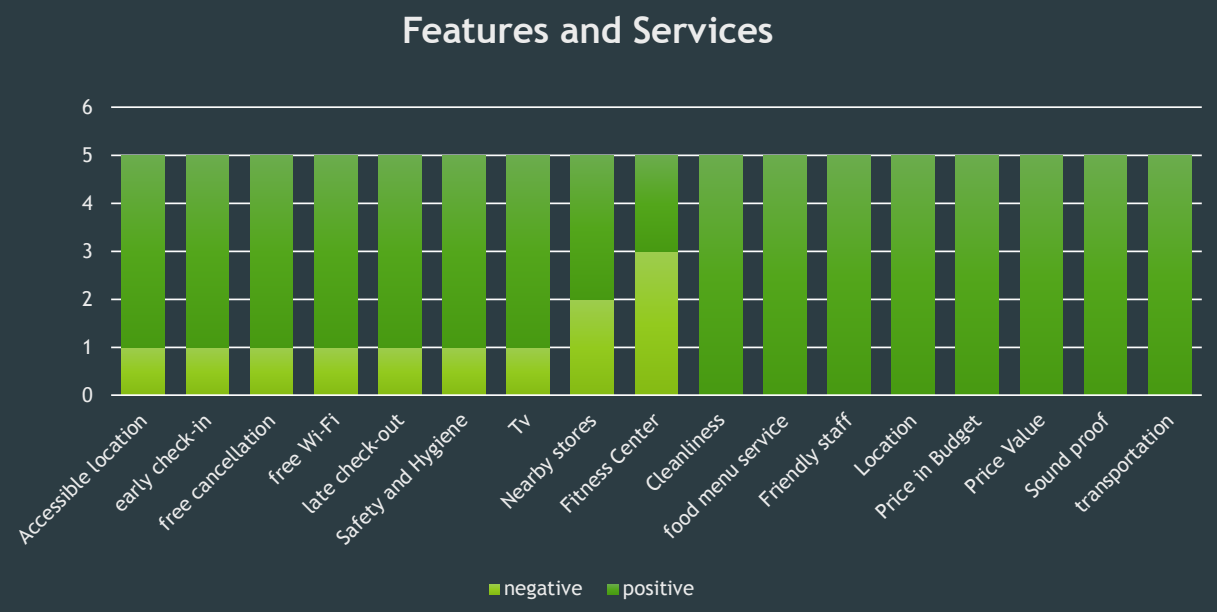
Table 2: Data of Interviewers

Respondent Id	Gender	Interview Date	Location
01	Male	17 August 2018	UK
02	Female	17 August 2018	Russia
03	Male	17 August 2018	Bangladesh
04	Male	17 August 2018	UK
05	Male	17 August 2018	UK

The responses of the respondents were recorded through an indication of the features and services of the Ibis Hotel. The services and features include accessible location, cleanliness, early check-ins, check-outs late, fitness center, food menu services, free cancellation of booking, free access to Wi-Fi, and sound-proof rooms.

Data Analysis and Findings

- The 73 responses were examined as the positive aspects and the 12 responses were related to the negative vibes. Therefore, the positive aspects were more than the negative.



The accessible location and transport, as mentioned in the online reviews, was an especially favorable factor for the guests. Another core feature, safety and hygiene, was reviewed positively. Moreover, interviews showed that sound-proof rooms added to the core features such as the comfortability of the room.

Discussion and Recommendation

- The guests were primarily concerned about the cleanliness of the room, comfortability of the beds, accessibility and location of the hotel, affordability and quality of F&B and staff behaviour.
- However, absence of basic hotel services, below average F&B service quality and lack of facilities have created uncertainties about ISLH
- Lack of Services (Room Service, Porter Services, 24 hour F&B)
- The managers should consider an option to provide these services to its guests as they are not very costly to deploy
- Lack of Facilities e.g. Gym
- It might be costly for the hotel to offer such facility, however, offering this facility would provide competitive edge over other budget hotels around the area and ultimately would increase the overall rating
- Poor F&B Quality.
- A poor or low quality breakfast may ruin the overall experience of the guest. The F&B manager should focus on delivery the quality food experience to the guests.

Limitations and Ethics

- Insufficient amount of data sample
- Limited to TripAdvisor's comments only.
- Consider other travel websites like booking.com and hotels.com as data sources to triangulate the findings of this study.
- While conducting the research study, ethics have been considered on the priority basis.
- Permission from the managers had been approved prior taking informal interviews from the guests.

References

- Arsal, I., Backman, S. and Baldwin, E. (2009). Influence of an Online Travel Community on Travel Decisions. *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008*, [online] pp.82-93. Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-211-77280-5_8 [Accessed 21 Aug. 2018].
- Bertan, S., Bayram, M. and Yozukmaz, N. (2015). The evaluation of thermal hotels' online reviews. *Tourism*, 63(53), pp.42-59.
- Biwei, Y. (2013). The Effect Of Online Customer Reviews On Customer's Perceived Risk Associated With Online Leisure Hotel Booking. Open Access Theses. Paper 93.
- Browning, V., So, K. and Sparks, B. (2013). The Influence of Online Reviews on Consumers' Attributions of Service Quality and Control for Service Standards in Hotels. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1-2), pp.23-40.
- Gu, H. and Ryan, C. (2008). Place attachment, identity and community impacts of tourism—the case of a Beijing hutong. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), pp.637-647.
- Hong, T. (2006). The influence of structural and message features on web site credibility. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*. 57 (1), 114-127.
- Hutchinson, J. C., McCleary, K. W., & Weaver, P. A. (2013). Hotel selection factors as they relate to business travel situations. *Journal of Travel Research*. 32(2), pp.42-48.
- Jeng, J. and Fesenmaier, D. (2002). Conceptualizing the Travel Decision-Making Hierarchy: A Review of Recent Developments. *Tourism Analysis*, 7(1), pp.15-32.
- Karakaya, F., & Barnes, N. G. (2010). Impact of online reviews of customer care experience on brand or company selection. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. 27 (5), 447-457.
- Lee, S. and Heo, C. (2009). Corporate social responsibility and customer satisfaction among US publicly traded hotels and restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(4), pp.635-637.

References

- Lu, C., Berchoux, C., Marek, M. and Chen, B. (2015). Service quality and customer satisfaction: qualitative research implications for luxury hotels. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(2), pp.168-182.
- O'Connor, P. (2008). User-Generated Content and Travel: A Case Study on Tripadvisor.Com. *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008*, [online] pp.47-58. Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-211-77280-5_5?LI=true#citeas [Accessed 11 Aug. 2018].
- Ren, L., Qiu, H., Wang, P. and Lin, P. (2016). Exploring customer experience with budget hotels: Dimensionality and satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 52, pp.13-23.
- Serra Cantallops, A. and Salvi, F. (2014). New consumer behavior: A review of research on eWOM and hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, [online] 36, pp.41-51. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259124156_New_Consumer_Behavior_A_Review_of_Research_on_eWOM_and_Hotels [Accessed 15 Aug. 2018].
- Sparks, B. and Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), pp.1310-1323.
- Steffes, E. and Burgee. L. (2009). Social ties and online word of mouth. Internet Research, 19 (1), 42-59.
- Tanford, S. (2013). The impact of tier level on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty of hotel reward program members. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 34, 285-294.
- TripAdvisor.com. (2018). *Media Centre*. [online] Available at: https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/uk-about-us [Accessed 20 Aug. 2018].
- Xu, X. and Li, Y. (2016). The antecedents of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction toward various types of hotels: A text mining approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 55, pp.57-69.