



Effect Of Demographic Factors On Customers' Perception Of Online Hotel Booking Websites In Uttarakhand

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Abstract: Tourism and hospitality belong to the world's largest and fastest-growing sectors. It contributes to the economic development of several districts in Uttarakhand. The objective of the study examined the customers' perception towards online hotel booking based on demographic factors. The statistical analysis was conducted on primary data; to measure consumer satisfaction, a semi-structured questionnaire was employed, which was then analysed using ANOVA and SPSS. Data were collected from 600 respondents aged 18 to 40 using the technique of Judgemental sampling. The study found no significant difference between respondents' demographic profile characteristics (age group, educational level, personal income, and occupation) and preferences for online hotel booking. It was also shown that three major aspects of how customers effects the perception with booking hotels online.

Keywords: Online Hotel Booking Websites • Customers' Perception • Demographic impacts

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, largely driven by increased disposable income, greater leisure time, and reduced travel costs. As transportation systems such as railways, airways, roadways, and sea travel developed over time, the hotel industry also expanded into a highly organized and competitive sector. Hotels form an essential part of the hospitality industry, one of the oldest service industries globally, and play a significant role in the growth of travel and tourism. The hospitality sector provides a wide range of services related to travel, including accommodation, food, transportation, recreation, and entertainment. Over time, the tourism and hotel industries have evolved tremendously, adapting to changing customer expectations and technological advancements.

The hospitality industry today is continuously transforming to provide greater comfort and convenience to guests. Hotels now offer a variety of services and personalized experiences to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Due to increasing competition, hotel owners have introduced innovative products and services to attract customers and create a unique identity in the market. Hotels are generally classified according to their star category, location, size, target customers, length of guest stay, and level of service offered, helping customers understand the facilities and standards they can expect during their stay (Barsky, 1992).

Hospitality is a broad concept that includes hotels, restaurants, catering services, resorts, and various travel-related businesses operating worldwide. The industry fulfills almost all requirements associated with travel and tourism activities and is projected to reach a value of



approximately US\$ 5.8 trillion by 2027, growing at a CAGR of 5.5%. Hospitality is commonly understood as the relationship between a host and a guest and the manner in which guests are welcomed and cared for. It is often described as the business of making people feel comfortable, welcome, and happy (Discover Hospitality, 2015). In a broader sense, hospitality means treating travellers with warmth and respect, making them feel valued not merely as customers but as honored guests.

In India, the tourism and hospitality sector is among the leading sectors attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). According to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), the hotel and tourism industry attracted nearly US\$ 8.70 billion in FDI during the financial year 2023. Recognizing India's immense tourism potential and increasing global tourist arrivals, several domestic and international companies have invested heavily in this sector. One notable development was the acquisition of Ibibo Group's India travel business by Make My Trip in a deal valued at approximately US\$ 720 million, creating India's largest online travel company with an estimated value of US\$ 1.8 billion according to Morgan Stanley.

The steady increase in domestic and foreign tourism has significantly contributed to the growth of the hotel industry in India. Budget hotels and affordable accommodation facilities are expanding rapidly to meet the needs of travellers seeking economical options. International hotel chains are also increasingly investing in low-cost and mid-range hotels across the country. As a result, the availability of accommodation for both domestic and international visitors has improved substantially. Tourism and hospitality have emerged as two of the most important sectors contributing to India's economy. India ranked 46th in the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) in 2019 and 54th

in 2021. The sector is expected to contribute nearly US\$ 250 billion to India's GDP by 2030. India is also considered one of the most digitally advanced traveller nations in the world due to the extensive use of digital platforms for travel planning, booking, and travel experiences.

Technological advancement has revolutionized the tourism industry, leading to the emergence of the concept of "Travel 2.0," which refers to the increasing use of digital technologies in tourism activities (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). Internet search engines and social media platforms have become highly influential tools for travellers seeking information about destinations, accommodations, and travel experiences. According to a study conducted by the Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism Management (IITTM, 2016–2017), more than 90 percent of respondents searched for information regarding Indian tourism through social media platforms. Make My Trip emerged as the most popular platform among respondents, followed by Facebook. Travellers now rely heavily on websites, mobile applications, social networks, blogs, and online reviews while planning their journeys.

Online booking, commonly known as e-booking, has become an integral component of modern tourism and hospitality management. It refers to the process of reserving travel-related services through the Internet. Online reservation systems enable consumers to book flights, hotels, tour packages, buses, and railway tickets conveniently from anywhere in the world. The transformation from traditional paper-based reservations to electronic reservation systems through Central Reservation Systems (CRS) has greatly enhanced efficiency and customer convenience. According to Internet World Stats (2022), an increasing number of internet users purchase travel services online. The Internet Advertising Bureau (2023) also reported that online reservation systems have witnessed substantial growth in recent years. The global



online travel market was projected to exceed US\$ 470 billion by 2022 and continue expanding further in 2023 as tourism activities gradually recovered after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the major online travel platforms in India, Make My Trip holds a significant position. Founded by Deep Kalra in 2000, it initially focused on the India-US travel market and later expanded its operations in India in 2005. The platform provides a wide range of services, including domestic and international hotel bookings, holiday packages, flight tickets, bus tickets, rail information, and corporate travel solutions. It also offers mobile applications that enhance customer accessibility and convenience. Through online travel reviews and travel-related discussions, Make My Trip enables users to share their travel experiences and information.

Similarly, Goibibo, launched in 2009 by the Ibibo Group, became one of India's leading online travel booking platforms. Founded by Ashish Kashyap along with Sanjay Bhasin and Vikalp Sahni, Goibibo allows users to search, compare, and purchase flight tickets, hotel rooms, and bus tickets from multiple service providers. The platform gained popularity due to its fast booking process, user-friendly interface, reliable customer service, and efficient payment and refund systems. Such online platforms have transformed the tourism industry by making travel planning more accessible, transparent, and convenient for travellers.

Uttarakhand, formed as India's 27th state on November 9, 2000, after being separated from Uttar Pradesh, is situated in the Himalayan region and shares international borders with China (Tibet) and Nepal. The state is widely known as "Devbhumi" or the "Land of Gods" because of its immense religious and spiritual significance. Numerous Hindu temples and pilgrimage sites located throughout the state make religious tourism one of its major attractions. The Himalayan landscape, natural

beauty, hill stations, wildlife sanctuaries, trekking routes, educational institutions, and adventure tourism opportunities have further contributed to the rapid growth of tourism in Uttarakhand.

Tourist arrivals in Uttarakhand have shown a steady increase over the years. The number of tourists visiting the state rose from approximately 19.45 million in 2006 to 31.78 million in 2016, reflecting a CAGR of 5.03%. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), India possesses the seventh-largest tourism economy globally, with the tourism sector expected to grow by 7% between 2017 and 2027. Uttarakhand is also likely to continue experiencing significant growth in tourist arrivals. According to an India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) report, around 37.58 million domestic tourists and more than 0.15 million foreign tourists visited Uttarakhand in 2019. Religious tourism plays a crucial role in the state's economy, as demonstrated by the large number of pilgrims participating in the Char Dham Yatra and visiting Kedarnath annually. Uttarakhand's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for FY23 was estimated at approximately Rs. 2.76 trillion (US\$ 33.61 billion).

The increasing popularity of Uttarakhand as a tourist destination has encouraged rapid growth in online hotel booking services within the state. Travellers can now conveniently book accommodations ranging from budget hotels and homestays to luxury resorts, heritage hotels, deluxe tents, and five-star hotels through online platforms. Online booking systems offer several advantages, including easy access, time savings, competitive pricing, and special discounts available exclusively through websites and applications. With the widespread use of the Internet, consumers can compare prices, read reviews, and reserve accommodations without leaving their homes. Consequently, computerized reservation systems have largely



replaced traditional methods of hotel booking and reservations, making tourism services more efficient, accessible, and customer-friendly.

Literature Review

Swati et al. (2023) examined customer preferences regarding online hotel booking applications using descriptive research based on primary data collected through a customized questionnaire from 300 respondents aged 18–40 years using a convenience sampling method. The findings revealed that male customers who used booking applications more than twice a year demonstrated greater awareness and a more positive perception of online hotel booking platforms compared to female customers. Salameh et al. (2022) investigated the influence of online reviews on customers' intentions and actual use of online hotel booking platforms through an online survey involving 844 valid responses analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study found that perceived benefits, system quality, and service quality significantly influenced customers' intention to use online booking platforms, while the usefulness and quantity of online reviews positively affected the actual use of these systems.

Garcia et al. (2021) analyzed tourist hotel booking preferences using data from 17,921 travellers in Northern Spain collected between 2005 and 2016. The study revealed that tourists travelling from distant regions and staying in premium hotels were more likely to book online, whereas off-season travellers with longer stays preferred travel agencies. First-time travellers generally preferred Internet booking, while visitors staying in economy hotels tended to use telephone bookings, and those travelling by public transport during the off-season relied more on travel agents.

Chua et al. (2020) studied customer expectations and perceptions regarding OYO services using both primary and secondary data collected from

100 respondents through random sampling. The study concluded that more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the information provided by OYO for selecting suitable accommodations and highlighted that improvements in the application and platform could enhance customer retention and satisfaction. Birinci, Berezina, and Cobanoglu (2018) explored consumer perceptions regarding hotels and peer-to-peer accommodations such as Airbnb through a cross-sectional survey involving 391 valid responses. The findings indicated that satisfaction had a strong positive relationship with repurchase intention, while perceived authenticity significantly influenced satisfaction in both hotels and Airbnb accommodations. Safety and security risks were particularly significant in the Airbnb sample. Chow (2017) investigated customer perceptions of e-service quality in Hong Kong's online hotel booking websites using descriptive research conducted among college students. Based on correlation and regression analyses of 162 valid responses, the study concluded that website customization and web design significantly influenced customers' perceptions of e-service quality.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the customers' perception towards online hotel booking based on demographic factors.

Hypotheses of the Study: H_1 There is a significant difference in the demographic factors on customers' perception towards online hotel booking.

Research Methodology

Research is described as an investigation into a specific subject of study. To better understand an issue or problem, research is a process that involves gathering and analysing information (Cresswell, 2007). Following methodology was adopted in this investigation and analysis.



1. Questionnaire for collection of Primary data:

The questionnaire was designed to measure the customers' perception of online hotel booking. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, with 5 to 1 denoted strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

2. Sampling and Data analysis: The judgmental sampling technique based on their judgment of the necessary characteristics of sample members (Zikmund et al., 2013). The data was collected from 600 sample size. To test the above hypotheses, data was collected from one of the most popular hotel reservation websites, Trivago and make my trip, from primary data was collected through survey data. The data analysis was done using various tools and methods with the help of SPSS 25, and AMOS 23. It started with a descriptive study that included mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum statistics analysis

Results

The demographic analysis is presented in Table 1. There were 305 (50.83%) of the 600 respondents men, while 295 (49.17%) women. Compared to female respondents, most male respondents were friendlier and more engaged with the survey. The majority of the respondents belong to the 27-31 age groups (27.50%) which are followed by the 32-36 age groups of the respondents (22.50%). In addition, the age group

between 22 and 26 years old represents only 21.67% of the sample population, whereas the remaining population accounts for 12.83% (37-41) years old. Furthermore, the respondents' personally income distribution is represented in Figure 4.4. Of the total of 300 respondents, 50% belong to the age group of up to 25000, followed by the range of 250001 and 50000, which accounts for 26.67%; the range of 50001-75000, which account is 15.5%, and the last one is 75001 and above is 7.83%. The majority of the 600 respondents (38.67%) were students, followed by professionals (23.83%), self-employed (16.83%), and other respondents (20.67%). The majority of the respondents were categorised as students, and the least number of respondents were in any other occupation category.

Skewness and kurtosis analyses verified that the data were normal and examined the connections between each variable and construct. The factor was found, and its existence was confirmed using factor analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a method for determining the factor from many existing variables, was used in the multivariate variant analysis of the factor. EFA analysis investigates the factor, verified by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS 23.

Table 1: Demographic Analyses

Demographic Factors		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	305	50.83
	Female	295	49.17
Age	Upto 21	93	15.5
	22-26	130	21.67
	27-31	165	27.5
	32-36	135	22.5
	37-41	77	12.83
Education Qualifications	Undergraduate	141	23.5
	Postgraduate	212	35.33
	Ph.D	79	13.17
	Others	168	28



Personal Income	Upto 25000	300	50
	25001-50000	160	26.67
	50001-75000	93	15.5
	75001 and above	47	7.83
Occupations	Student	232	38.67
	Professional	143	23.83
	Self- Employed	101	16.83
	Others	124	20.67

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations for the constructs in the research model are reported in Table 2. To compute these descriptive statistics, multiple-item scales were summed and averaged. The

means of all the variables were between 31.36 and 23.35 Standard deviation values were less than 3.42. The ranges skewness and kurtosis are, respectively, -.1.106 to -1.664 and 2.699 to 1.804 (George & Mallery, 2010).

Table: 2 Overall Descriptive Statistics

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's Alpha
Trust	600	31.36	5.92	-1.106	2.699	0.913
Information Quality	600	19.90	3.42	-1.478	2.788	0.847
Best Deals & Price	600	23.35	4.32	-1.566	2.800	0.873
Convenience	600	27.96	4.99	-1.664	3.107	0.879
Safety/ Security	600	26.48	4.99	-1.262	1.804	0.880

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The calculated value of KMO is 0.921, which is higher than the acceptable level of .50. It revealed that the data had a good sample size (Table 3). The approximated chi-square value for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 9899.272, which was statistically significant at the 5%

level. The results of the KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity with an approximation of the chi-square value demonstrated that the sample used was suitable to move forward with a factor analysis or principal component analysis approach.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9899.272
	Df	528
	Sig.	.000

Sub Hypotheses of the Objectives

H_{1a}: There is a significant difference between males and females in customer perception towards online hotel booking.

This hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA. Gender was used as a predictor, while the factor of online hotel booking was used as the actual variable. Gender contains more than

two categories; hence, ANOVA was utilised (Table 4).



Table 4: ANOVA Test Results of Perception (Gender-wise)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PERCEPTION	Between Groups	146.541	2	73.271	.296	.744
	Within Groups	147563.219	596	247.589		
	Total	147709.760	598			

The one-way ANOVA in Table No. 3 shows an F value of .296, which is greater than the value of $F = 1.52$ for d.f. $V1 = 2$ and $V2 = 596$, and a sig. value of .744, which is greater than the 5% significance level. Due to the F computed value above the F tab, the alternate hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted. This also demonstrates that customers' perceptions of online hotel booking differed notably across gender groups in the sample.

H_{1b}: There is a significant difference among different age groups in customer perception towards online hotel booking.

For testing this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was performed. Age was used as a predictor, while the factor of online hotel booking was used as the actual variable. ANOVA was used as age has more than four categories (Table 5).

Table 5: ANOVA Test Results of Perception (Age-wise)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PERCEPTION	Between Groups	10660.030	4	2665.007	11.551	.000
	Within Groups	137273.755	595	230.712		
	Total	147933.785	599			

The F value for the age variable was 11.551, which is considered very significant with $p = .000$ (Table 5), demonstrating that perceptions of online hotel booking varied significantly across the sample's age groups. To determine how age groups differ from one another, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Overall, we could say that age has a considerable effect on respondents' perceptions of online hotel booking.

H_{1c} There is a significant difference among different education levels in customer perception towards online hotel booking.

To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was used. The education level was used as a predictor, while the factor of the online hotel booking was used as the outcome variable. ANOVA was employed as education has more than three categories (Table 6).

Table 6: ANOVA Test Results of Perception (Education Qualification-wise)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PERCEPTION	Between Groups	2907.581	3	969.194	3.983	.008
	Within Groups	145026.204	596	243.333		
	Total	147933.785	599			

The one-way ANOVA shown in Table No. 4 displays an F cal value of 3.983, which is higher than the table value of $F = 1.89$ for d.f. $V1 = 3$ and $V2 = 596$ at the 5% significance level. As the F Cal value is greater than the F Tab, the

alternative hypothesis is accepted, and it is discovered that, on average, customers' perceptions of online hotel booking differ across education levels.



H_{1a}: There is a significant difference among different income levels in customer perception towards online hotel booking.

The one-way ANOVA outcomes were used to assess the significance of variables (perception) in terms of income distribution. The analysis

contained significant values. ANOVA was used because income contains more than three categories (Table 7).

Table 7: . ANOVA Test Results of Perception (Income-wise)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PERCEP Between Groups	3967.747	3	1322.582	5.475	.001
TION Within Groups	143966.038	596	241.554		
Total	147933.785	599			

The one-way ANOVA in Table 7 provides an Fcal value of 5.475, which is greater than the table values of d.f. V1 = 3 and V2 = 596 and a significant value of .001 at 5% SL. Since the sig. value is less than the F tab, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that there is a significant difference in customer perception of online hotel booking among income levels.

H_{1c}: There is a significant difference among different occupations in customer perception towards online hotel booking.

This section presents the findings from an ANOVA test of customer perception (variables) in regard of their job. Following are the distribution results by occupation:

Table: 8 ANOVA Test Results of Perception (Occupation-wise)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PERCEP Between Groups	3604.929	3	1201.643	4.962	.002
TION Within Groups	144328.856	596	242.163		
Total	147933.785	599			

The above Table 8 shows a significant difference in the occupation factors of customers' perception. The significance value is .002, less than 0.05, and the F values are 4.962 for online hotel booking. However, the overall customers' perception among different occupations of the online hotel booking sub-hypothesis is also accepted.

Discussion

This study has provided new information on web-based purchasing of hotel rooms. Apart from perceptions of usefulness and risk in Sigala (2009) study, information quality and price level boosted the intention of customers to make purchases over hotel websites. In reality, the factor study revealed three factors that motivate customers to purchase.

The study of factor data revealed three key factors in online hotel booking: information quality, content sensitivity, and availability. In terms of aspects of perception of online hotel booking to purchase, this study provides some data that seems consistent with past research on the factors that influence a successful website. The first two things are completely compatible with the findings of most prior studies, which discovered that a successful website always contains high-quality content and strong security measures. This finding is consistent with prior research, which found that web features such as information quality, pricing, and security were highly essential (Huang et.al, 2019).



Conclusion

Technology innovation has changed how organisations function, notably in the hospitality industry. Hotel booking processes have become more straightforward and accessible to customers as online platforms have become popular. Customers use the internet for informational searches as well as to make reservations. Visitors are persuaded to use the internet for trip planning because of its unique feature. Some customers only use the internet to find hotels, and travel agency reservations. While some prefer to book online, others appreciate speaking with travel agents in person. Customer behaviour is unpredictable and varies from person to person depending on the type of intermediary they select. The current research aimed to examine the variables that influence consumers' perceptions, and determine whether respondents' perceptions levels changed according to their gender, age, education level, income, and jobs.

Several factors influencing travel decisions are interdependent and related to one another. The study found that customers' perceptions are being accepted at a quick speed across genders, ages, income levels, and occupational groupings. Technology is a powerful mediator while also opening up new options for travel agents. Both older and younger visitors are becoming more receptive to using technology to book hotels online. Lower-income people, like higher-income groups, use the internet to book hotels.

On the basis of this study it is suggested that (i) regular customers may be eligible for a particular tariff discount, (ii) frequent customers' feedback can help them improve the quality of the hotel service and provide better service to their customers, (iii) in order to maintain their websites' rich content and usability, tourism and hospitality management should periodically review and make improvements to the website's design and

content and (iv) make the return procedure quicker and less time-consuming.

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