



Customer Satisfaction In Star Category Hotels: Evaluating The Effects Of Technology-Driven CRM Initiatives In Tricity (Chandigarh, Panchkula And Mohali) Region

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives on customer satisfaction in star category hotels located in the Tricity region, encompassing Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, data was collected from guests staying at various star category hotels through structured questionnaires. The study identified six key factors related to technology-driven CRM initiatives: Digital Reservation Experience, Personalized Guest Experience, Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services, Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction, Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services, and Guest Feedback Integration and Continuous Improvement. Reliability analysis confirmed the internal consistency of the constructs, and hypothesis testing revealed significant positive effects of most constructs on customer satisfaction. The findings explain the importance of technology-driven CRM initiatives in enhancing guest experiences and suggest implications for hotel management to prioritize investments in digital platforms, personalized services, and guest feedback integration. Future research could explore the long-term effects of CRM initiatives on customer loyalty and examine emerging trends in technology adoption within the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Technology-driven CRM initiatives, Star category hotels, Tricity region, Hospitality industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive hospitality industry, ensuring customer satisfaction is paramount for the success of star category hotels. As technology continues to transform various aspects of business operations, customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives have emerged as crucial tools for enhancing guest experiences and increasing loyalty. The utilization of technology-driven CRM strategies has become increasingly prevalent, offering hotels innovative ways to engage with customers, personalize services, and streamline operations (Jones & Kim, 2018). However, the efficacy of these initiatives in driving customer satisfaction within the context of star category hotels remains a subject of interest and investigation. In the vibrant Tricity region encompassing Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali, where the hospitality sector is flourishing, understanding the impact of technology-driven CRM initiatives on customer satisfaction is particularly pertinent. This study aims to analyse this relationship, exploring how various CRM approaches, powered by technology, influence guest satisfaction levels in star category hotels across the Tricity region.

Amidst the ever-evolving landscape of hospitality management, technology-driven CRM initiatives hold promise for revolutionizing guest experiences and shaping perceptions of service quality (Sigala, 2017). By leveraging advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and mobile applications, hotels can personalize interactions, anticipate guest needs, and deliver tailored services that resonate with individual preferences (Kim, Chung, & Lee, 2020). Moreover, technology-enabled CRM platforms facilitate seamless communication between guests and hotel staff, enabling swift resolution of issues and enhancing overall satisfaction (Xiang et al., 2017). Despite these potential benefits, the effectiveness of technology-driven CRM initiatives may vary depending on factors such as hotel location, guest demographics, and cultural preferences

(Choi & Mattila, 2020). Therefore, examining the impact of these initiatives within the unique context of star category hotels in the Tricity region becomes imperative for hoteliers seeking to optimize guest satisfaction and loyalty.

In recent years, scholars and practitioners alike have recognized the importance of customer satisfaction as a key determinant of hotel performance and competitiveness (Wu et al., 2019). Satisfied guests are more likely to exhibit loyalty behaviors, including repeat visits, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and increased spending (Han & Hyun, 2019). Consequently, understanding the drivers of customer satisfaction, particularly in the context of technology-driven CRM initiatives, holds significant implications for hotel management strategies and marketing efforts (Chen & Huang, 2018). By investigating the impact of CRM technologies on customer satisfaction levels in star category hotels across the Tricity region, this study seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform strategic decision-making and enhance the overall guest experience.

In summary, this research endeavors to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the relationship between technology-driven CRM initiatives and customer satisfaction in star category hotels within the dynamic Tricity region. By examining the unique challenges and opportunities faced by hotels in leveraging CRM technologies to enhance guest satisfaction, this study aims to offer practical recommendations for hoteliers and industry stakeholders striving to excel in today's competitive hospitality landscape.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP

The literature review explores the multifaceted relationship between technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives and customer satisfaction within the context of star category hotels. With the hospitality industry increasingly embracing digital innovations to enhance guest experiences, understanding the impact of CRM strategies on customer satisfaction becomes imperative. This review synthesizes findings from a diverse array of studies spanning different industries and contexts to elucidate the key factors influencing customer satisfaction in star category hotels and the role of technology-driven CRM initiatives in shaping these experiences. Malki et al. (2023) found that social CRM dimensions positively influence customer satisfaction and loyalty, with traditional CRM directly impacting loyalty and social media technology use indirectly affecting satisfaction. Garcia et al. (2022) identified several recommendations for implementing technology-driven CRM initiatives in budget hotels, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. Nguyen and Patel (2021) found that technology-driven CRM initiatives significantly influenced customer satisfaction and loyalty in mid-scale hotels, particularly through personalized services and efficient communication. Park and Kim (2021) highlighted the positive impact of technology-driven CRM initiatives on customer satisfaction and loyalty in hotel food and beverage services, emphasizing personalized menus and efficient ordering processes. Brown et al. (2020) revealed that boutique hotels with effective technology-driven CRM initiatives experienced higher customer satisfaction, attributing it to personalized experiences and seamless interactions. Chen et al. (2020) demonstrated the significant impact of technology-driven CRM initiatives within hotel loyalty programs on customer satisfaction and loyalty, with perceived value mediating the relationship. Lee and Wang (2017) found that technology-driven CRM initiatives significantly influenced customer satisfaction and loyalty in online hotel booking platforms, particularly through personalized recommendations and efficient booking processes. Liu et al. (2012) highlighted the positive relationship between E-CRM, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the Taiwanese banking sector, emphasizing the importance of customer satisfaction in promoting loyalty. Sparks and Browning (2011) demonstrated the impact of online reviews on booking intentions and trust perceptions in the hospitality sector, underscoring the significance of online reputation management. Verhoef et al. (2010) explored the dynamics of customer engagement and its implications for business performance, emphasizing the importance of cultivating engaged customers for long-term success. Hennig et al. (2010) investigated the influence of new media on customer relationships, highlighting the transformative effects of digital communication channels on customer engagement. Reinartz et al. (2004) evaluated the CRM process and its impact on performance, providing insights into the measurement and consequences of CRM initiatives for organizational success. Lawson et al. (2004) examined the relationship between web site characteristics, CRM elements, and customer loyalty, highlighting the role of online attributes in supporting CRM strategies. Gupta et al. (2004) explored customer valuation in marketing research, emphasizing the importance of understanding consumer preferences and perceptions to enhance customer satisfaction and value.

Despite the abundance of research on technology-driven CRM initiatives and their impact on customer satisfaction in various industries, there remains a noticeable research gap regarding their specific implications within the context of star category hotels. While existing studies provide valuable insights into CRM strategies and their effects on customer experiences, few focus exclusively on the hospitality sector, particularly on star-rated hotels. Additionally, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining how different types of CRM initiatives, such as social CRM or personalized services, influence customer satisfaction specifically in star category hotels. Furthermore, there is limited research exploring the nuanced interplay between CRM initiatives, customer satisfaction, and other crucial factors like customer loyalty within the hospitality industry. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing tailored CRM strategies that effectively meet the unique needs and expectations of guests in star category hotels, ultimately enhancing their satisfaction and loyalty.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In the dynamic landscape of the hospitality industry, technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives have emerged as vital tools for enhancing guest experiences and long-term relationships. However, despite their growing significance, there remains a notable research gap concerning their impact on customer satisfaction, particularly within the context of star category hotels in the Tricity region encompassing Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. This study aims to address this gap by comprehensively evaluating the effectiveness of technology-driven CRM initiatives in elevating customer satisfaction levels within these hotels. By assessing the adoption, utilization, and specific implications of CRM strategies on guest satisfaction, the research endeavors to provide valuable insights for hotel management in optimizing their CRM practices to meet the evolving expectations of guests in the Tricity region. Through a thorough analysis of CRM effectiveness and its correlation with customer satisfaction, this study seeks to contribute to the enhancement of guest experiences and the overall competitiveness of star category hotels in the Tricity area.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a quantitative methodology to examine the impact of technology infused CRM initiatives on customer satisfaction in five-star hotels located in the Tricity region, which encompasses Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. By using a convenience sample approach, the research has attempted to effectively gather information from a heterogeneous group of 400 participants, guaranteeing representation from a range of demographic backgrounds. Participants were chosen from a variety of star-rated hotels, and structured questionnaires were used to collect data on demographics, customer satisfaction, and opinions of technology-driven CRM programmes. The degree to which technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives are put into practice and used in star-rated hotels is measured by the Technology Driven CRM Initiatives. The measurement items for this variable were modified from Hinkins (1998) and DeVellis (2003). Customer satisfaction measures how satisfied patrons are with the services received from hotels in the star category. The customer satisfaction measurement items were modified from a number of sources, such as Cadotte and Turgeon (1988), Danaher and Mattsson (1994), and Barsky and LaBagh (1992). Confidentiality and informed consent are two ethical factors that have been closely followed during the entire research process. It is anticipated that the study's conclusions will provide useful information to Tricity hotel managers, making it easier to tailor services to improve overall guest satisfaction in this ever-changing hospitality environment.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A thorough frequency distribution of the study participants' demographic profile is shown in Table 1. According to the gender distribution, 42% of participants are women and 58% of participants are men. In terms of age, the majority is between the ages of 41 and 50 (46.75%), with the 26 to 40 age group coming in second (33%). The marital status of the participants indicates that 90.75% of them are married. There is variation in educational qualifications; 53.5 percent of individuals hold post-graduation degrees. Regarding monthly earnings, almost 50% of the subjects (47.75%) are in the income range of 60,000–90,000. A detailed summary of the demographic features is given in the table, which makes it easier to comprehend the makeup of the sample and paves the way for additional research into how these characteristics affect guest satisfaction in star category hotels.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Consumers

		Count	Column N %
Gender	Male	232	58%
	Female	168	42%
Age	18 - 25 years	25	6.25%
	26 - 40 years	132	33%
	41 - 50 years	187	46.75%
	51 years + Above	56	14%
Marital Status	Single	37	9.25%
	Married	363	90.75%
Qualification	10+2	24	6%
	Graduation	139	34.75%
	Post-Graduation	214	53.5%
	Doctorate	23	5.75%
Monthly Income	Below 40,000	31	7.75%
	40,000-60,000	96	24%
	60,000-90,000	191	47.75%
	Above 90,000	82	20.5%

Technology-driven CRM initiatives were measured across six key constructs to comprehensively evaluate their impact on guest experiences in star category hotels. The first factor, termed "Digital Reservation Experience," highlights the significance of seamless and efficient online/mobile reservation and check-in processes. The second factor, "Personalized Guest Experience," enhances the importance of personalized recommendations and real-time updates on services. The third factor, "Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services," emphasizes the role of technology in augmenting in-room amenities and services. The fourth factor, "Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction," explores the hotel's prowess in utilizing diverse communication channels for timely and informative guest engagement. The fifth factor, "Guest Feedback Integration and Continuous Improvement," assesses the hotel's commitment to incorporating guest feedback for ongoing enhancements. Lastly, the sixth factor, "Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services," encapsulates the impact of chatbots and messaging platforms on instant support and information accessibility. When taken as a whole, these elements reveal the many facets of technology-driven CRM programmes in the hotel sector and provide insightful information about the views and preferences of visitors.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Constructs

	Cronbach's Alpha
Customer Satisfaction	0.831
Digital Reservation Experience	0.806
Personalized Guest Experience	0.838
Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction	0.82
Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services	0.798
Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services	0.788
Guest Feedback Integration and Continuous Improvement	0.727

The reliability statistics, as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, demonstrate the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs measured in the study. Overall, the constructs exhibit strong reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.727 to 0.838. Specifically, the constructs of Customer Satisfaction, Personalized Guest Experience, and Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction demonstrate particularly high levels of reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.831, 0.838, and 0.82, respectively. The constructs of Digital Reservation Experience, Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services, and Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services also exhibit strong reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.788 to 0.806. These high reliability coefficients indicate that the items within each construct consistently measure the intended aspects of technology-driven CRM initiatives, providing confidence in the validity of the constructs for further analysis and interpretation in the study.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing of Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Customer Satisfaction	←-	DRE	0.233	0.050	4.66	0.000
Customer Satisfaction	←-	PGE	0.121	0.054	2.24	0.025
Customer Satisfaction	<---	ERTS	0.210	0.069	3.043	0.002
Customer Satisfaction	<---	ECMI	0.091	0.046	1.978	0.048
Customer Satisfaction	<---	GFCI	0.067	0.047	1.439	0.150
Customer Satisfaction	<---	IAMS	0.105	0.031	3.427	0.000

The results from Table 3 provide crucial insights into the impact of various technology-driven CRM initiatives on customer satisfaction within star category hotels. Firstly, Digital Reservation Experience (DRE), which encompasses the efficiency and seamlessness of online and mobile reservation processes, significantly enhances customer satisfaction. This implies that hotels investing in user-friendly and hassle-free reservation systems are more likely to satisfy their guests, potentially leading to increased loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Similarly, Personalized Guest Experience (PGE) plays a significant role in driving customer satisfaction, indicating that guests value tailored recommendations and real-time updates on services. Hotels that prioritize personalization in guest interactions are better positioned to meet individual preferences and expectations, resulting stronger guest relationships and loyalty.

Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services (ERTS) also emerge as a significant predictor of customer satisfaction, underscoring the importance of technological advancements in augmenting in-room amenities and services. Hotels that leverage technology to enhance guest comfort and convenience are likely to receive higher satisfaction ratings from their guests. The significant positive effect of Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services (IAMS) suggests that guests value instant support and information accessibility provided by automated systems. Hotels that deploy chatbots and messaging platforms for guest inquiries and assistance can improve customer satisfaction by offering prompt and efficient services round-the-clock.

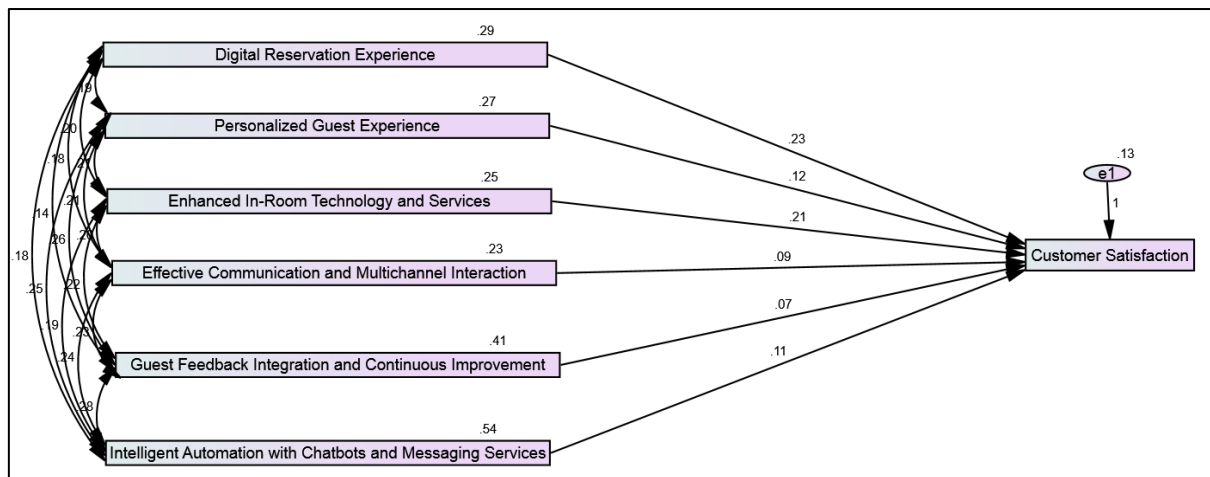


Figure 1: Measurement Model of the Study

While Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction (ECMI) also shows a positive effect on customer satisfaction, its slightly higher p-value suggests that its impact may be less pronounced compared to other factors. Nonetheless, this finding highlights the importance of hotels employing diverse communication channels for timely and informative guest engagement to maintain high levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, the non-significant effect of Guest Feedback Integration and Continuous Improvement (GFCI) implies that while incorporating guest feedback is important, its direct impact on customer satisfaction may vary across different hotel contexts. This suggests that while continuous improvement based on guest feedback is essential for overall service quality, its influence on immediate satisfaction may be more nuanced.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the significant role played by technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives in elevating customer satisfaction levels within star category hotels situated in the Tricity region. The research highlights several key factors that contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction, including seamless digital reservation experiences, personalized guest interactions, advanced in-room technology and services, effective communication channels, and a commitment to continuous improvement based on guest feedback. These findings emphasise the importance for hotel management to prioritize investments in intuitive digital platforms, utilize guest data for personalized services, integrate innovative technologies to enhance guest experiences, maintain active communication channels to address guest needs promptly, and consistently seek feedback to drive service improvements. Moreover, the study suggests that future research efforts could explore deeper into exploring the long-term effects of technology-driven CRM initiatives on customer loyalty, assess the effectiveness of different CRM strategies across various segments of the hotel industry, and investigate emerging trends in guest preferences and technology adoption within the hospitality sector. Such steps would contribute to a deeper understanding of how hotels can leverage technology to increase lasting relationships with their guests and adapt to evolving market dynamics effectively.

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