CUSTOMER DELIGHT: A STUDY OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN NORTH EAST INDIA

A Thesis Submitted in Part-Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Introduction:

The concept of customer delight has been propagated by Oliver, Rust and Varki (318) and Rust and Oliver (86-94). Literature in confirmation of the same has also been authored by Crotts, Pan and Raschid (464), Finn (19), Kwong and Yau (255-257), and Torres and Kline (290). Customer delight fundamentally involves providing additional unanticipated benefits along with the core product to any customer leaving him/her surprised with excitement, positive feelings and happiness.

Relevance and Objectives of the Study:

In the present competitive era, most of the activities of all business firms including hotels are centered on prevailing and changing tastes of existing and potential customers with respect to their products. Therefore, simply satisfying customers may not be adequate to stay ahead in such a competition. This calls for greater emphasis on gaining loyal customers through customer delight.

Attractive additional features may be offered along with the basic product in any firm to create customer delight. But as time passes, these delighter features might get assimilated with the satisfier features of any product (assimilated delight). So, with every successive purchase, customers tend to expect the earlier delighter features. This affects the profitability of a firm at some future point of time through incremental costs.

The initial works on customer delight (as mentioned above) gave rise to certain issues regarding the independent variables that might exhort some kind of influence in the process, and the process itself that is being experienced by the customer, which eventually leads to delight. Hospitality offers almost pure service as it revolves around creating pleasure zones for the customer. The concept of customer delight, therefore, is important for hospitality industry. It is noticed that this concept is yet to be established through empirical evidence in the hospitality industry. Questions like sustainability of customer delight from long term perspectives are also remained to be answered.

This study has made an attempt to analyze the concept of customer delight in detail in the hospitality industry particularly in the hotels. Besides, the present study

proposes to describe any processes or means for maintenance of the constancy of customer delight in the hospitality industry.

Keeping these in view the present study attempts to achieve the following objectives.

i.   To establish the concept of customer delight with empirical evidence in the hospitality industry of North East India.

ii. To determine the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry of North East India.

iii. To develop strategy for management of customer delight in hospitality industry of North East India. The sub-objective for this are as follows:

   a. To study the role of reenacted delight and transitory delight in overall delight management.

   b. To study the role of skilled and well trained employees in overall delight management.

Methodology Followed:

This study involves exploratory and descriptive research design concerning customer delight and its overall management in the hospitality industry (mainly hotels). Primary data has been collected from 1st June, 2010 to 31st May, 2011 in North East India with the help of a sample survey. This is done through a structured self-administered questionnaire for respondents who are repeat guests in the 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified hotels in this region. The questionnaire mainly tried to elicit the roles of 50 variables as common hospitality parameters responsible for formation of customer delight, which are derived from an extensive literature survey. Snowball sampling is employed to select 500 such respondents from the study population. This is done as repeat guests are difficult to be traced for collection of required data. Thereafter, the collected data are analyzed using tools like Correlation, Analysis of Variance, t-test, Discriminant and Factor Analyses. In the process several hypotheses are tested as and when necessary.

Scope of the study:

The scope of this study is defined by its objectives. The study considered repeat guests of hotels. These repeat guests are identified for 65 hotels situated in North East India.

Limitations of the study:

i.   This study on the hospitality industry has involved hotels only as they represent the sole most important component representing the entire hospitality industry. This is based on the fact that many researchers have used hotels as representation of the hospitality industry. (Harkinson, Poulston and Kim 377-392; HVS, FHRAI and ECOTEL 1-50; Mei, Dean and White 136-143; Thadani 1-4).

ii. Hotels from North East India are taken for identification of the repeat guests. However, these guests were inquired not only on the hotels they visited but their preferences while visiting hotels. Hence, the responses should not only reflect the views from the point of view of geographical area, rather it is expected that the views they expressed are universal.

Analysis and Findings:

1. Presence of Customer Delight in the Hospitality Industry of North East India:

A series of tests have been conducted with Pearson's Correlation and One-way ANOVA to explore initial relationship among the parameters modeled to be responsible for customer delight. Finally, Discriminant Analysis has been used to successfully establish the model of customer delight. The process of achieving customer delight, which is established though this work is shown in Fig. 1 below.
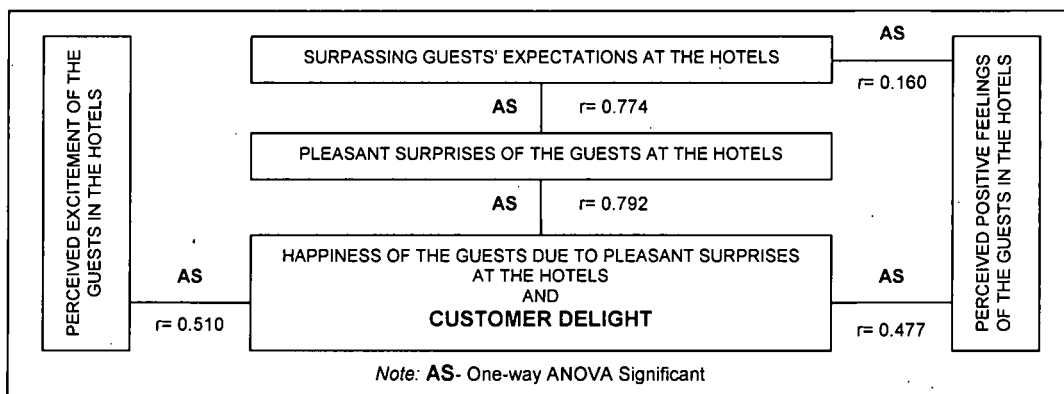

Fig 1: Sequence of Customer Delight in Hotels

2. Role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry of North East India:

Results of the analyses indicate 34 variables and 2 elements of pleasant surprises as significant common parameters that might lead to customer delight in hotels. The most influential among these variables include cleanliness of the hotel

rooms, and security of belongings. The least influential are availability of facilities like gymnasium and swimming. The raw variables are later put through Factor Analysis in order to reduce them into few manageable factors. This resulted in 8 new factors.

3. Strategy for Management of Customer Delight in the Hospitality Industry of North East India:

3.1 Strategy for Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight:

3.1.1 Through Reenacted Delight:

Results of analyses show that, if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among guests in the hotels on a regular basis, they sometimes expect similar value addition during their subsequent visits. Similarly, results indicate that if guests in the hotels have higher expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits-

a) There is higher chance that they are always happy.

b) There is high possibility that they will always stay in the same hotel in their successive visits.

It is also observed that the above two situations are highly correlated.

This can be the basis of any future strategy targeted towards maintenance of customer delight through reenacted delight. Findings also indicate that hotels may target on the following types of guests in such a strategy:

Table 1: Target Group of Hotel Guests for Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight through Reenacted Delight

Segmentation Criteria for Hotel Guests	Types of hotel guests
Place of Residence	Residing in Foreign Countries
Age Group	Below 30 Years
Monthly Income	Less Than Rs.12,000/-

3.1.2 Through Transitory Delight:

The analyses indicate that if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among guests in the hotels on a regular basis they sometimes expect changes in value addition during their subsequent visits. Similarly, results show that if guests in the hotels have higher expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits-

a) There is greater chance that guests could be made happy through this.

b) There is higher chance that they will always stay there in future.

d

In case of transitory delight also close relationship is observed between (a) and (b) above.

This can be the foundation of any proposed strategy for management of customer delight through transitory delight. Findings also indicate that hotels may target on the following types of guests in such a strategy:

Table 2: Target Group of Hotel Guests for Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight through Transitory Delight

Segmentation Criteria for Hotel Guests	Types of hotel guests
Gender	Female
Marital Status	Single (Unmarried)
Sector of Employment	Public Sector
Place of Residence	Residing in Foreign Countries
Purposes of Visit	Leisure Purposes
Age Group	Between 51 to 60 years
Monthly Income	Above Rs.1,50,000/-

3.2 Strategy for Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight:

Continuous delivery of customer delight is possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees. Identification of 7 variables (from among the significant 34 variables of customer delight (refer to section 2) that are related to skill and training of man-power which are emphasized by the guests is done. Two factors from these variables are obtained using Factor Analysis which are termed as Responsiveness and Presentability (of the staff). Independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA results suggest that the following categories of hotel guests may be targeted with respect to the factor, Responsiveness:

Table 3: Target Group of Hotel Guests for Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight by means of Well Trained and Skilled Hotel Employees with respect to the factor, Responsiveness

Segmentation Criteria for Hotel Guests	Types of hotel guests
Marital Status	Married
Sector of Employment	Entrepreneurs
Place of Residence	Residing outside North East India
Educational Qualification	12th Standard Passed
Age Group	Between 41 to 50 Years
Monthly Income	Between Rs.1,00,000/- to Rs.1,50,000/-

Similarly, the outcome of Independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA indicate that the following categories of hotel guests may be targeted with respect to the factor, Presentability:

Table 4: Target Group of Hotel Guests for Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight by means of Well Trained and Skilled Hotel Employees with respect to the factor, Presentability

Segmentation Criteria for Hotel Guests	Types of hotel guests
Gender	Female
Marital Status	Married
Sector of Employment	Self Employed/ Professional
Place of Residence	Residing in Foreign Countries
Educational Qualification	12th Standard Passed
Age Group	Between 41 to 50 Years
Monthly Income	Less Than Rs.12,000/-

The above points should be borne in mind while framing any proposed strategy for continuation of customer delight involving well trained and skilled hotel employees through reenacted and transitory delight which are discussed below:

3.2.1 Through Reenacted Delight:

It is seen that that 5 variables of customer delight in hotels (out of the above mentioned 7 repeated variables (refer to section 3.2)) have to be emphasized by hotels as they are linked with guests' expectations of similar value addition. These 5 variables should be taken into account for management of customer delight through reenacted delight (refer to section 3.1.1). This can be the basis of other strategies for continuation of such delight involving well trained and skilled hotel employees through reenacted delight.

3.2.2 Through Transitory Delight:

The analysis indicates that all 7 variables are related with guests' expectations of changes in value addition in their ensuing visits to these hotels. Hotels should be careful regarding these variables in case of the already mentioned activities (refer to section 3.1.2) for management of customer delight through transitory delight. This might be also remembered while formulating strategies for continuation of such delight.

Conclusion:

Through this work, the concept of customer delight is established in the hospitality industry. The process of attaining delight by a hotel guest is verified through empirical data. The role of common hospitality parameters in constituting customer delight has also been delineated. It is found that 34 such parameters are contributing significantly towards customer delight. Also studied the role of 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises hotels can deliver in order to build up happiness and 2 such elements namely, special discounts and free access to facilities, are found to be more important than the others. This study has also identified certain segments of guests who could be targeted for delight through staggered and continuous delivery of pleasant surprises in order to create reenacted and transitory delights among such guests. The role of well trained and skilled hotel employees in delivering reenacted and transitory delight has also been highlighted by the findings of the study.

f

Implication of the study:

The results of this study have empirically established the model of sequence leading to customer delight in the hospitality industry. The study has shown how customer delight is an extension of customer satisfaction, especially in the hospitality industry. This may be treated as an important contribution of this work. Besides, the concept of maintenance of customer delight, as highlighted in this study, can be practically applied in case of certain segments of hotel guests. Proper emphasis on these findings actually may enable hotels to retain guests.

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DECLARATION BY THE SCHOLAR

I, Mr. Sinmoy Goswami, Research Scholar in the Department of Business Administration, School of Management Sciences, Tezpur University, Assam, hereby declare that this research work titled "Customer Delight: A Study of the Hospitality Industry in North East India" is a bona fide work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Mrinmoy K. Sarma.

This work has not been submitted elsewhere for award of any other degree.

Date: 24th June, 2013

Place: Tezpur

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FORM-XIII

Certificate from the Supervisor

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *Customer Delight: A Study of the Hospitality Industry in North East India* submitted to the School of Management Sciences, Tezpur University in part fulfillment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management is a record of research work carried out by **Mr. Sinmoy Goswami** under my supervision and guidance.

All help received by him from various sources have been duly acknowledged.

No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for award of any other degree.

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PREFACE

In the present era, every business firm including hotels are witnessing intense competition. To stay ahead in such a competition, most of their activities are based on prevailing and changing tastes of existing and potential customers with respect to their products. In other words, they are emphasizing on satisfying their customers (guests in case of hotels). However, simply satisfying customers is not enough in such cases. In fact, they have to win loyalty of their customers. One of the most promising paths for attaining it is through customer delight. This may be attainable by offering attractive additional features along with the basic product in any firm. Customer delight basically involves providing additional unexpected benefits along with the core product to any customer leaving him/her pleasantly surprised with excitement, positive feelings and happiness. This is as per the works of various scholars including Crotts and Magnini, and Crotts, Pan and Raschid.

The concept of customer delight is significant in the field of marketing. Marketing is the process of planning and innovating any product and formulating policies related to its pricing, promotion and delivery to the target market. Marketing essentially helps to arrive at a proper balance between the needs of a firm (including hotels) and its target customers (guests in case of hotels). Customer delight can play an important role in this regard by creating a healthy relationship with customers. This may result in loyal customers. In fact, customer delight is very essential in the hospitality industry in which hotels are a major segment. Customer delight, in case of hotels, enables them to gain loyal guests. This can immensely help in greater profitability and survivality of such hotels in the long run. This study, therefore, emphasizes on empirically establishing the presence of the sequence leading to customer delight in the hospitality industry particularly in hotels. Such an attempt may enable hotels to clearly understand the concept of customer delight. Besides, this will also help in establishing the role of different variables in creating customer delight in the hotels. Besides, this study has also aimed at the determination of the role of common hospitality parameters in constituting customer delight in the hospitality industry. This may help in finding out the main common hospitality parameters that may result in delighting experience for the guests in hotels. Proper

understanding of such parameters would, additionally, help hotels in arriving at greater understanding regarding the concept of customer delight.

As noted earlier, customer delight normally involves providing additional unanticipated benefits along with the basic product in any firm or hotel. However, with the passage of time, these delighter features may get assimilated with the satisfier features of any product. Thereafter, with every successive purchase, customers tend to expect the earlier delighter features. This may seriously affect the profitability of the firm in future through incremental costs. So, this research work also seeks to determine suitable strategies for management of customer delight in the hospitality industry particularly hotels. Such management of customer delight may be possible through its staggered delivery by means of reenacted delight and transitory delight. This study endeavours to determine suitable strategies for this purpose. Such strategies may help hotels in managing customer delight without affecting their profitability and survivality. Besides, management of customer delight in hotels may also be possible through its continuous delivery. This may be achievable by means of skilled and well trained hotel employees involving reenacted delight and transitory delight. Therefore, this study also strives to determine appropriate strategies for this purpose. Such strategies may aid hotels in delighting guests on a continuous basis without affecting their profitability and sustenance. Proper emphasis on formulation and implementation of these strategies for maintaining customer delight may actually help hotels in maintaining loyal guests in the near future.

The findings of this study may immensely help in gaining greater insight into the concept of customer delight in the hospitality industry (mainly in hotels). Adequate focus on these findings may enable these hotels to gain loyal guests. Thereby, these hotels may stay ahead in the present competitive business scenario. This will be a boon for such hotels in the future.

I would also like to declare here that I have personally gone through the materials mentioned in the Bibliography.

Date: 24ᵗʰ June, 2013

Sinmoy Goswami

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Administration, Tezpur University, for their assistance in the completion of this study. In addition, I would like to express my gratefulness to Tezpur University for providing all the necessary help for successful completion of this research work.

My sincere thanks are due to all those people who helped me with the data collection during my survey. I offer my heartfelt appreciation to all the owners, managers, and employees of various hotels during my survey. Finally I would like to extend my sincere thanks to any other persons whose names could not be included in this list. In the absence of their help and support, this study would not have been completed.

Date: 24ᵗʰ June, 2013

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

C h a p t e r 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, it is tried to offer a conceptual idea about customer delight. The issues related to the importance of customer delight and its continuance from the viewpoint of a firm are also discussed here. While doing so, literatures are reviewed thoroughly. Towards the end of the chapter, an effort is made to draw out the problems which form the basis of this study. In this process, this chapter has also attempts to give the review of literature related to customer delight.

Delight refers to "great pleasure" or "joyful satisfaction" that a person experiences from a product, service, experience or idea etc. In fact, delight is explained as the status that "affords extreme enjoyment" to a person (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 341; Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary 413; Webster Comprehensive Dictionary 339). The term delight has been used in management literature, particularly in marketing literature to a large extent. The concept of customer delight has gained popularity in the recent years and it is seen that firms are trying their best to delight their customers (Crotts and Magnini 719; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 462; Keiningham, Goddard, Vavra and Laci 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi 486; Torres and Kline 290).

Customer delight refers to any one of the following (Keiningham and Vavra 25):

i. "Positive surprise arising from extremely good service or product performance".

ii. "The highest level of satisfaction".

iii. "Exceeding customers' expectations".

The same authors have stated that "customer delight will only be achieved by exceeding all the base expectations in the performance of a product or in the delivery of service (or in the servicing that accompanies a product or service)". This has also been repeated by Keiningham et al. (54-64). Crotts and Magnini (719) have defined customer delight as the reaction of customers when the performance of any product not only satisfies them but also provides "unexpected level of value or

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satisfaction". This has been supported by Magnini, Crotts and Zehrer (535-545). On the other hand, in marketing literature, delight is explained as the "emotional response to a successful business transaction" (Keiningham et al. 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Kumar, Olshavsky and King 14). According to noted experts in service marketing like Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler and Pandit (100-101) customer delight refers to the "profoundly positive emotional state" resulting from one's expectations "exceeded to a surprising degree". This has also been emphasized by Lovelock, Wirtz and Chatterjee (51-52). Almost two decades ago, Lynch (1) described customer delight as the "capacity to provide customers with experiences that transcend normal standards of quality services". This viewpoint has also been shared by other researchers (Berman 137; Driggs; Schneider and Bowen 35).

Delighting customers has become an important strategy for most companies and organisations in their quest for higher profitability and survivality (Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder and Lueg 1133; Crotts et al. 463; Donovan and Samler 38; Fuller and Matzler 116; Kanji 44-45). Same findings have also been stated by other researchers (Mascarenhas et al. 486; Raut 623; Schneider and Bowen 35; Skogland and Siguaw 222-224; Stewart 112-113; Torres and Kline 290). It basically involves providing an added set of unexpected benefits along with the core product and/or service which surprises the customer leaving him/her enthralled with a favourable attitude regarding the company or organization (Berman 131, 132, 142; Crotts and Magnini 719). In today's globalized business scenario every corporate organisation has experienced hard competition. Therefore, most of their decisions are made keeping in view the prevailing and changing tastes of existing and prospective customers in relation to their products and/or services. In fact, it may not be surprising to find different business activities of these organisations (namely planning, organizing, leading, coordinating, controlling and staffing) are centered on satisfying their customers. However, keeping in view the number of their competitors, merely satisfying customers may not be enough (Deming; Mascarenhas et al. 486; Stewart 112-113; Yang 85-88). The above discussion shows that customer loyalty has gained higher importance along with customer satisfaction for these organisations (Engeset and Heide 23-33; Fuller and Matzler 116; Kandampully and Suhartanto 348-350; Pantouvakis and Lymperopoulos 624-626). The same observations have also been given by other thinkers (Hawkins, Best, Coney and

Mookerjee 701-716; Kotler 20-21, 59-64; Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri and Haque 12-23; Nair 1-315; Panda 180-210; Schneider and Bowen 35; Schiffman and Kanuk 27-30, 246-250; Stanton, Etzel and Walker 159). Customer loyalty, which every company strives to achieve, may not be obtained only by satisfying the customer. This necessitates the marketing firm to venture beyond customer satisfaction. The most promising path towards obtaining customer loyalty is by achieving customer delight (Crotts et al. 463; Crotts and Magnini 719, 721; Keiningham et al. 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Kumar et al. 14). In fact, customer delight can help in generating more "positive word-of-mouth" for any company (Paul 34-36). Therefore, there is a vital need for organisations to move beyond simply satisfying customers. As observed by some researchers, retention (the result of customer loyalty) can be best achieved by delighting the customer (Burns, Evans, Johansson and Barrett; Popli 19).

Modern business scenario demands customer delight to be treated differently from customer satisfaction (Berman 130; Crotts et al. 463; Chowdhury 253; Patterson 221-224; Popli 19). Customer delight is a "better measure of customer relationship management than customer satisfaction" (Torres and Kline 290-291). In the long run, this ensures a healthy relationship between the organisation and the customers thereby creating loyalty of the latter. As stated earlier, this leads to improved image of the organisation with greater profitability and chances of better survivality in the long run.

1.1 Review of Literature:

Most scholars have treated customer satisfaction and customer delight separately. Crotts et al. (463) have stated that customer delight "goes beyond" customer "satisfaction". Chowdhury (253) has highlighted that presently most companies aim at delighting customers "by assuring only what they can provide, then providing more than their assurance". Companies do so in order to win a customer for life (in case he or she is continuously delighted). This fact has also been supported by other scholars (Berman 131, 132, 142; Crotts and Magnini 719; Patterson 221-224; Popli 19, 22). Besides, Chowdhury (265) has described obtaining customer delight as a move towards providing Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS).

Kano (39-48) has conducted a detailed analysis of the concept of customer satisfaction and has put forwarded a model on the said topic. His model of customer satisfaction distinguishes the following six categories of quality attributes (Fig. 1.1):

i. **Basic Factors (Dissatisfiers- Must Have):** These are the minimum prerequisites in any product which lead to customer dissatisfaction if they are not fulfilled. However, they do not cause customer satisfaction if they are fulfilled or exceeded (Kano 39-48).

ii. **Excitement Factors (Satisfiers- Attractive):** These factors increase customer satisfaction if delivered. However, they do not cause customer dissatisfaction if they are not delivered. These factors leave the customers surprised and generate "delight" (Kano 39-48; Sauerwein, Bailom, Matzler and Hinterhuber 314).

iii. **Performance Factors:** These factors cause customer satisfaction if their performance is high but lead to dissatisfaction for low performance. Normally, these factors are directly connected to customer's explicit needs and desires, and any company should try to be competitive here (Kano 39-48).

iv. **Indifferent Attributes:** These refer to those features in any product that are not given much emphasis by the customers. In fact, they do not care about these features (Kano 39-48; Sauerwein et al. 314).

v. **Questionable Attributes:** These refer to those features in any product whose level of expectations are not clear among the customers (Kano 39-48; Sauerwein et al. 314).

vi. **Reverse Attributes:** These refer to those features in any product whose opposite are expected by the customers (Kano 39-48; Sauerwein et al. 314).
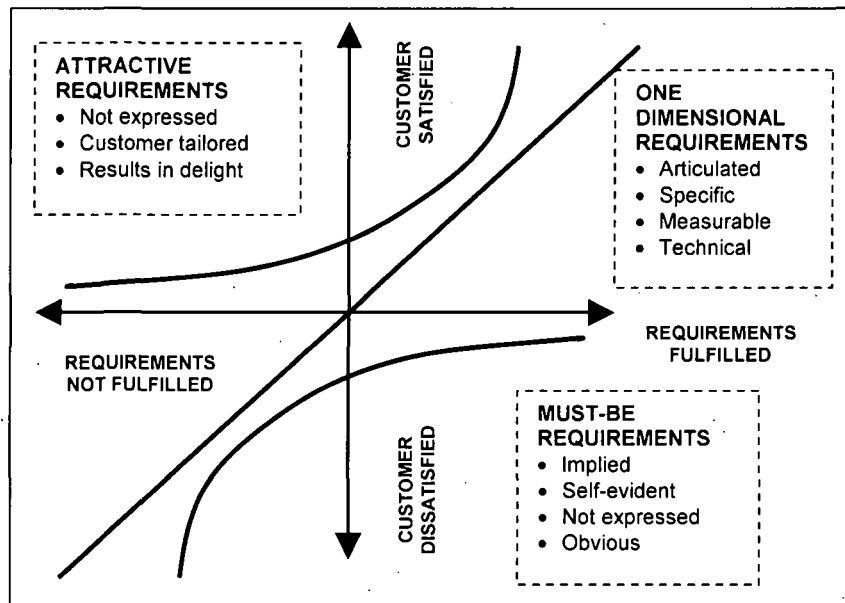
Fig. 1.1. Kano's Model of Customer Satisfaction
(Source: Kano 39-48)

The above viewpoints in Fig. 1.1 have been supported by Matzler, Hinterhuber, Bailom and Sauerwein (6-18) and Sauerwein et al. (313-327). Many other researchers have added further explanation to the above discussed points. Berman (131) and Berger, Blauth and Boger (3-35) have referred to basic factors of any product as must-be requirements. Burns et al. have referred to these requirements as basic qualities to be present in any product or service. Berman (131) and Berger et al. (3-35) have referred to excitement factors of any product as attractive requirements. Burns et al. regards them as delighter features of any product or service. Performance factors of any product have also been referred to as one- dimensional requirements by some researchers (Berger et al. 3-35; Burns et al.). All these points have been incorporated into Kano's model of customer satisfaction (39-48). Thereby, an adapted model of customer satisfaction based on the above Kano's model has been developed. This has been shown in the following Fig. 1.2. This was done to give a greater insight for better understanding of the concept of customer delight. At the same time, this would also provide an easier understanding of the various factors that may result in customer delight in any firm.
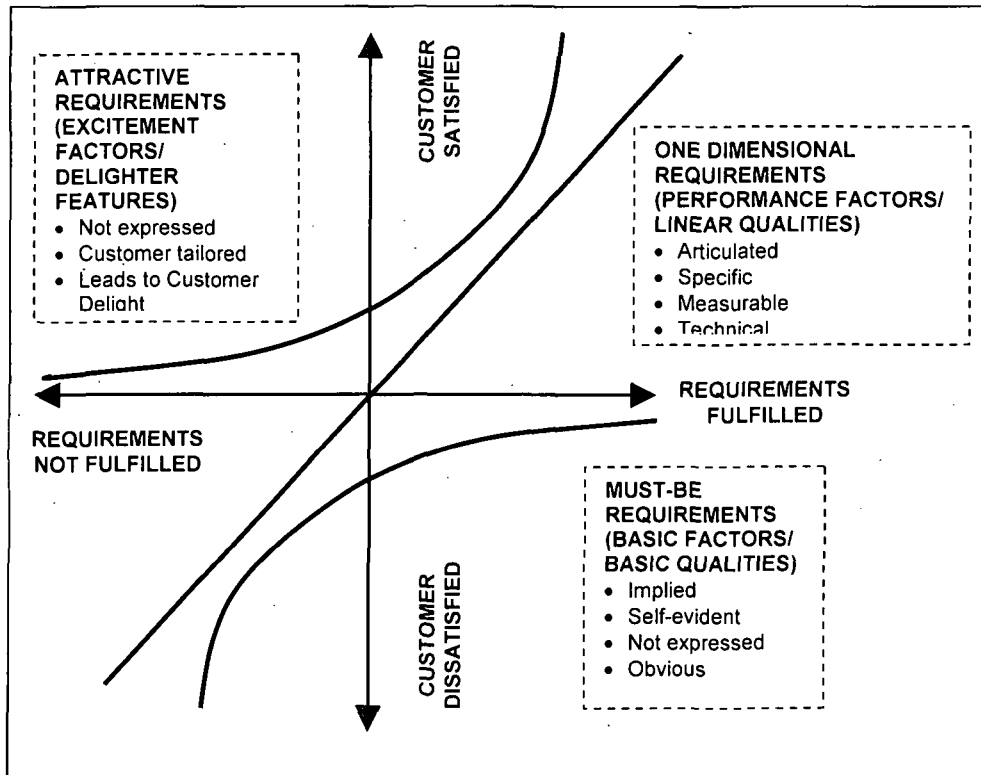
Fig. 1.2. Adapted Kano's Model of Customer Satisfaction
(Adapted from Berger et al. 3-35; Burns et al.; Kano 39-48; Sauerwein et al. 313-327)

Rust and Oliver (86) have described customer delight as "profoundly positive emotional state" generally resulting from "having one's expectations exceeded to a surprising degree". After thorough analysis of the insights of customer delight, the product attributes can be classified into the following three types (Fig. 1.3):

i. **Must Attributes:** Customers expect these attributes while purchasing a product. Their absence can render any product unable to perform its basic function and may end up dissatisfying the customer. In Fig. 1.3, these attributes are the innermost bull's eye.

ii. **Satisfiers:** These represent additional features associated with the basic product. Higher levels of these attributes may increase the level of satisfaction beyond that which is provided by the basic product. In Fig. 1.3, these attributes are the next adjacent ring from the innermost bull's eye.

iii. **Delighters:** These represent product attributes that are unexpected by the customers and provide them with surprising enjoyment leading to customer

delight. In Fig. 1.3, these attributes are the next outer adjacent ring from the inner ring comprising the satisfiers.
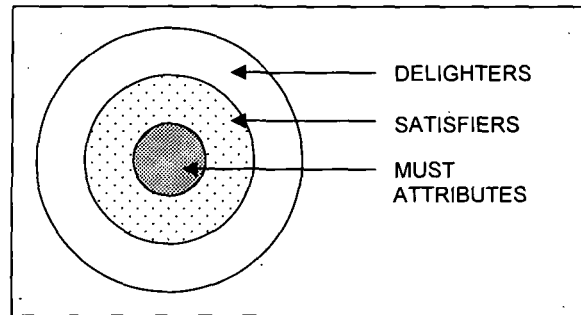
Fig. 1.3. Classification of Attributes of a Product
(Source: Rust and Oliver 87)

Rust and Oliver (86) have depicted the above classification by the example of a gasoline station. In a gasoline station, the availability of gasoline is a must attribute, the existence of clean rest rooms represent satisfiers and existence of a "concession area" represents delighters. They have described customer delight in case of a product's performance from the point of view of exceeding customer expectations which may be of the following levels:

i.   **"Level of Exceedingness" is within the Normal Range:** This implies that the product's performance would lead the customers to have a notion that the product was better than expected but not so surprising.

ii. **"Level of Exceedingness" is beyond the Normal Limits:** This implies that the product's performance would surprise the customers.

Burns et al. have described customer delight as a "post-purchase emotion" that results from the consumer's evaluation of the performance of product or service and is assumed to be an "extension of satisfaction characterised by positive effect". Their Disconfirmation Theory of customer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction provides the theoretical basis for defining customer delight (Fig. 1.4). Customers evaluate the performance of the products and services they have purchased by referring to their expectations before purchase. Whenever products or services cannot meet their expectations, the customers experience dissatisfaction (negative disconfirmation). However, when these products or services meet expectations, these expectations are confirmed and customers experience satisfaction. But, when the products or services exceed customer expectations, the latter feels delighted (positive disconfirmation).

The above viewpoint has also been supported by Berman (135), Crotts and Magnini (719), Chitturi, Raghunathan and Mahajan (48-50) and Zehrer, Crotts and Magnini (106).
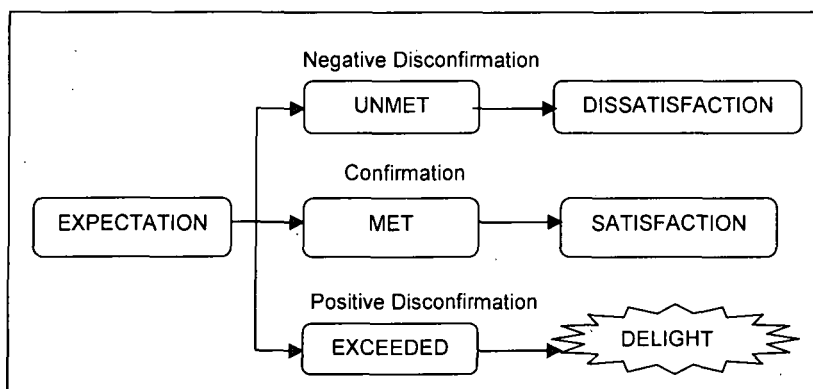
Fig. 1.4. Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction
(Source: Burns et al.)

Leventhal (53) has further added another dimension to the concept of customer satisfaction and delight through his analysis of the Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction (Fig. 1.5). If the product or service delivery has met customer's "desired expectations", then it is said to be a state of confirmation leading to customer satisfaction. If on the other hand customer's expectations are not met, then it is said to be a state of disconfirmation which may be of the following types:

i. **Positive Disconfirmation:** According to Leventhal (53), this occurs when product or service delivery surpasses customer's expectations whenever the higher "should be" and "ideal" expectations are met. Customer delight occurs at this level leading to compliments from the customers (Leventhal 53).

ii. **Negative Disconfirmation:** This is seen when product or service delivery falls below customer expectations. Negative disconfirmation will generate acceptance by the customer in between "predicted" and "minimum tolerable" expectations. However dissatisfaction occurs in between "intolerable" and "worst imaginable" expectations leading to complaining behaviour of the customer (Leventhal 53).

Expectations	Dis/Confirmation	Affective State	Outcome
Ideal	Positive Disconfirmation	Delight	Compliments
Should be			
Desired		Satisfaction	
Predicted	Confirmation	Indifference	
Minimum Tolerable	Negative Disconfirmation	Acceptable	
Intolerable		Dissatisfaction	Complaints
Worst Imaginable			

Fig. 1.5. Disconfirmation of Expectations
(Source: Leventhal 53)

Berman (135) has further modified the above concept of customer delight through his Model of Dissatisfaction, Outrage, Satisfaction, and Delight shown in Fig. 1.6. As per this model, when the performance of any product relates to an existing expectation of a customer, there can be two possibilities- Dissatisfaction (if the experienced performance is negative) and Satisfaction (if the experienced performance is positive). However, when the performance of any product "does not relate to any prior expectation" of a customer, there can be two probabilities- Outrage and Pain (if the experienced performance is negative) and Delight (if the experienced performance is positive). Berman (135) has stated that it is the "element of surprise" that differentiates satisfaction from delight, and dissatisfaction from outrage and pain. Berman (135) has opined that positive unexpected level of performance (that is a positive surprise) leads to delight, whereas a "positive expected level of performance" results in satisfaction. Similarly, a negative unexpected level of performance (that is a negative surprise) results in outrage and pain, and a negative expected performance results in dissatisfaction. The arrow starting from the no prior expectation column to the existing expectation column points out that customers form "expectations through their experiences" regarding any product with the passage of time.

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	EXISTING EXPECTATION	NO PRIOR EXPECTATION
EXPERIENCED PERFORMANCE (PARTIALLY AFFECTIVE) NEGATIVE	DISSATISFACTION	OUTRAGE AND PAIN
POSITIVE	SATISFACTION	DELIGHT
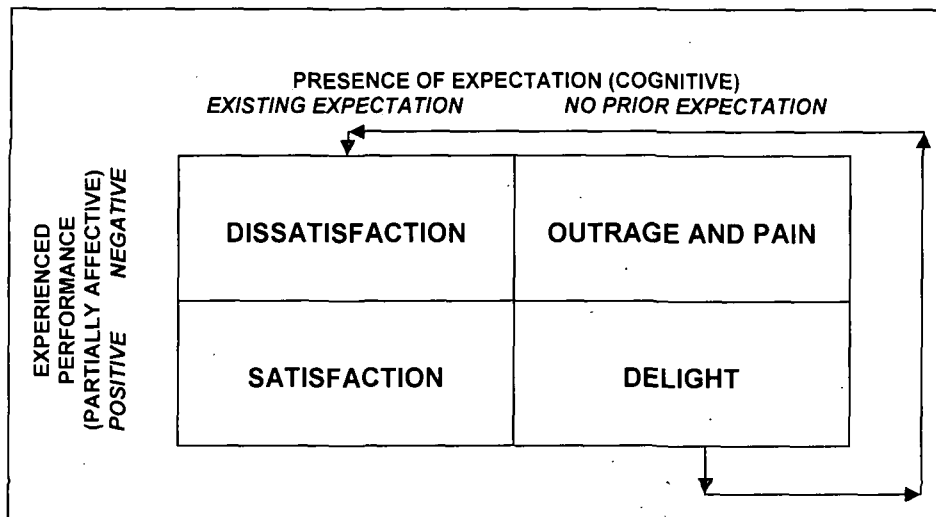
Fig. 1.6. A Model of Dissatisfaction, Outrage, Satisfaction, and Delight
(Source: Berman 135)

Torres and Kline (290-291) have suggested in the above context that the real way to increase customer loyalty and retention is not to satisfy customers but to delight them. Keiningham and Vavra have measured customer satisfaction along a continuum. The three major points along this continuum are as follows (25):

i. **Zone of Pain:** It is the point at which the company or organisation is not satisfying its customers' needs.

ii. **Zone of Mere Satisfaction:** It is the point at which the company or organisation is fulfilling needs but not doing much to distinguish itself from any other competitor within the same market.

iii. **Zone of Delight:** It is the point at which customers demonstrate behaviour consistent with the goals of the firm (like increased retention, sales, word-of-mouth recommendations etc.).

Berman (132) and Crotts et al. (464) have further modified the above concept of the impact of customer satisfaction and delight as put forwarded by Keiningham and Vavra (25) by replacing the zone of mere satisfaction by zone of dissatisfaction and zone of satisfaction (Fig. 1.7). Customer delight is the customer's "positive emotional reaction" on receiving a product or service that not only satisfies them but also provides unexpected value leading to sense of surprise. "Outrage and pain" result when a customer receives unexpected poor product or service (Chitturi et al. 48-50; Kwong and Yau 257; Schneider and Bowen 35). Dissatisfaction occurs when

the product or service falls below the customer's expectations. However, when a customer's expectations are met and exceeded, he or she feels satisfied and have a moderately high intention to repurchase the item. Valenzuela, Mellers and Strebel (476) have described delight as a "combination of affect (pleasure and happiness) and surprise (contrast with expectations)". Besides, delight is also referred to as the combination of "surprise and happiness" when any product or service exceeds customer expectations on key criteria" (Crotts et al. 463). These "criteria create memorable and emotional responses" that strongly drive overall satisfaction intention to repurchase the product or service (Crotts et al. 463).
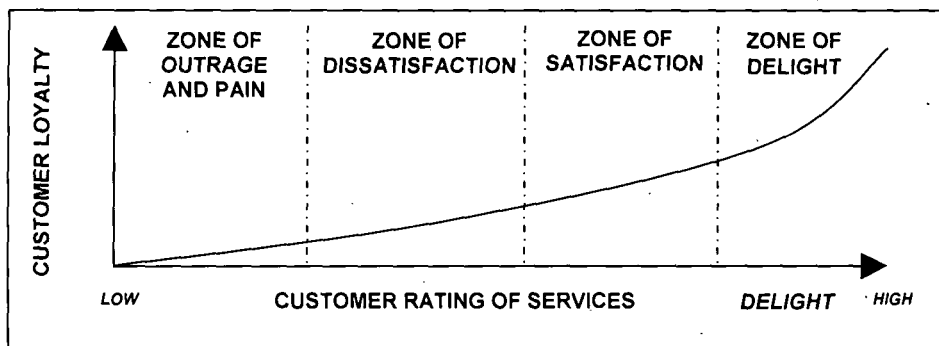
Fig. 1.7. Perception of Service among Customers in the Hotel Industry
(Source: Berman 132; Crotts et al. 464)

Crotts and Magnini (721-722) have established that surprise is an important element of customer delight. Magnini et al. (535-545) have also stated that delight occurs whenever a customer obtains a "positive surprise beyond his or her expectations". Crotts and Magnini (720) and Oliver, Rust and Varki (318) have noted that surprising positive performance of a product leads to arousal in the mind of the customers which causes positive effect on the latter. This in turn leads to customer delight. Berman (134) has opined that "joy", "surprise" and "high levels of arousal" may lead to customer delight. This fact has also been focused by Crotts and Magnini (720) and Kwong and Yau (255-257). Thereby the antecedents of customer delight are surprising positive performance, arousal and positive effect (Fig. 1.8). This fact has been supported by Kumar et al. (18).
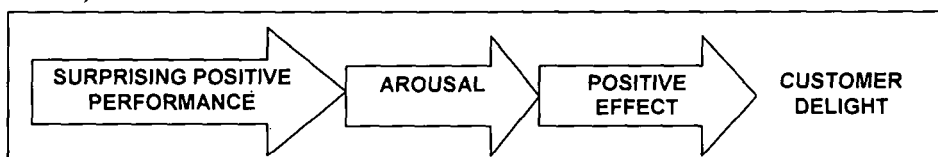
Fig. 1.8. Antecedents of Customer Delight
(Source: Rust and Oliver 87)

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The above concept of customer satisfaction and delight has been further exemplified by Finn (19) who had conducted a thorough analysis of the model by Oliver et al. (318) referred to as ORV (Oliver, Rust and Varki) Model. The ORV Model is an integrative model of the behavioural basis for customer delight and satisfaction including hypothesized antecedents and consequences of delight (Fig. 1.9).
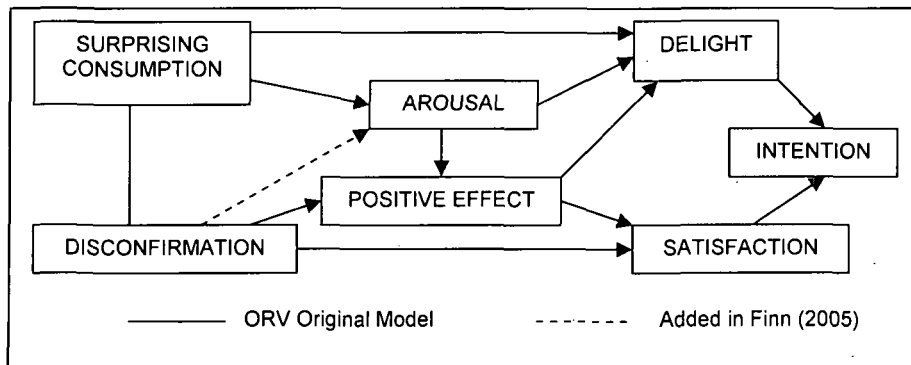
Fig. 1.9. Model of Customer Delight and Satisfaction
(Source: Finn 19)

As per the viewpoint of Finn (19), unexpectedly high level of performance or satisfaction of any product (surprising consumption experience) causes arousal in customers (refer to Fig. 1.9). This results in positive affect which leads to customer delight. Thereby "both a surprising experience and arousal" can "also be considered as direct antecedents of customer delight". In addition through the efforts of Finn (30), it has been found that there is an additional direct effect of disconfirmation on arousal. Accordingly, in case of hotels, surpassing of guests' expectations, their pleasant surprises and resultant happiness coupled with their perceived excitement (arousal) and perceived positive feelings may lead to customer delight (Crotts et al. 463; Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Finn 19; Magnini et al. 535-545; Rust and Oliver 87; Torres and Kline 290).

Rust and Oliver (88) have classified customer delight into the following categories on the basis of the function of human memory:

i. **Assimilated Delight:** It involves consumers recollecting delighting facets of consumption and thereby coming to accept them as normal through "raised expectations". In short, this type of delight raises customer expectations. In terms of the rings, this would imply that a previously delighting feature of a product would move to the level of the "satisfier" attribute or "must"

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attribute. This raises the bar and would eventually force the firms to compete at this new level. This type of delight can create customer loyalty through attraction (Rust and Oliver 88). This has also been accepted by Torres and Kline (293).

ii. **Reenacted Delight:** It involves customer delight that a person experiences when a favorite movie or song is being played. This type of delight emotion decays but its memory is retained. The person in this case retains memories of the delight and can also experience the delighting stimulus at will or when available through the movie or song. In case of reenacted delight, firms can win customer loyalty through reenacting memories of the delight. It is "appreciated once on receiving by the customer" and "may be sought again by the same customer" (Rust and Oliver 88). Such value addition of reenacted delight may result in happiness or enjoyment to a customer while using products of a firm. In future, this results in their repeat purchase of products of the same firm. In case of hotels, reenacted delight may be possible through similar value addition during guests' subsequent visits to the hotels. This may result in their happiness leading to repeat visit to the same hotels in the future. Thereby, guest loyalty and guest delight is maintained in the hotels for such guests (Rust and Oliver 88). This has also been supported by Torres and Kline (293).

iii. **Transitory Delight:** In this case, "considering the time frame" the delighting experience of a customer in relation to any product or service is soon forgotten. Such a delight may be attributed to "fate, randomness or serendipity" (Rust and Oliver 88). In case of transitory delight, firms should put together a number of such delights in such a way that the consumer remembers the experience as "delighting moments and not as individual moments" (Rust and Oliver 88). Such value addition of transitory delight may lead to customers' happiness or enjoyment while using services and/or products of a firm. According to Rust and Oliver (88), this might result in their repeat procurement of these products of the same firm. The same scholars, in their study, have also explained transitory delight through the example of a child getting a "lollipop after an initial doctor visit" and then getting "a small plastic toy" in the next visit. Therefore, in case of hotels,

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transitory delight may be possible through changes in value addition during guests' subsequent visits. This may make them happy. As a consequence, they can repeatedly visit the same hotel in the future. Thus, guest loyalty and guest delight is maintained in the hotel for such guests (Rust and Oliver 88). This has also been accepted by Torres and Kline (293).

1.1.1 Important Requirements for Guests in Hotels:

Studies conducted by many researchers at different locations have indicated that hotel guests usually lay high importance on food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage "variety", "hygiene" of food and beverage, quality of the restaurant, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel, "cleanliness" and tidiness of the hotel, room furnishings and appearance, cleanliness of the room, "room service", reasonable price for the room, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, "security of belongings including valuables inside the room", "responsible security personnel" and overall comfortability (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320). This fact has been supported by other scholars who have established that "cleanliness, comfort, service, value and facilities" and "ambience, food and service" are the main factors leading to guest delight in hotels (Lynch, 1). Schneider and Bowen (35) have stated that "customer delight and outrage originate" from "security, justice and self-esteem". This fact has been further substantiated by Kwong and Yau (260-262) who have stated that customer delight is associated with justice, esteem, security, trust and variety. Groenenboom and Jones (14-16) have highlighted the importance of security for guests in hotels. Hasan, Raheem and Subhani (510-515) have established that customer delight in a bank is possible through "unusual ambiance", "problem solving gestures", "caring" for every customer, "giving undue favour", "bypassing the system" to help customers, helpfulness and willingness to help customers, "prompt feedback" and "giving a VIP feel for every customer". Some researchers have also highlighted the importance of free gifts, special foods and free access to facilities among the guests in the hotels (Poon and Low 219, 222). In addition properly trained and empowered employees in any hotel may also result in guest (customer) delight

(Management Development Review 112-113) and thereby create greater guest loyalty (Castro, Armario and Ruiz 27-30).

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

As noticed from the above discussion, several studies are there concerning customer delight (Arnold et al. 1133; Crotts et al. 463; Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Donovan and Samler 38; Fuller and Matzler 116; Kanji 44-45; Keiningham et al. 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Kumar et al. 14; Magnini et al. 535-545; Mascarenhas et al. 486; Raut 623; Schneider and Bowen 35; Torres and Kline 290; Zeithaml et al. 100-101). But these observations on customer delight are presently at the conceptual level. However, unless the sequence leading to customer delight is established through market feedback, these will remain at the hypothetical stage.

It has been stated by some scholars that attractive additional features should be offered along with the basic product to create customer delight (Berman 137; Crotts and Magnini 719; Keiningham et al. 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Kumar et al. 14; Zeithaml et al. 100-101). Unless this is done cleverly with the passage of time, these delighter features get assimilated with the satisfier features of any product leading to issues regarding profitability and survivality (White 16). Because, with every successive purchase, customers tend to expect the earlier delighter features (Rust and Oliver 87, 92). Thereby, this may pose a serious problem in case of any firm trying to delight customers. However, to gain customer loyalty it is a priority for the establishment to practice such concepts like customer delight. This poses a problem to which a solution in the form of a strategy of management of customer delight is urgently needed.

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CHAPTER 2

PROFILE

OF THE

HOSPITALITY

INDUSTRY

C h a p t e r 2
PROFILE OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

This chapter attempts to offer an idea of the hospitality industry in general and that of India in particular. Besides, attempt has been made to offer highlights about the industry in North East India, the location of this study. These deliberations offered in this Chapter should lead towards better understanding of the problem related to customer delight (as discussed in section 1.2 in Chapter 1) with respect to the hospitality industry.

2.1 Hospitality Industry:

Hospitable refers to the act of being "kind, welcoming and generous to strangers or guests" (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 631). Webster Comprehensive Dictionary (611) describes hospitable as the disposition to "behave in a warm manner or to entertain with generous kindness". Hospitable also means "having an open, generous and receptive mind". It also refers to being "well behaved towards strangers" and "welcoming them with warmth and generosity" (Ingram, *Hospitality: A framework* 140; Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary 745);

Hospitality means the "act of being hospitable or tendency towards being hospitable" thereby providing "entertainment to guests" (Brotherton 165; Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 631; Webster Comprehensive Dictionary 611). Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary (745) describes hospitality as the "spirit or practice" of being hospitable. In short, hospitality refers to the act of being kind, generous and welcoming towards strangers or guests. It is considered to be one of the most important virtues in the human society.

Thus hospitality industry refers to all those institutions that offer hospitality to strangers or guests. Such institutions or organisations "offer shelter or food or both to people away from their homes" (Malhotra 4-5). Such an industry is also characterized by presence of welcoming atmosphere, kindness and generosity besides food and shelter so as to make the guests' stay comfortable with homely experience (Ahmed 70-91; Gill 28-77; Hsu and Powers 1-62; Malhotra 4-5).

Hospitality industry as a whole consists of the following establishments (Hsu and Powers 66-265; Malhotra 4-5):

i. **Hotels and Motels:** Hotels refers to a building or establishment that provides food, accommodation etc. to travelers and others (Ahmed 1-5; Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 632; Gill 28, 33; Hsu and Powers 66-265; Ingram, *Hospitality: A framework* 140; Jha 28-257; Malhotra 4-5; Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary 746; Webster Comprehensive Dictionary 611). Motels refer to a hotel for motorists typically with rooms adjacent to a parking area (Ahmed 70-91; Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 858; Gill, 28-77; Hsu and Powers 66-265; Jha 1-10; Malhotra 4-5).

ii. **Restaurants:** Restaurants are places where refreshments or meals are provided to people (Blum 354; Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 1151; Hsu and Powers 177-178, 236-237; Jha 28-257; Malhotra 4-5).

iii. **Reception/ Conference Centres/ Exhibition centres:** Such centres are places where social gatherings and events like marriage and birthday parties, conferences, exhibitions etc. are held (Gill 37; Hsu and Powers 172; Malhotra 4-5).

iv. **Self Service Outlets:** Self service outlets are specific type of "café, restaurants or stores where patrons (customers) serve themselves" (Blum 354; Gill 37; Hsu and Powers 172, 184, 215; Malhotra 4-5).

v. **Clubs (Service Clubs and Sports Clubs):** Such clubs refer to a room, building or other facilities used by a group or association of people for special purposes like rendering services or playing sports (Hsu and Powers 83-84; Malhotra 4-5; Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary 306).

vi. **Fast Food Outlets:** Fast food outlets are places or institutions specializing in food "prepared and served quickly" (Blum 354; Gill 37; Hsu and Powers 184, 189, 215; Malhotra 4-5).

vii. **Snack Bars:** Snack bars are "café or counters" wherein light meals are provided (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary 1277; Gill 37; Hsu and Powers 172; Malhotra 4-5).

viii. **Private Catering Firms:** Private catering firms "supply and serve food and drinks" for "large social gatherings, banquets" etc. (Gill 37; Hsu and Powers 215; Ingram, *Hospitality: A framework* 141; Malhotra 4-5).

ix. **Transport Services (Road, Railway, Ship and Airline Services):**
Transport services carry or convey people or goods from one place to another by road, railway, ship, airplanes and helicopters or similar other means of movement. Transport services may also provide food, entertainment or other services during movement of people or goods (Gill 36; Hsu and Powers 232; Malhotra 4-5).

x. **Hospitals:** Hospitals are institutions providing reception, care, medical treatment and surgery for ill and wounded people (Dittmer 5-105, 201-288; Hsu and Powers 90; Malhotra 4-5; Severt, Aiello, Elswick and Cyr 665).

2.2 Hospitality Industry and Hotels:

The global hospitality industry employs around 8% of the total workforce worldwide (LRGUAS). The same study also stated that this industry may employ around 303 million people worldwide by 2020. Besides, this industry is witnessing significant growth in the recent years (CTH 17; Ernst and Young 1-2).

The hospitality industry in India has contributed around 8.6% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2010 (Thadani, Tuli and Karulkar 1) up from 6.1 % in 2007 (Thadani, *Critical Issues* 4). In fact, Thadani et al. have mentioned that the hospitality industry happens to be the most important component of the Indian travel and tourism industry. In 2011, India obtained the 68th position among all countries in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2011 (Blanke and Chiesa 15).

It is to be noted that hotels constitute the most critical segment of the entire hospitality industry as it is the base wherein all specialist skills related towards courting and satisfying guests (tourists[#]) lie (Thadani, *Critical Issues* 1-4). The same author has highlighted that infrastructure of the hotels is essential for the hospitality industry particularly in nations like India. Thadani et al. (1-11) have heavily focused on hotels as the most important segment of the hospitality industry in their study. In fact, the entire study on hospitality revolved around the hotel industry only. The same authors in yet another study have emphasized on increased availability of hotel

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[#] As per UN and WTO (5-7), tourists are described as "overnight visitors". Again, Doering (3) in his study has described guests as visitors to whom hospitality or "generosity" is extended. This viewpoint has also been emphasized by Berno (656-674) in his study. Therefore, in case of the hospitality industry (particularly hotels), guests may also be referred to as tourists.

rooms and improved infrastructure as the most important requirement for developing the Indian hospitality and tourism industry (Thadani, *An HVS* 6). Again, in another research work, hotels were taken as the only entities of study concerning the hospitality industry (HVS, FHRAI and ECOTEL 1-50). Similar methodologies have been noted in case of studies by few scholars (Bowen 334-344; Blum 350-361; and Ingram, *Hospitality and tourism* 44-54). In similar studies, required data on the hospitality industry have been collected from guests in hotels only (Harkinson, Poulston and Kim 377-392; Mei, Dean and White 136-143). The study by Mei et al. (138) involved development of a scale for measuring quality of hotels called "HOLSERV Scale" based on the SERQUAL Scale for measuring service quality. Countryman, DeFranco and Venegas (577-578) have stated that the two top categories in the hospitality industry are hotels and clubs. They have also established that hotels happen to be most important part of the hospitality industry. Jayawardena (259) has emphasized only on education in hotel schools in his study on creating hospitality management educational programmes in developing countries. Ingram (*Hospitality: A framework* 140-141) has stated that hotels and catering forms the essence of the hospitality industry. In fact, he has greatly focused on hotels as the indispensable segment of this industry. Thereby, hotel industry can be taken as the sole most important component representing the entire hospitality industry. This fact has been further supported by some other researchers as well (Hsu and Powers 66-265; Stutts 22-23; Reid and Bojanic 31-57, 63-86). Costa, Eccles and Teare (293), MKono (857-865), Purcell (17-20), Teare (55-65), and Zopiatis and Constanti (135-153) have also shared the same views.

2.3 Hotel Industry in India:

Hotels are essential part of the tourism industry. Hotels, through proper facilities and services for guests, can provide significant contribution to the overall services offered under the broad purview of tourism (Ahmed 70-91; Gill 28-77; Hsu and Powers 66-265; Jha 28-257; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)).

Hotels existed long ago in the Indian subcontinent in the form of dharamsalas (known as inns in other parts of the world). These provided meals and "accommodation" as monasteries, rest houses, taverns etc. (Kannan 1-3). With the

passage of time, there has been tremendous development in the hotel industry particularly in the last century. Early hotels in India included Hotel Taj Mahal and the British Hotel in Bombay (now Mumbai) and the Great Eastern Hotel and Esplanade Hotel in Calcutta (now Kolkata). Later on many new hotels were set up involving both the private and public sectors (Kannan 1-10). In fact, the Government of India set up the following for aiding the hotel industry in the country (Kannan 1-86; Mohanty 1-115):

i. Indian Tourism Hotel Corporation (later named as Hotel Corporation of India (HCI) Limited): It was set up on January 21, 1965 to look after construction and management of hotels in the public sector.

ii. Indian Tourism Corporation Limited: It was set up on March 31, 1965 to produce material for publicity of tourism in the country.

iii. Indian Tourism Transport Undertaking Limited: It was set up on December 1, 1964 to provide transport facilities to tourists visiting the country.

After around one year of working, the above three organizations were amalgamated into one single entity, namely, the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). The ITDC started functioning from October 1, 1966. Still, before 1980, the Indian hotel industry comprised mainly of single hotel companies. During this period this industry was lagging behind in comparison to its counterparts in western countries due to bottlenecks in developing crucial infrastructure sector such as airports, railways, roadways, communication etc. (Kannan 1-86).

However with the *Asiad* held in New Delhi in 1982 and subsequent liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991, there was a tremendous improvement in these hotels including related infrastructure all throughout the country particularly in the metropolitan cities (Corporate Catalyst India). In recent years, the Indian hotel industry has seen satisfactory growth due to increasing number of foreign and domestic tourists as well as growth in the economy (Kumar 17-41). In fact, during the financial year 2010-2011, the Indian hotel industry registered a modest growth rate of 7 percent (Maps of India). The same author has also stated that arrival of low cost airlines, "Incredible India" destination campaign and the "Atithi Devo Bhava" campaign has also greatly helped in this regard. Besides, the Government of India has

also taken up the following steps to boost "travel and tourism" that will ultimately help the hotel industry (Bureau of Immigration; Kumar 17-41):

i. Abolishment of inland air travel tax of 15%.

ii. Reduction in the excise duty on aviation turbine fuel to 8%.

iii. Removal of number of restrictions on outbound charted flights.

iv. Treating "convention centres as a part of core infrastructure".

v. Implementation of Tourist Visa-on-Arrival facility with a maximum validity of 30 days with single entry facility issued by the Immigration officer at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata Airports.

A report prepared by Hospitality India in 2012 laments that the total number of available rooms in all categories of hotels and guest houses in India is 200,000 with a shortfall of around 100,000 rooms. The same report has stated that there are 1285 approved budget hotels across the country with around 51,000 available rooms apart from dharamsalas, devasthans and guest houses. As mentioned earlier, India obtained the 136th position among all countries in terms of hotel rooms in the year 2011 as per Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2011 (Blanke and Chiesa 217).

According to Kumar (238-327), few favourable prospects for the Indian hotel industry in the near future are:

i. **Availability of Low Cost Carriers:** There has been a noticeable growth in low cost airline services in India. This has stimulated greater demand for travel even if room rents in hotels are increasing.

ii. **Technological Improvement:** In recent years, there has been considerable improvement in technology in case of hotel services relating to information technology, accommodation, traveling, communication etc. Some examples of such technology include e-ticketing, on-line bookings, Wi-Fi internet connectivity etc.

iii. **Large Scale Expansion Plans:** The Indian hotel industry is expected to witness huge expansion in the coming years. In fact, global hotel chains like Hilton, Accor, Marriott International, Berggruen Hotels, Cabana Hotels etc. are likely to enter India in future. Besides, international "hotel asset management companies" are also expected to enter the country in the coming years.

2.4 Hotel Industry in North East India:

As mentioned in sections 2.2 and 2.3 in this Chapter, hotels constitute a major segment of the hospitality industry. In fact, hotels are an important part of the tourism industry. According to the reports in the Vision document 2020 for the North East India (refer to Fig. 2.1) published by Ministry of DONER and NEC (7), there is enormous tourism potential in this region keeping in view its various natural and other resources. Development in the tourism sector can result in the creation of more jobs thereby bringing about development in this region (Ministry of DONER and NEC 25, 49). This has also been mentioned in other reports (Italia 5-7). So, there must be greater emphasis on providing satisfactory services in hotels which are an indispensable component of the hospitality and tourism industry. Already, the Government of India is focusing on development of the required infrastructure for giving a boost to tourism in this region (Ministry of DONER and NEC 52, 104). Hotels have existed in this region for quite a long time. Growth in the hotel industry in this region of India has immensely contributed to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of almost every state in this region (Ministry of DONER and NEC 185). There are hotels falling into different categories (refer to Appendix-III) as per various records in this region (FHRAI; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)). As per Appendix-III during the period of study (2010-2011), there is only one 5 star deluxe hotel in this region but there is no other 5 star hotel. This single 5 star deluxe hotel is Mayfair Gangtok located in Gangtok in the state of Sikkim. There are six (6) 4 star hotels in this region. The prominent among them include Hotel Dynasty and Hotel Rajmahal located in Guwahati in the state of Assam, and Hotel Polo Towers in Shillong in the state of Meghalaya. Besides, there are forty nine (49) 3 star hotels in this region. Some of these include Hotel Nakshatra and Hotel Viswaratna in Guwahati in the state of Assam, and Hotel Royal Demazong and Hotel Saramsa Resort in Gangtok in the state of Sikkim. The rest of the hotels in this region fall in the 2 star, 1 star and unclassified categories. It is to be noted that unclassified hotels are those hotels that have not applied for any type of classification to the competent Government of India authority, i.e., Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC).
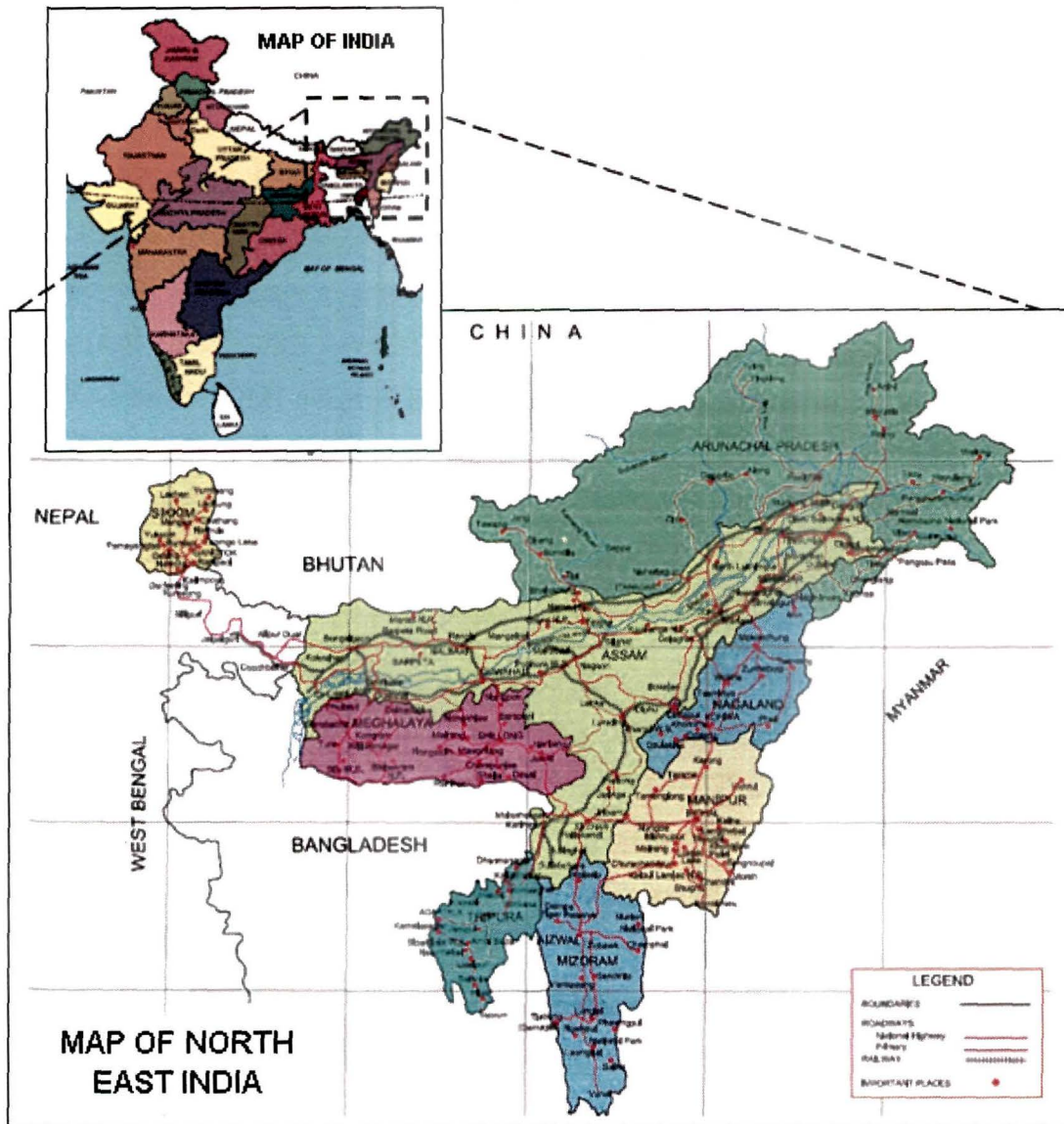
Fig. 2.1. Map of North East India
(Source: http://cyberjournalist.org.in/images/states.gif and
http://allindiabirdingtours.com/images/map%20of%20NE%20india.JPG)

2.5 Classification of Hotels in India:

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has formed a "voluntary scheme for classification of operational hotels" in India based on the following categories in order to provide "contemporary standards of facilities and services available in the hotels" (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

i. **Star Category Hotels**: Star Category hotels are classified into 5 Star Deluxe, 5 Star, 4 Star, 3 Star, 2 Star and 1 Star hotel.

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ii. **Heritage Category Hotels**: Heritage Category hotels are classified into Heritage Grand, Heritage Classic and Heritage Basic hotel.

The Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is responsible for inspection and assessment of hotels based on facilities and services offered. Accordingly, it also looks after the following:

i. Approval of hotel projects at the implementation stage

ii. Classification of hotels under various categories

Hotels all over the world including those in India have adopted a formal classification system keeping in view the following objectives (ECC-Net 2-8). This has been supported by Callan (11-17):

i. Obtaining proper customer information.

ii. "Possibility of differentiating hotels to implement differentiated policies".

iii. "Possibility of exercising an increasing tax burden on products of luxury as a special case of the previous target".

iv. "Possibility of regulation of rates"

v. "Steering" and directing hotels towards modernization

vi. Facilitating communication, "conclusion of contracts" and "monitoring their compliance with tourism agencies".

Some scholars have stated that hotels are normally classified on the following bases (Ahmed 71; Gill 28-77):

i. On the basis of size

ii. On the basis of star category

iii. On the basis of ownership

iv. On the basis of other bases of classification

2.5.1 Classification of Star Category Hotels:

Classification of hotels in India is carried out, as discussed earlier, by the Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)) on the basis of star category. As mentioned earlier, Star

Category Hotels are classified into 5 Star Deluxe, 5 Star, 4 Star, 3 Star, 2 Star and 1 Star hotel. The following common characteristics should be present for each of these categories (Ahmed 75-88; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)).

   i.   The "architectural features and general construction of the hotel building should have distinctive features" relevant for any luxury hotel of each these categories.

   ii.   The locality of such hotels should be of "highest standards" relevant for any hotel of each these categories.

   iii.   There should be ample space for car parking.

5 Star Deluxe, 5 Star and 4 Star hotels should have the following facilities (Ahmed 75-86; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

   i.   There should be full air conditioning facilities in all "public and private rooms".

   ii.   There should be sufficient number of 24 hour lifts.

   iii.   There should be a "well appointed lobby" and cloakrooms for ladies and gents with the highest standards in terms of facilities.

It is to be noted that 5 Star Deluxe and 5 Star hotels should have the following distinct characteristics (Ahmed 75-84; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

   i.   There should be "atleast 25 bedrooms with attached bathrooms with long baths or most modern shower facilities".

   ii.   There should be a swimming pool with facilities of the highest standards.

4 Star hotels should have minimum "25 bedrooms with attached bathrooms". Atleast half of them should have "long baths or most modern shower facilities" (Ahmed 84-86; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)).

3 Star hotels should have the following characteristics (Ahmed 86-87; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

   i.   There should be "atleast 20 bedrooms with attached bathrooms" having all the good quality latest provisions.

ii. There should be air conditioning facilities in atleast fifty percent (50%) of the rooms with all the required modern facilities and design.

iii. There should be sufficient number of 24 hour lifts provided the hotel building is more than "two storey including the ground floor".

2 Star hotels should have the following characteristics (Ahmed 87; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

i. There should be "atleast 10 bedrooms with seventy five percent (75%) of them having attached bathrooms" having all the good quality latest provisions.

ii. There should be air conditioning facilities in atleast twenty five percent (25%) of the rooms with all the required modern facilities and design.

iii. The rooms should be clean, comfortable, properly ventilated with all the required items for furniture.

iv. There should be a "well furnished lounge".

1 Star hotels should have the following characteristics (Ahmed 88; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

i. There should be "atleast 10 bedrooms with twenty five percent (25%) of them having attached bathrooms" with latest good quality facilities.

ii. There should be air conditioning facilities in atleast twenty five percent (25%) of the rooms with all the required modern facilities and design.

iii. The rooms must be clean, comfortable, properly ventilated with comfortable bed and furniture.

2.5.2 Classification of Heritage Category Hotels:

Heritage category hotels represent those hotels running in palaces, castles, havelis, hunting lodges, forts or royal residences of any size build before 1950 (Ahmed 88; FHRAI). Classification of heritage hotels in India is also carried out by the Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)) on the following basis:

i. Number of rooms

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ii. Year of construction of the palaces, castles, havelis, hunting lodges, forts or royal residences of any size that has been converted into a hotel.

Heritage Grand hotels and Heritage Classic hotels are those heritage hotels running in palaces, castles, havelis, hunting lodges, forts or royal residences of any size built before 1935 (FHRAI). Heritage Basic hotels represent similar heritage hotels built before 1950 (FHRAI). All these three categories should have the following common characteristics (FHRAI; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

i. These hotel buildings should be designed and constructed with distinctive features as per the "traditional way of life in the area".

ii. There should be no interference with the architecture of the property.

iii. Any kind of "improvement, renovation, extension or change in the existing structures" should be done in line of the "traditional architectural styles and construction techniques harmonizing the new with the old". In the aftermath of such expansion, "the newly build up area added should not exceed 50% of the total built up (plinth) area including the old and new structures. In such case, facilities like swimming pools, lawns etc. will be excluded".

iv. There should be proper space for car parking.

v. There should be proper maintenance and cleaning of all public and guests rooms with all the required modern amenities.

vi. A properly attended lobby and cloakrooms for ladies and gents with the befitting facilities should be present in the hotel premises.

Heritage Grand hotels should have the following distinct characteristics (FHRAI; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

i. There should be minimum 15 rooms with 30 beds with "fifty percent (50%) of the rooms air-conditioned (except in hill stations where there should be heating arrangements)".

ii. There should be atleast two of the following sporting facilities:

> Swimming pool
> Health club
> Lawn tennis
> Squash
> Riding

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> Golf course

Apart from the above mentioned facilities, "supplementary sporting facilities like golf, boating, sailing, fishing or any other adventure sports facilities like ballooning, parasailing, wind surfing, safari excursions, trekking, indoor games etc. may also be present.

Heritage Classic hotels should have the following specific characteristics (FHRAI; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)):

i.   There should be minimum 15 rooms with 30 beds with proper ambience.

ii.   Atleast one of the following sporting facilities should be present:

> Swimming pool
> Health club
> Lawn tennis
> Squash
> Riding
> Golf course

Besides the above mentioned facilities, extra sporting facilities like golf, boating, sailing, fishing or any other adventure sports facilities like ballooning, parasailing, wind surfing, safari excursions, trekking, indoor games etc. may also be present.

In case of Heritage Basic hotels, there should be minimum 5 rooms with 10 beds with proper ambience (FHRAI; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (HRACC Division)).

This chapter has tried to provide an insight about the hospitality industry. It has also tried to give some explanation about this industry particularly hotels in case of India in particular. Besides, a detail explanation about the different categories of hotels in India has been given in this chapter.

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CHAPTER 3

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Chapter 3

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the need for conducting this study in terms of its importance. Besides, it also provides the information needs and objectives for this study. In addition, this chapter also provides the scope and perceived limitations of this study.

3.1 Importance of Customer Delight in Marketing:

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create, exchange and satisfy individual and organisational objectives (Grönroos, *Defining Marketing* 52-53; Hawkins, Best, Coney, and Mookerjee 1-29; Kotler 1-29; Kotler, Armstrong, Agnihotri, and Haque 4-79; Panda 1-177; Schiffman and Kanuk 24-58; Stanton, Etzel and Walker 4-6, 10; Yadin 226-228). Trustrum (48-50) has described the concept of marketing as a belief that the organization can function in the best interest of its customers and itself where a balance is achieved between the needs of both these parties. One of the best means of achieving this is through customer delight (Crotts and Magnini 719, 721; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 463; Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi 486; Torres and Kline 290-291). Grönroos (*Defining Marketing* 52-55) has also stated that marketing is centered on customer relations "where objectives of the parties are met through various kinds of exchanges". In fact, such exchanges can build and maintain customer relationships which can prove to be an important tool for obtaining customer delight.

Customer delight is an essential part of marketing (Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder and Lueg 1133; Fuller and Matzler 116; Mascarenhas et al. 486; Skogland and Siguaw 222-224; Stewart 112-113; Torres and Kline 290-291). Mascarenhas et al. (486) have also supported this viewpoint by stating that greater emphasis on target customers as well as increased participation of such customers at every step of the value chain can lead to higher customer satisfaction, retention and ultimately customer delight. The same authors have also established that Customer Value Chain Involvement (CVCI), which is an important aspect of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in marketing, is responsible for providing customer delight.

This can usher in higher customer loyalty through repeat customers which is beneficial for any firm (Berman 129, 148-151; Crotts et al. 463; Torres and Kline 290-291).

Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort, and Hillier (123-125) have established that marketing provides an essential medium for "changing consumer behaviour and in influencing their attitudes and beliefs". The same authors have also opined that marketing is linked with sustainability of an organization or firm. As stated before, customer delight is an indispensable component of marketing. Thereby, it is seen from the works of these scholars that customer delight is also connected to sustainability as well as consumer behaviour. Therefore, if noticed deeply, customer delight is an inalienable part of marketing and can lead to greater sustainability of any firm in today's business scenario.

3.2 Importance of Customer Delight in the Hospitality Industry:

The hospitality industry is an important segment of the service sector which has been contributing much towards global economic development. Kandampully and Suhartanto (348-350) have stressed upon building "customer loyalty by providing unique benefits to customers" as one of the important strategies used by hotel managers to gain competitive advantage. Palmer, McMahon-Beattie and Beggs (54-56) have highlighted that any hotel should ensure that distinctive requirements of the guests (customers) are fulfilled in a flawless way. The same scholars have stated that this culture enables any hotels to deliver their promises to guests (customers) in relation to "individual customization". They have also stated that this can lead to higher guest (customer) loyalty in these hotels in the long run. Customer loyalty leads to greater customer retention (Aldaigan and Buttle 357; Banga, Kumar, Goyal and Kaur 101; Dasbiswas and Das 18-19). This is also applicable in the hospitality industry (Pizam and Ellis 326-327). As such, customer loyalty as well as customer satisfaction has gained very high importance for all organizations including hotels (Engeset and Heide 23-25; Fuller and Matzler 116; Kandampully and Suhartanto 348-350; Pantouvakis and Lymperopoulos 624-626). It is to be noted that customer loyalty may not be attained only through customer satisfaction. Any firm or hotel needs to move beyond customer satisfaction for gaining loyal guests (Crotts and Magnini 719; Crotts et al. 463; Deming; Magnini, Crotts and Zehrer

535-545; Mascarenhas et al. 486; Stewart 112-113; Yang 85-88). Some thinkers have established that customer loyalty can be best achieved through customer delight (Crotts and Magnini 719; Crotts et al. 463; Keiningham, Goddard, Vavra and Laci 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Kumar, Olshavsky and King 14-26). The same viewpoint have also been shared by many other researchers (Arnold et al. 1133; Fuller and Matzler 116; Patterson 221-224; Popli 19; Skogland and Siguaw 222-224; Stewart 112-113; Torres and Kline 290-291). Torres and Kline (298) have highlighted the importance of obtaining customer delight in the hotel industry through a model which indicated that customer delight can lead to loyal customers. This ensures a steady stream of cash flows (Estelami 285-290; Torres and Kline 290-291). Again as discussed earlier (refer to section 1.1.1 in chapter 1), customer delight is found to be associated with three fundamental needs of customers namely "security, justice and self esteem" which are well applicable in the hospitality industry (Schneider and Bowen 35-45). This can be achieved with the help of motivated and exceptional employees delivering "exceptional service" (Cook, Bowen, Chase, Dasu, Stewart and Tansik 160; Henkoff 110-112; Torres and Kline 290-291). These may enable any hotel to win customers' trust and loyalty.

3.3 Need of the Study:

In section 1.2 in Chapter 1, a detail discussion regarding the problem related to customer delight has been offered. In order to have a suitable solution to this, it is urgently needed to establish the concept of customer delight with its sequence from empirical evidence. As mentioned earlier, without feedback from customers it is not possible to conclude if customer delight could be achieved through a sequence of events.

As hospitality is almost a pure service industry, the issue of customer loyalty through customer delight is very important. Hence, it is felt that the need for this kind of study is essential in the hospitality industry especially in hotels.

Also there is a need to study the roles of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in hotels. This is needed in order to understand if a firm practicing customer delight strategy should give some more importance to certain variables than some others.

Also as discussed in section 1.2 in Chapter 1, management of customer delight is not straight forward. A firm needs to evolve special strategies so that the concern for profitability does not arise while implementing such strategy.

This study attempts, therefore, to achieve the following objectives in order to fulfill the above needs.

3.4 Objectives of the Study:

In order to gain more insight on the problem that has been discussed above and also to arrive at a solution, the following objectives are proposed to be fulfilled through this study:

i.   To establish the concept of customer delight with empirical evidence in the hospitality industry of North East India.

        It is important to provide a clear understanding of the sequence leading to customer delight in order to see the relationship among various components those are said to be responsible in forming customer delight. Therefore, in this study, the relationship among surpassing guests' expectations, perceived pleasant surprises, perceived excitement, perceived positive feelings and happiness (Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 463; Finn 19; Oliver, Rust and Varki 318; Rust and Oliver 87) are tried to be established with empirical evidence. The literatures related to this are discussed in section 1.1 in Chapter 1.

ii.   To determine the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry of North East India.

        It is important to find out the role of various parameters of the hospitality industry (mainly hotels) that may result in customer delight. In addition, this attempt is essential to find out the role of various pleasant surprises for the guests in the hotels that may cause customer delight among them.

iii.   To develop strategy for management of customer delight in hospitality industry of North East India. The sub-objective for this are as follows:

        To study the role of reenacted delight and transitory delight in overall delight management.

This is important to suggest a means for maintaining customer delight in the hospitality industry mainly hotels by providing provisions to the guests which does not affect the profitability and survivality of the hotels.

- To study the role of skilled and well trained employees in overall delight management.

This is indispensable to propose a way for continuance of customer delight in the hospitality industry mainly hotels through such employees which does not affect the profitability and survivality of the hotels.

3.5 Scope of the Study:

The coverage of the present study on customer delight that has been described by its objectives is applicable in the hospitality industry. Since hotels constitute the sole most important part of the hospitality industry (as noticed in section 2.2 of Chapter 2), this study, therefore, has been carried out only in hotels. These hotels belong to 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and some unclassified categories in North East India. Unclassified hotels are those hotels that have not applied for any type of classification to the competent Government of India authority, i.e., Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC). Besides, it is to be noted that this study is conducted mainly among repeat guests in these hotels.

3.6 Perceived Limitations of the Study:

This study on customer delight in hotels is not free from limitations. Some of such limitations are discussed below:

i. This study on the hospitality industry has involved hotels only. This is because hotels represent the lone most important component representing the entire hospitality industry. This is on the basis of the fact that many scholars have used hotels as representation of the hospitality industry (Harkinson, Poulston and Kim 377-392; HVS, FHRAI and ECOTEL 1-50; Mei, Dean and White 136-143; Thadani 1-4).

ii.   The study is carried out only among repeat guests in the hotels in North East India since the study objectives deals with delight management only, as discussed in section 3.4 of this Chapter.

iii. The study has been carried out in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and some unclassified categories of hotels in North East India. These hotels in North East India are taken for identification of the repeat guests. However, these guests were inquired not only on the hotels they visited but their preferences while visiting hotels. So, their responses should not only reflect the views from the point of view of geographical area, rather it is expected that the views they expressed are universal. Only these categories of hotels are covered in this region keeping in view of the fact that customer delight is applicable in such hotels only. The study could not be carried out in 2 star and 1 star hotels or any other types of establishments in the hospitality industry as advanced marketing concepts might not be very common there. As such, the findings of this study cannot be generalized for hotels of lower categories.

iv.   The exact star category wise classification of 8 hotels (out of 65 hotels) could not be ascertained (refer to Appendix-III). This is because these hotels have not applied for any type of voluntary classification. So, such hotels have been stated as unclassified hotels. However, these few hotels have all the required facilities and provisions for providing customer delight for their guests. This fact has been ascertained through interviews of their repeat guests.

v.   The study has been carried out within a time frame of one year (From 1st June, 2010 to 31st May, 2011) in North East India. The basic aim is to empirically establish the sequence of customer delight and to deal with its management. Therefore, the concern for a representation of Indian or any other national in the sampling scheme is not given top priority. As will be discussed in Chapter 4 Research Methodology, the basic sampling scheme adopted for this study is snowball sampling, wherein prime concern is to interview repeat guests of the hotels surveyed.

vi.   Probabilistic sampling procedure is not employed in this study owing to the absence of any proper sampling frame for the population from which data are

being gathered. However, statistical tests like Independent sample t-test, One-way ANOVA, Factor Analysis, and Discriminant Analysis have been carried out in this study. There remains some apprehension regarding the employment of such tools as non-probabilistic sampling procedure is used. But literatures justify using such tools due to a large sample size of 500 respondents (Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson 283; Levin and Rubin 592; Malhotra 479; Salkind 1: 924). Besides, such statistical tests have been employed in this research work based on other studies (Kobrin 32-37; Wood and Goolsby 43-50).

vii. This study did not involve any tests for normality distribution other than in case of Discriminant Analysis (in Chapter 5). Still, all the statistical tests (as mentioned in the earlier limitation no. vi) have been conducted keeping in view of the fact that departure from normal distribution may not seriously affect the validity of such analysis (Hair et al. 283; Levin and Rubin 436; Lumley, Diehr, Emerson and Chen, 152; Lunney, 264; Malhotra 479, 514).

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CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter attempts to provide the methodology for achieving the objectives of the study. In this chapter the research plan, research design, customer delight variables, data collection procedure, questionnaire design, and data analysis techniques of this study have been discussed in detail. This study involves both exploratory and descriptive research design.

4.1 Information Needs:

For fulfillment of the objectives of this study, certain specific information needs have been identified in detail. The first objective as given in section 3.4 (in Chapter 3) deals with establishing the concept with respect to the sequence of customer delight with empirical evidence in the hospitality industry (mainly in hotels) in North East India. In order to fulfill this objective, a literature review is carried out regarding customer delight (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1). Similar literatures are reviewed in case of customer satisfaction as customer delight is related to it (as noticed in the literature review). Through this attempt, it is found that variables like surpassing of guests' expectations, their pleasant surprises from any act of hotels, and resultant happiness along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings (as discussed in section 1.1 in Chapter 1) may form a sequence that may lead to customer delight in hotels (Crotts, Pan and Raschid 463; Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Finn 19; Magnini, Crotts and Zehrer 535-545). Primary data on these variables need to be collected in order to empirically establish the sequence leading to customer delight.

The second objective as specified in section 3.4 (in Chapter 3) deals with determination of the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry (mainly in hotels) in North East India. For fulfillment of this objective, literature related to customer delight and hospitality industry (particularly the hotel industry) is studied. This also includes study of literature relating to customer satisfaction for reasons mentioned in the earlier paragraph. This endeavour revealed 50 main common hospitality parameters constituting customer delight in the hotels falling under 5 star deluxe, 4 star, 3 star,

Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India (refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in this Chapter). Some of these important common parameters include food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage etc. In order to analyze the roles of these variables (discussion on which is offered in another section of this Chapter) customer (guests in this case) preferences are to be measured.

The third objective as mentioned in section 3.4 (in Chapter 3) is related with the development of strategy for management of customer delight in the hospitality industry (mainly in hotels) in North East India. This includes two sub-objectives. One of them involves studying the role of reenacted delight and transitory delight in overall delight management in hotels (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1). For attainment of this sub-objective, literature relating to these two forms of delight as well as overall customer delight in hotels (as established by Rust and Oliver (88)) is studied in depth. An explanation regarding reenacted and transitory delight is already discussed in section 1.1 in Chapter 1. Such delight may lead to guests' happiness in a hotel resulting in increased repeat visits, thereby causing maintenance of delight. The required strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted and transitory delight needed to be determined with the aid of primary data collected from respondents as explained in section 4.3.2 in this Chapter. The second sub-objective of the third objective of this research work involves the study of the role of skilled and well trained employees in overall delight management in hotels as established by Torres and Kline (290-291). For achievement of this sub-objective, literature relating to constructs that constitute proper skill and training of employees in relation to customer delight in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels) are studied. The required strategy for management of customer delight in hotels involving skilled and well trained employees through reenacted and transitory delight needed to be formulated with the help of primary data.

4.2 Research Design:

As stated earlier, this study involves both exploratory and descriptive research design. Exploratory research emphasizes on the discovery of "ideas" by providing valuable insights into the problem situation confronting the research

(Aaker, Kumar and Day 109, 188-189; Beri, *Marketing Research* 62; Chawla and Sondhi 49; Cooper and Schindler 143; Malhotra 106, 143; Tull and Hawkins 57). This research work has been carried out on customer delight in the hospitality industry in North East India. As discussed earlier, this involves extensive literature review of studies related to customer delight, customer loyalty and satisfaction, and the hospitality industry. In this way, this research involves exploratory research design. Descriptive research is a well structured study intended to describe the characteristics and facts related to any issue or problem involved in a research study (Aaker et al. 228-229, 245-246; Beri, *Marketing Research* 63; Chawla and Sondhi 53; Cooper and Schindler 151; Malhotra 183; Tull and Hawkins 57). The objectives of this study (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3) include deep analysis of the said concept of customer delight. This involves empirically establishing the sequence leading to customer delight. Therefore, this study also involves descriptive research design. Since, primary data in this study has been collected only once from the sample respondents through survey, it is a cross-sectional descriptive study. Survey research has been employed in this study to collect required data. Data collection procedure is discussed in section 4.3 of this Chapter.

Initially, a review of literature related to customer delight is conducted for identification of variables which can result in such delight and its overall management in the hospitality industry (mainly hotels). The same literature are also reviewed to identify data collection procedure and data analysis approaches. Additional ideas and information on this subject is gathered from existing literature on customer loyalty and satisfaction, as well as on hospitality industry (refer to section 3.3 Need of the Study in Chapter 3). As discussed earlier, this led to the identification of variables like surpassing of guests' expectations, their pleasant surprises, and consequent happiness along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings that may result in customer delight in hotels. The same literature review also led to the identification of a set of 46 common hospitality variables (including an open ended variable "others") like food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage etc. as common hospitality parameters that might affect guests' delight in hotels. In a similar manner, 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises (including an open ended element "others") like free gifts, special discounts, special foods etc. (as common

hospitality parameters) that may lead to customer delight in hotels are selected. Primary data has been collected within a time frame of one year (from 1st June, 2010 to 31st May, 2011) in North East India. Primary data is collected with the help of a sample survey through a structured self-administered questionnaire for repeat guests in the hotels. It is to be noted that before the final survey, a pilot survey is conducted among 66 repeat guests in 12 hotels falling in 4 Star, 3 Star and unclassified categories in Guwahati city (Assam) and required modifications are incorporated into the final questionnaire. The final questionnaire consists of 41 questions covering variables relating to customer delight and its overall management in the hotels. This questionnaire has been administered to repeat guests in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified hotels in North East India. Thereafter, the collected data is analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software. This analysis has been shown in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.2.1 Research Design for the First Objective:

The first objective of this study is concerned with the establishment of the concept of customer delight with empirical evidence in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels) in North East India (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3). This involves empirically establishing the sequence resulting in customer delight in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels). According to the views of various scholars, surpassing of guests' expectations, their pleasant surprises and their resultant happiness along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings may lead to customer delight in hotels (Crotts et al. 463; Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Finn 19; Oliver, Rust and Varki 318; Rust and Oliver 87). In fact, these scholars have noted that these may be the main antecedents of such delight. Such observations indicate the sequence involving these variables for creating customer delight in hotels. The following relations based on these views may be considered to be a part of such a sequence:

i.   Relation of surpassing of expectations with pleasant surprises in hotels.

ii. Relation of pleasant surprises in hotels with resultant happiness.

iii. Relation of perceived excitement with happiness due to pleasant surprises.

iv. Relation of perceived positive feelings with happiness due to pleasant surprises.

v. Relation of surpassing of expectations with perceived positive feelings.

The above relations may be appropriately tested using One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) and Discriminant Analysis. One-way ANOVA is used for examining the presence of significant differences among the means of the dependent variables across independent variables (Malhotra 505). The value of the means of the dependent variable with respect to different groups (levels) of the independent variable may show the nature of relationship between these two variables. Discriminant Analysis is employed to examine the existence of significant differences among groups of dependent variable in terms of the independent (predictor) variable (Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson 245; Malhotra 576). It also helps in developing the Discriminant Function which is a linear combination of the independent (predictor) variable(s) that will appropriately discriminate between categories of the dependent variable.

In case of relation i. of the first objective of this study, the variable, respondent guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations may be treated as the independent variable while the variable, respondents' viewpoint regarding pleasant surprises may be treated as the dependent variable (refer to Question No.15(i) and 18 respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). Here, One-way ANOVA may test the presence of significant differences among the means of guests' opinion on their pleasant surprises in hotels across their perception on surpassing of their expectations. Besides, the value of the means of the guests' pleasant surprises with respect to different levels of surpassing of their expectations may indicate the nature of relationship between these two variables. Similarly, Discriminant Analysis may also test the existence of significant differences among groups of guests' opinion on such pleasant surprises with respect to their views on surpassing of their expectations. It may also aid in forming the Discriminant Function- linear combination of surpassing of guests' expectations which may best discriminate between categories of their pleasant surprises in hotels. In this manner this relation may be tested. Similarly, the other four relations may be tested using ANOVA and Discriminant Analysis. The degree of relationship between the pairs of variables associated with each of these relations may be essential in arriving at a meaningful study on customer delight. This can be tested through Pearson's Correlation (Malhotra 534-542). This effort may help in checking the above

mentioned sequence of customer delight (comprising these relations) for establishing its presence in hotels in North East India. The details are shown in Chapter 5.

Use of Discriminant Analysis in the above situation offers certain advantages. These are (Hair et al. 245; Malhotra 576-577):

i. It helps in the determination of the Discriminant function that can discriminate between the categories of the dependent (criterion) variable.

ii. It helps in finding out the presence of significant differences among groups in terms of the independent (predictor) variables.

iii. It helps in examining which independent (predictor) variables may highly contribute to most of the intergroup differences.

iv. It aids in classification of cases on the basis of the values of independent (predictor) variable.

v. Besides, it also helps in finding out the accuracy of the classification.

It is to be noted that an attempt was made to involve Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (involving Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis) for creating a path diagram indicating a model of the sequence of customer delight in the hotel industry in North East India. However, this could not be put into practice owing to the following two serious limitations of SEM with respect to this study (Kleyman and McVean 5; Valluzzi, Larson and Miller 4350; Wu 33):

i. "Missing data and outliers" have influence on the covariance and correlation matrices analyzed in SEM. This study consists of considerable missing data particularly in case of responses to branching questions for customer delight. This led to failure of model fit while using SEM in this study.

ii. In most cases, a "large sample size produces stable estimates of the covariance or correlation among variables", but may also result in easier rejection of the model.

4.2.2 Research Design for the Second Objective:

The second objective of this study is concerned with the determination of the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels) in North East India (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3). As per the literature review, certain common hospitality parameters of hotels have

been identified (refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in this Chapter). These include 46 common hospitality variables (45 identified variables and any other variable) and 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises (5 probable elements and any other element of pleasant surprises). Some of these 46 common hospitality variables include food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage etc. Few of the 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises are free gifts, special foods, special discounts etc. These common hospitality parameters may lead to customer delight in hotels. It is important to reduce the earlier mentioned 46 common hospitality variables into few manageable factors. This would lead to proper understanding regarding customer delight in hotels with respect to these variables. Thereby this can help in arriving at meaningful observations for achieving the second objective of this study. This may be suitably done through Factor Analysis. It is used for data reduction and summarization. Factor Analysis can be used for two purposes. Firstly, it reduces a large number of variables into a smaller manageable number of factors. Secondly, it also analyses the "interdependence of interrelationship among a total set of variables" (Beri, *Marketing Research* 369-380; Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Malhotra 609-611). Factor Analysis has two basic approaches, namely, *Principal Component Analysis* and *Common Factor Analysis*. In Principal Component Analysis, the total variance of data is considered. It is normally employed when emphasis is on determining the "minimum number of factors that will account for maximum variance in the data for use in subsequent multivariate analysis" (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Malhotra 616-617). In Common Factor Analysis (also called Principal Axis Factoring), the common variance of data is considered. It is used when focus is on "identifying the underlying dimensions and common variance of interest" (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Malhotra 616-617). For the purpose of this study, Factor Analysis employing Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation is decided to be conducted on all these 46 common hospitality variables to best reduce them to few factors.

As already mentioned, the common hospitality parameters of hotels comprising 46 common hospitality variables and 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises may lead to customer delight in hotels. This may be tested on the basis of their relationship with surpassing of guests' expectations in hotels, which is an important component of customer delight (Crotts et al. 463; Crotts and Magnini 719-

722; Finn 19; Oliver et al. 318; Rust and Oliver 87). These relations may be duly tested using One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) for reasons mentioned in earlier section 4.2.1. Here, the variable, respondent guests' expectations regarding each of these 46 variables may be treated as the independent variable while the variable, surpassing expectations of the respondents may be treated as the dependent variable. In this case, an equal number of One-way ANOVA tests may be carried out to examine if the means of guests' opinion on surpassing of their expectations differ across their expectations regarding each of these 46 variables. Thereafter, the value of the means of guests' views on surpassing of their expectations with respect to the different levels of their expectations regarding each of these 46 variables may indicate the nature of relationship between them. This may show the nature of relationship of guests' expectations of each of these 46 variables with respect to surpassing of their expectations. This may help in indicating which of these variables may be highly emphasized by hotels to delight guests. Again for ANOVA, the variable, respondent guests' views on the frequency of obtaining the above mentioned 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises may be treated as the independent variable while the variable, surpassing expectations of the respondents may be treated as the dependent variable. Here, an equal number of One-Way ANOVA may be conducted to verify if the means of guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations differ in relation to obtainment of these 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises in hotels. Subsequently, the value of the means of guests' opinion on surpassing of their expectations across the different levels of their obtainment of each of these 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises may specify the nature of relationship between the former and the latter. This effort may help in studying the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hotels in North East India. The details are shown in Chapter 6.

4.2.3 Research Design for the Third Objective:

4.2.3.1 First Sub-Objective:

The first sub-objective of the third objective of this study is concerned with the development of strategy for management of customer delight in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels) in North East India involving reenacted delight and transitory delight (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3). It may be noted that staggered

delivery of customer delight may be a possible strategy in this regard. It is noticed through earlier research studies that staggered delivery of customer delight may be achievable through reenacted delight and transitory delight (Rust and Oliver 88). The former delight may be possible by providing similar value addition during guests' subsequent visits to hotels (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1). The latter delight may be possible by offering changes in value addition during guests' subsequent visits to hotels (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1).

As per the studies of Rust and Oliver (88), guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels, their expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits, and their resultant happiness and likelihood of staying in their same preferred hotels during their next visits may form a basis for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1). Therefore, the following relations may form the basis of any such proposed strategy in North East India:

i.   Relation of regular expectations of pleasant surprises in preferred hotels with expectations of similar value addition during next visit to these hotels.

ii. Relation of expectations of similar value addition during next visit in preferred hotels with resultant happiness.

iii. Relation of expectations of similar value addition during next visit in preferred hotels with resultant likelihood to stay in the same hotels.

The above relations may be suitably tested using One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) (as discussed in section 4.2.1). In case of the above relation i., the variable, respondents' regular expectation of pleasant surprises is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is treated as the independent variable (refer to Question No.20 and 25 respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). Here, One-way ANOVA may check if the means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises differ across their responses if they ever expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels. Next, the value of the means of the guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises with respect to different levels of their expectations of similar value addition may indicate the nature of relationship between these two variables. Similarly, the other two relations may be tested using One-way ANOVA. The

degree of relationship between the variables- guests' happiness with their preferred hotels due to similar value addition and their resultant likelihood to stay in the same hotels may also be important in this regard. This may be tested through Pearson's Correlation (Malhotra 534-542). As mentioned earlier, this may form the basis of any future strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight. Besides, examination of the segments of guests who may have higher or lower perception about expectations of such similar value addition during their next visit may add important inputs to such a strategy. This may be suitably done through a series of Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA. Independent sample t-test may be used to test whether significant differences exist between the means of the dependent variables (test variables) across independent variables (grouping variables) (Malhotra 479). One-way ANOVA is used for reasons mentioned in earlier section 4.2.1. In these tests, the variable, respondent guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' profiles (comprising of their gender, marital status etc.) is taken as the independent variable. The value of the means of the guests' expectation of similar value addition with respect to their profiles may indicate the segments of guests who may have higher or lower expectations about such value addition. The details are shown in section 7.2.1 of Chapter 7.

From the views of Rust and Oliver (88), it is also seen that guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels, their expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits, and their resultant happiness and likelihood of staying in their same preferred hotels during their next visits may be important for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1). As such, the following relations may form the basis of any such projected strategy in North East India:

i. Relation of regular expectations of pleasant surprises in preferred hotels with expectations of changes in value addition during next visit to these hotels.

ii. Relation of expectations of changes in value addition during next visit in preferred hotels with resultant happiness.

iii. Relation of expectations of changes in value addition during next visit in preferred hotels with resultant likelihood to stay in the same hotels in such visits.

The above relations may be duly tested using One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) (as discussed in section 4.2.1 and earlier paragraphs). In this regard, the degree of relationship between the variables- guests' happiness with their preferred hotels due to changes in value addition and their consequent likelihood to stay in the same hotels may also be significant. This may be checked through Pearson's Correlation (Malhotra 534-542). As stated earlier, this may form the basis of any prospective strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight. Moreover, examination of the segments of guests who may have higher or lower perception about expectations of such changes in value addition during their next visit may provide additional contributions to such a strategy. This may be appropriately done through a series of Independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. The details are discussed in section 7.2.2 of Chapter 7.

4.2.3.2 Second Sub-Objective:

The second sub-objective of the third objective of this study is also aimed at the development of a strategy for management of customer delight in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels) in North East India involving skilled and well trained employees (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3). It is seen that continuous delivery of customer delight in hotels may be a potential strategy in such case. This is feasible through skilled and well trained hotel employees involving reenacted and transitory delight (Rust and Oliver 88; Torres and Kline 290-300). In this regard, a proper Human Resource Management policy in any hotel is essential. As such, identification of common hospitality variables of customer delight that are directly possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees and are repeatedly emphasized by guests may be essential at the initial stage. It is also important to reduce these variables into few manageable factors. This may result in proper understanding regarding such continuous delivery of customer delight with respect to these variables. In this way, this can aid in arriving at significant observations for achieving the second sub-objective of the third objective of this study (refer to

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section 3.4 of Chapter 3). This may be suitably done through Factor Analysis (involving Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation) for reasons mentioned in section 4.2.2. It may also be essential to find out which segments of guests show higher or lower expectations regarding these factors in the hotels. For this purpose, factor scores are computed for each of these factors using weighted average of the factor loadings. Again, such segments of guests may be suitably identified through Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) as stated in the earlier sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.3.1. Here, the variable, factor scores on respondent guests' perception of each of these factors is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' profiles (comprising of their gender, marital status etc.) is taken as the independent variable.

For continuous delivery of customer delight through reenacted delight, it is important to identify which of the above already stated repeated common hospitality variables have to be emphasized with respect to guests' expectations of similar value addition during their next visits to their preferred hotels. This is obtained through One-way ANOVA. In this case, the variable, respondents' expectations of similar value addition during their next visit to their preferred hotels is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' expectations of such repeated variables is taken as the independent variable. The value of the means of the former variable across the latter variable indicates the nature of relationship between these two variables. In fact, this endeavour may show which of these repeated variables have to be focused for any future strategy for continuous delivery (management) of customer delight for the same guests in these hotels in the form of reenacted delight through skilled and well trained employees. These attempts, in addition to the already mentioned means to arrive at a future strategy for maintenance of customer delight through reenacted delight (refer to section 4.2.3.1), may also aid in formulating a future strategy for management of the same through the same delight involving skilled and well trained hotel employees in North East India. Again, for continuous delivery of customer delight through transitory delight, it may be vital to discover which of the above stated repeated variables have to be focused with respect to guests' expectations of changes in value addition during their subsequent visit to their preferred hotels. This is possible through One-way ANOVA as mentioned above. Here, the variable, respondents' expectations of changes in value

addition during their next visit to their preferred hotels is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, expectations of such repeated variables is taken as the independent variable. This endeavour, in addition to the already mentioned means to arrive at a proposed strategy for maintenance of customer delight through transitory delight (refer to section 4.2.3.1), may also assist in forming a future strategy for management of the same through the same delight involving skilled and well trained hotel employees in North East India. The details are shown in section 7.3 of Chapter 7.

4.3 Sources of Data:

The sources of primary and secondary data for this study are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Secondary Data Sources:

Secondary data is mainly important for fulfillment of the second objective of this study, i.e., to identify the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry (mainly hotels) (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3). In addition, secondary data is also essential in fulfillment of the first and third objective of this study. Secondary data has been obtained from the following:

i.	Books	iv.	Websites
ii.	Journals	v.	Literature, brochures and leaflets etc.
iii.	Magazines and periodicals		

The detail list is offered in the Bibliography.

4.3.2 Primary Data Sources:

Primary data for this study is collected from repeat guests (customers) of 65 hotels in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India covered during the sample survey (refer to Appendix-III). Survey method is used to collect primary data. Survey method is employed for data collection because of its wide scope and ability to provide detailed information from a sample of large population (Aaker et al. 245-255; Beri, *Marketing Research* 103-131; Chawla and Sondhi 99; Cooper and Schindler 245-246; Malhotra 410-423, 426-451; Tull and Hawkins 61, 164). This is done through interview of repeat guests in

hotels falling in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India covered during the sample survey. Besides, only repeat guests in these hotels are included as sampling elements in this study as customer delight is associated only with them (as established through literature survey). Only such hotels are selected for this study as they contain almost all the facilities wherein the concept of customer delight is applicable (refer to section 3.5 of Chapter 3). It is to be noted that wherever 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star and Heritage Grand categories of hotels are absent, other unclassified hotels having state of art facilities for guests had to be included for this survey. It is to be noted that unclassified hotels refers to those hotels that have not applied for any type of classification to the competent Government of India authority, i.e., Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC).

Table 4.1 Star Category Of Hotels in North East India covered during this Study

Sr. No.	Star Category	Number	Locations
1	5 Star Deluxe	1	Gangtok
2	4 Star	6	Gangtok, Guwahati and Shillong
3	3 Star	49	Gangtok, Guwahati, Kaziranga, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Tezpur, Silchar, Agartala, Kohima, Dimapur, Itanagar and Shillong
4	Heritage Grand	1	Gangtok
5	No Classification	8	Gangtok, Guwahati, Agartala, Aizawl, Itanagar and Imphal
Total		65	

4.3.2.1 Study Population:

The population for this study includes only repeat guests in 65 hotels in the 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and some unclassified categories in North East India covered during the sample survey. It is to be noted that only repeat guests are involved for data collection as the concept of customer delight in hotels is only applicable for them (Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder and Lueg 1133-1136; Crotts and Magnini 720; Crotts et al. 462; Donovan and Samler 38-43; Fuller and Matzler 118; Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi 486-490; Schneider and Bowen 35-45; Skogland and Siguaw 221-225; Stewart 112-113; Torres and Kline 297). This fact has been supported by other scholars (Keiningham, Goddard, Vavra and Laci 57-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25).

A detailed view of the North East India in terms of number of tourist visits to different states in this region is shown in Table 4.2. Such tourists include both domestic and foreign tourists and they belong to different age_groups, genders and visit for various purposes. Domestic tourists arrive from different states of India

outside the North East region. Foreign tourists arrive from different countries located in various parts of the world. These are evident from different studies (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India 11-15, 17-19, 21-24, 29-60, 87-88). It is noticed that there is an increasing trend of the total tourist visits to North East India similar to that of India and the world in general. Thereby, any viewpoint arrived from study on such tourists in this region of India may also represent world view.

Table 4.2 State Wise Domestic and Foreign Tourist Visits* in North East India

States	2009		2010		2011	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
Arunachal	195,147	3,945	227,857	3,395	233,227	4,753
Assam	3,850,521	14,942	4,050,924	15,157	4,339,485	16,400
Manipur	124,229	337	114,062	389	134,505	578
Meghalaya	591,398	4,522	652,756	4,177	667,504	4,803
Mizoram	56,651	513	57,292	731	62,174	658
Nagaland	20,953	1,423	21,094	1,132	25,391	2,080
Sikkim	615,628	17,730	700,011	20,757	552,453	23,602
Tripura	317,541	4,246	342,273	5,212	359,515	6,046
North East	5,772,068	47,658	6,166,269	50,950	6,374,254	58,920
North East Total	5,819,726		6,217,219		6,433,174	
India	668,800,482	14,372,300	740,214,297	17,852,777	850,856,640	19,494,879
India Total	683,172,782		758,067,074		870,351,519	
World Total	880,000,000		940,000,000		983,000,000	

* Multiple entry of tourists may be recorded by the Government of India machinery during calculations of their total visits to the states in North East India

(Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India 87-88, http://databank.nedfi.com/content/tourism, and UNWTO 4)

4.3.2.1(a) Elements:

In this study, elements constitutes the repeat guests of 65 hotels falling in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and a few unclassified categories in North East India from whom information is collected for fulfillment of the stated objectives. Only repeat guests are selected as sampling elements in this study as customer delight is associated only with them (as established through literature survey). Few unclassified hotels are included in this study as they have all the required facilities and provisions for providing customer delight for their guests (refer to point iv. section 3.6 of Chapter 3).

4.3.2.2 Sampling Units:

In this study, sampling unit consists of repeat guests of 65 hotels falling in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India. As discussed earlier in section 4.3.2.1, only repeat guests are included as sampling units keeping in view the applicability of the concept of customer delight in hotels among them.

4.3.2.3 Time Period of Data Collection:

The study has been carried out within a time frame of one year (From 1st June, 2010 to 31st May, 2011) in North East India. Data collection has been done during summer, rainy and winter seasons as applicable in this region during this time frame of one year.

4.3.2.4 Extent of Data Collection:

The study covers the guests of hotels situated in the North East region of India. Hotels from the following places are selected as the basis of concentration of hotels in the selected categories (5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories). These places are depicted in an indicative map (Fig. 4.1):
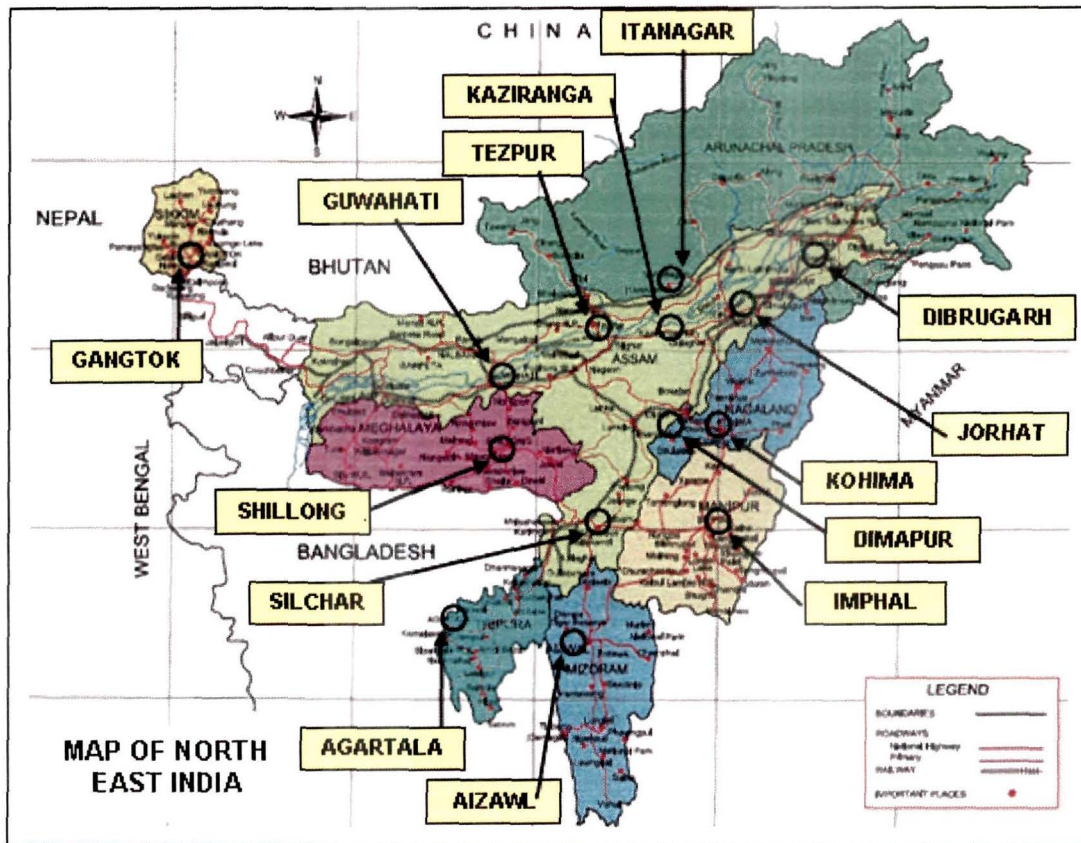
Fig. 4.1. Indicative Map of Places housing the Selected Hotels in North East India
(Places of Sampling are indicated within Black Circles in the Map)
(Source: http://cyberjournalist.org.in/images/states.gif and
http://allindiabirdingtours.com/images/map%20of%20NE%20india.JPG)

i.	Itanagar (in the state of Arunachal Pradesh)	viii.	Shillong (in the state of Meghalaya)
ii.	Guwahati (in the state of Assam)	ix.	Aizawl (in the state of Mizoram)
iii.	Dibrugarh (in the state of Assam)	x.	Kohima (in the state of Nagaland)
iv.	Jorhat (in the state of Assam)	xi.	Dimapur (in the state of Nagaland)
v.	Tezpur (in the state of Assam)	xii.	Gangtok (in the state of Sikkim)
vi.	Silchar (in the state of Assam)	xiii.	Agartala (in the state of Tripura)
vii.	Kaziranga (in the state of Assam)	xiv.	Imphal (in the state of Manipur)

4.3.2.5 Sample Size:

The size of the sample for this study is 500 repeat guests of 65 hotels falling in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India (refer to Appendix-III). This sample size is selected on account of the fact that population size for this study is unknown. This is because accurate records of this population consisting of repeat guests in star category hotels (as mentioned in section 4.3.2.1 of this Chapter) are not available. Besides, such a sample size is taken keeping in view the convenience of identifying and approaching repeat guests in these hotels for collection of required data for the study. In addition, this sample size has been selected based on other similar studies related to customer delight, satisfaction and loyalty, and tourism as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Sample Size in Similar Studies related to Customer Delight, Satisfaction and Loyalty, and Tourism

Sl. No.	Researchers	Sample Size	Sl. No.	Researchers	Sample Size
1	Andaleeb and Conway 3-11	119	16	Miller,Craighead and Karwan 387-400	448
2	Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy 412-422	200	17	Mittal and Lassar 177-194	233
3	Cameron and Gatewood 107-127	255	18	Morrison, Hsieh and Wang 32-40	300
4	Chen, Chu and Wu 360-365	311	19	Oliver, Rust and Varki 311-336	124
5	Faulkner and Tideswell 3-28	400	20	Panayides 42-68	212
6	Finn 18-32	250	21	Popli 17-24	50
7	Ganguli 7-17	200	22	Sirakaya, Petrick and Choi 517-539	394
8	Gilbert 178-186	465	23	Smith and Krannich 783-802	160
9	Hensley and Sulek 151-173	150	24	Tosun 231-253	241
10	Heung, Qu and Chu 308-315	406	25	Vilares and Coelho 1703-1722	547
11	Huang, Soutar and Brown 53-59	276	26	Wang, Siu and Hui 239-252	431
12	Jamal and Naser 146-160	200	27	Winsted 399-421	511
13	Jham and Khan 17-23	555	28	Wirtz 99-111	264
14	Julian and O'Cass 19-39	203	29	Yu and Goulden 1331-1342	530
15	Kelsey and Bond 359-367	272	30	Yuksel, Kilinc and Yuksel 11-24	420

In this study, the sample size of 500 respondents is larger compared to most of the above mentioned studies in Table 4.3. Since this study envisages dealing with

Discriminant analysis and many other hypotheses concerning the study population, it is thought to be important to have a large sample size. A large sample size would presumably ensure normality of the distribution. This is discussed in detail in section 3.6 (vii) of Chapter 3 and in sections 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.3.4.3 and 5.3.5 of Chapter 5. A sample size of 500 is thought to be large enough.

4.3.2.6 Sampling Procedure:

Due to unavailability of any proper sampling frame for the population from which data would be collected, probabilistic sampling procedure could not be selected for this study. Therefore, non-probabilistic sampling procedure is employed to select repeat guests in 65 hotels falling in 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India. Besides, this sampling procedure has been selected as such repeat guests are generally difficult to be traced for required data collection in North East India. This sampling procedure did not involve the use of any mathematical tools and techniques or any other basis for selection of elements from the population in the sample.

Therefore, snowball sampling is employed during this survey for selection of elements from the population to be included in the sample. Snowball sampling initially involves selection of a group of sample respondents through judgement sampling. After interviewing them, they are requested to identify other respondents belonging to the target population. Thereafter, other respondents are selected through referrals. This process is repeated until all the 500 respondents are selected (Bajpai 267; Beri, *Marketing Research* 156; Beri, *Business Statistics* 265-299; Bhardwaj 1-226; Chawla and Sondhi 223; Cooper and Schindler 409-410; Lind, Marchal and Wathen 250-311; Malhotra 345).

4.3.2.7 Data Collection Instrument:

As mentioned in section 4.3.2 of this Chapter, survey is conducted to collect primary data in this study through structured and unstructured interview of repeat guests in hotels. This is done with the help of a well defined self administered questionnaire for repeat guests (refer to Appendix-I). Questionnaire is selected as the data collection instrument as it presents questions related to this study in a formalized

manner. This is supposed to improve the accuracy of recording and processing of data for this study (Malhotra 299).

4.3.2.7(a) Variables Measured:

In order to select the variables that may lead to customer delight in the hotels, an extensive literature review is carried out. Precedence from similar customer delight and customer satisfaction studies, as well as studies on the hospitality industry, that were conducted previously have provided immense help in deciding about the variables to be measured in the context of this study. In addition, the pilot survey also helped in fine tuning the variables finally taken up.

The idea behind the exercise is to measure two broad dependent variables:
i) guests' expectations in hotels, and ii) enjoyment of the guests in hotels.

i) **Guests' Expectations in Hotels:** The first factor is measured with the help of 50 common hospitality parameters. Such parameters include common hospitality variables and pleasant surprises. These are shown alongwith the references of works where they appeared below:

Common Hospitality Variables:

1. Food and beverage quality (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

2. Availability of food and beverage variety (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

3. Hygiene of food and beverage (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

4. Food and beverage at reasonable price (Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

5. Quality of the restaurant (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

6. Location of the hotel (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

7. Physical appearance of the hotel (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222)

8. View of the surrounding areas of the hotel (Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 166)

9. Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Lynch 1; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

10. Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

11. Room furnishings and appearance (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

12. Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Tsang and Qu 320)

13. Quietness of the room (Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

14. Cleanliness of the room (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

15. Quality of in-room temperature control (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Tsang and Qu 320)

16. Room service (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

17. In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

18. Internet connection (Poon and Low 219, 222; and Tsang and Qu 320)

19. Reasonable price for the room (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

20. Helpful pre transaction information (Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166)

21. Convenient and reliable reservation system (Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Tsang and Qu 320)

22. Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

23. Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

24. Special attention (Heung 311; and Tsang and Qu 320)

25. Courtesy of the hotel staff (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

26. Language proficiency of the hotel staff (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

27. Efficient check-in and check-out (Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Tsang and Qu 320)

28. Neat appearance of staff (Tsang and Qu 320)

29. Convenient payment method (Poon and Low 219, 222)

30. Availability of reliable wake-up call (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

31. Security of belongings including valuables inside the room (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Groenenboom and Jones 14-16; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

32. Responsible security personnel (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Groenenboom and Jones 14-16; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

33. Availability of recreation facilities (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222)

34. Availability of transportation arrangements (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222)

35. Availability of 24 hours taxi service (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222)

36. Availability of business centre (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

37. Availability of meeting facilities (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

38. Availability of convenient parking facilities (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222)

39. Availability of efficient laundry service (Heung 311; Poon and Low 219, 222)

40. Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.) (Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

41. Availability of free newspaper (Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

42. Availability of frequent travellers' program (Heung 311; Tsang and Qu 320)

43. Availability of swimming facilities (Heung 311; Tsang and Qu 320)

44. Availability of gymnasium facilities (Heung 311; Tsang and Qu 320)

45. Overall comfortability (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Poon and Low 219, 222; Tsang and Qu 320)

It is to be noted that the study also involved other common hospitality variables other than the above mentioned variables labeled as "Any other" in Question No.16 in the Questionnaire given in Appendix-I.

Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises:

1. Free gifts (Poon and Low 219, 222)

2. Special discounts (*observed during pilot survey*)

3. Special foods (Poon and Low 219, 222)

4. Special entertainment (Poon and Low 219, 222)

5. Free access to facilities (Poon and Low 219, 222)

It is to be noted that the study also involved other probable elements of pleasant surprises other than the above mentioned elements labeled as "Any other" in Question No.19 in the Questionnaire given in Appendix-I.

ii) **Enjoyment of the Guests in Hotels:** This is measured on the basis of the presence of happiness, positive feelings and excitement (arousal) due to surpassing of guests' expectations and resultant pleasant surprises in the hotels.

It is to be noted that all the above mentioned variables are measured through survey of repeat guests of the stated hotels.

4.3.2.7(b) Questionnaire Design:

The questionnaire that is prepared by the incorporating the required changes after the pilot survey consists of 41 questions (including sub-questions). Of these 41 questions, 3 questions are open-ended questions and the rest are close-ended questions. Of the 38 close-ended questions, 12 are nominal scaled questions, 1 is 3 point Likert type questions and the rest are 5 point Likert type questions. This division is shown through the pie diagram in Fig. 4.2.

The natures of the questions in this questionnaire are discussed as follows:

Fig. 4.2. Type of Questions used in the Questionnaire

i.   The first six questions (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) are meant to determine the required demographic characteristics of the respondents for this study.

ii. The last three questions (Questions 27, 28 and 29) are also meant to determine the required demographic characteristics of the respondents for this study.

iii. Thereafter, there are four questions (Questions 7, 8 and 14 (including one sub-question)) which are meant to determine the loyalty status of the respondent guests.

iv. Two questions (Question 10 and 12) are meant to determine nature of respondent guests' fulfillment of expectations and their reaction when such expectations are not met.

v.   Again there are four questions (Questions 9, 11, 13, and 16) to determine the respondent guests' expectations of different common hospitality variables (as common hospitality parameters) during their stay in the hotel.

vi. There is one question (Questions 19) to determine the respondent guests' frequency of obtainment of various probable elements of pleasant surprises (as common hospitality parameters) during their stay in the hotel.

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vii. Thereafter, there are nine questions (Questions 15(i), 15(ii), 17, 18 (including one sub-question), 20 (including one sub-question), 21 and 22) to establish customer delight in hotels.

viii. The remaining ten questions (Questions 23, 24, 25 (including two sub-questions 25(b1) and 25(b2)) and 26 (including two sub-questions and another two sub-questions 26(c1) and 26(c2))) are meant to determine the constancy of customer delight in the stated hotels.

As per the above discussion, the natures of the questions for achieving the objectives of this study (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3) are as follows:

i. For achieving the first objective of this study (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3), most of the questions (questions 9, 11, 13, 16, 15 (i), 18, 15 (ii) and 21) are based on 5 point scale (Likert scale). One of such question (Question 22) is based on 3 point scale (Likert scale).

ii. For fulfilling the second objective of this study (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3), most of the questions (questions 9, 11, 13, 16, 19 and 15 (i)) are based on 5 point Likert scale.

iii. For achieving the third objective of this study (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3), most of the questions (questions 9, 11, 13, 16, 20, 25 (including sub-questions 25(b1) and 25(b2)), 26 (including sub-questions 26(c1) and 26(c2))) are based on 5 point Likert scale. Two branching sub-questions included in question 26 are nominal scaled. Questions 20, 25 (including sub-questions 25(b1) and 25(b2)), and 26 (including sub-questions 26(c1) and 26(c2)) are related to the first sub-objective of the third objective. Again, questions 9, 11, 13, 16, 20, 25 (including sub-questions 25(b1) and 25(b2)), and 26 (including sub-questions 26(c1) and 26(c2)) are related to the second sub-objective of the third objective.

4.3.2.8 Pilot Survey:

Before the start of the final survey, the draft questionnaire is tested through a pilot survey. This pilot survey is conducted among 66 repeat guests in 12 hotels in Guwahati city of the state of Assam in North East India which are mentioned in Table 4.4. This is done to incorporate any changes that may appear essential before administering the final questionnaire.

The pilot survey led to some modifications in the draft questionnaire. This included incorporation of additional variables that are likely to result in customer delight in hotels. Besides, it also included inclusion of other questions for the fulfillment of the stated objectives of this study (refer to section 3.4 in Chapter 3). The pilot survey also led to incorporation of few modifications in the sequence of the research plan in terms of the sequence of customer delight and its overall management through reenacted delight, transitory delight, and skilled and well trained hotel employees.

Table 4.4 List of Hotels in Guwahati city covered during Pilot Survey

Sr. No.	Name of the Hotels	Star Category
1	Hotel Dynasty	4 Star
2	Hotel Rajmahal	4 Star
3	Hotel Ambarish	3 Star
4	Hotel Ambarish Grand Regency	3 Star
5	Hotel Millenium	3 Star
6	Hotel Viswaratna	3 Star
7	Agnideep Continetal	3 Star
8	Hotel Nakshatra	3 Star
9	Kiranshree Portico	3 Star
10	Hotel Atithi	3 Star
11	Hotel Grand Starline	3 Star
12	Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok	3 Star

4.4 Analysis Techniques Adopted:

SPSS is used in the entire analysis. In order to make the responses useable all choices in the questionnaire are converted into numeric values. In the sections below, the details of data processing is discussed.

4.4.1 Data Processing:

As mentioned data are processed and coded uniformly in order to make these useable in the SPSS software. A codebook is made which is reproduced in the Appendix-II.

4.4.2 Statistical Tools Used:

As discussed in detail in Section 4.2 this work uses the following statistical tools extensively.

1. Pearson's Correlation
2. Independent Sample t-test
3. One-way ANOVA
4. Discriminant Analysis
5. Factor Analysis

A very brief discussion on these is offered in this section.

In order to achieve the first objective of this study (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3), One-way ANOVA and Discriminant Analysis has been used as discussed in Chapter 5. Again, the degree of relationship between the variables that may lead to customer delight in hotels is determined using Pearson's Correlation.

For fulfillment of the second objective of the study (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3), an exploratory study with the help of the questionnaire is applied. As discussed in Chapter 6, this also involves extraction of factors from the common hospitality variables (as common hospitality parameters) that may lead to customer delight in hotels using Factor Analysis (involving Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation). Reliability Analysis (using Cronbachs' Alpha) is used to calculate the reliability coefficients for each factor. Thereafter, One-way ANOVA is used to determine the relation of each these common hospitality parameters with surpassing of guests' expectations.

For attaining the first sub-objective of the third objective of this study (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3), Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA, and Pearson's Correlation has been used as discussed in Chapter 7.

For achieving the second sub-objective of the third objective of this study (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3), the variables among the 7 common hospitality variables of customer delight that are directly possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees that have been repeatedly emphasized by respondent guests are identified (as discussed in Chapter 7). Thereafter, Factor Analysis (involving Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation) is used to extract factors from these repeated variables followed by determination of reliability coefficients through Reliability Analysis (using Cronbachs' Alpha). This is followed by the use of Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA, and Pearson's Correlation for fulfillment of this sub-objective as discussed in Chapter 7.

Fig. 4.3 indicates the various statistical tools used for achieving the objectives of this study (refer to section 3.4 of Chapter 3).
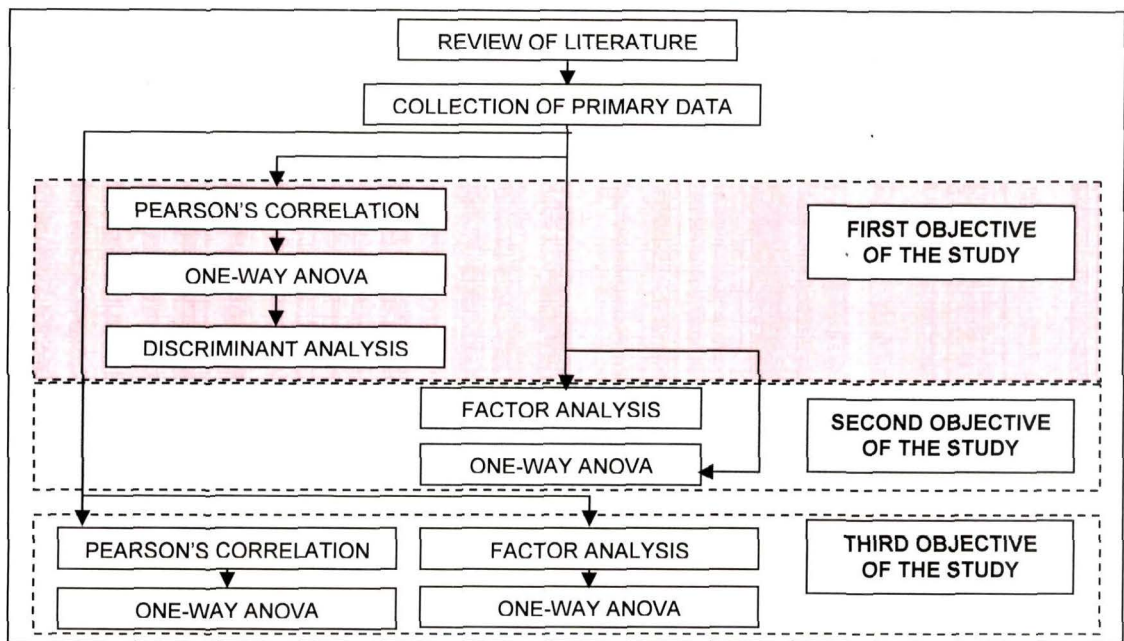
Fig. 4.3 Chart of Statistical Tools used in this Study

For establishing the applicability and authenticity of the above mentioned data analysis for this study, a literature review is conducted to determine analysis techniques used in similar studies related to customer delight, satisfaction and loyalty, and tourism.

Factor Analysis, as a tool of data analysis, has been used in a total of 16 related studies that are reviewed for this study. These are shown in Table 4.5. In these studies, the size of the sample ranged from 124 to 5136. The number of variables which are involved in these studies ranged between 10 to 47. In most of the cases, 5 point Likert type scales and 7 point Likert type scales have been mainly used. Again, all these studies involve Factor Analysis through Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation.

Table 4.5 Studies using Factor Analysis

Sl. No.	Researcher and Date	Sample Size	Number of Variables	Variables Used	Factor Analysis	Data Format/ Scale Used
1	Andaleeb and Conway 3-11	119	17	Activities	PCA with VR	7 point Likert type scale
2	Aldaigan and Buttle 349-359	975	17	Activities	PCA with VR	7 point Likert type scale
3	Cameron and Gatewood 107-127	255	15	Activities	PCA with VR	3 point scale
4	Faulkner and Tideswell 3-28	400	30	Activities	PCA with VR	5 point Likert type scale
5	Finn 18-32	250	10	Attributes	SEM involving EFA and CFA	5 point scale and 7 point scale
6	Gilbert 178-186	465	15	Activities	PCA with VR	7 point Likert type scale

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Table 4.5 Studies using Factor Analysis

SI. No.	Researcher and Date	Sample Size	Number of Variables	Variables Used	Factor Analysis	Data Format/ Scale Used
7	Gilbert, Veloutsou, Goode and Moutinho 371-383	5136	18	Activities	PCA with VR	5 point Likert type scale
8	Heung, Qu and Chu 259-269	406	23	Activities	PCA with VR	5 point Likert type scale
9	Jham and Khan 17-23	555	16	Activities	PCA with VR	7 point Semantic Differential scale
10	Nicholson and Pearce 449-460	1296	20	Activities	PCA with VR	5 point Likert type scale
11	Oliver, Rust and Varki 311-336	124	10	Behaviour	SEM involving EFA and CFA	10 point Likert type scale
12	Sirakaya, Petrick and Choi 517-539	394	13	Activities	CFA with VR	5 point Likert type scale, 7 point Likert type scale and 10 point Likert type scale
13	Tosun 231-253	241	16	Activities	RFA with VR	Nominal
14	Torres-Moraga, Vásquez-Parraga and Zamora-González 302-313	1223	13	Attributes	CFA with VR	7 point Likert type scale
15	Ueltschy, Laroche, Eggert and Bindl 410-423	625	12	Activities	SEM involving EFA and CFA	7 point Likert type scale
16	Winsted 399-421	511	47	Behaviour	PCA with VR	7 point Likert type scale

PCA- Principal Component Analysis, **VR-** Varimax Rotation, **SEM-** Structural Equation Modeling,
EFA- Exploratory Factor Analysis, **CFA-** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A total of 10 related studies that are reviewed for this study have involved the use of Discriminant Analysis, as shown in Table 4.6. In these studies, the size of the sample ranged from 200 to 1516. The number of variables which are involved in these studies ranged between 2 to 17. In seven of these studies, 5 point Likert type scales have been used. In three of these studies, 7 point Likert type scales have been used.

Table 4.6 Studies using Discriminant Analysis

SI. No.	Researcher and Date	Sample Size	Number of Variables	Variables Used	Data Format/ Scale used for Independent Variables
1	Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy 412-422	200	5	Attributes	7 point Likert type scale
2	Chatzipanagiotou and Coritos 1576-1611	780	4	Characteristics	7 point Likert type scale
3	Chen, Chu and Wu 360-365	311	14	Work values	5 point Likert type scale
4	Hansen 101-121	1516	17	Characteristics	5 point Likert type scale
5	Huang, Soutar and Brown 53-59	276	8	Attributes	5 point Likert type scale
6	Julian and O'Cass 19-39	203	9	Attributes	7 point Likert type scale
7	Miller, Craighead and Karwan 387-400	448	10	Activities	5 point Likert type scale and dichotomous
8	Mittal and Lassar 177-194	233	5	Attributes	5 point Likert type scale
9	Panayides 42-68	212	2	Attributes	5 point Likert type scale
10	Wang, Siu and Hui 239-252	431	13	Attributes	5 point Likert type scale

As mentioned earlier, an attempt was made to use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for creating a path diagram showing a model of the sequence of

customer delight in the hotel industry. Similar efforts were also made using SEM to create another path diagram showing a model for management of overall customer delight in the hotel industry through reenacted and transitory delight, and skilled and well trained employees. However, this could not be put into practice owing to the two serious limitations associated SEM with respect to this study as mentioned in section 4.2.1 earlier.

4.5 Indicative Hypotheses Tested:

For fulfillment of the first objective of this study, the following hypotheses have been formed (refer to Fig. 4.4):

First Indicative Hypothesis (H_1): Surpassing guests' expectations has relation with their pleasant surprises at the hotels.

Second Indicative Hypothesis (H_2): Pleasant surprises of guests at the hotels have relation with their resultant happiness.

Third Indicative Hypothesis (H_3): Perceived excitement (arousal) of guests has relation with their happiness due to pleasant surprises at the hotels.

Fourth Indicative Hypothesis (H_4): Perceived positive feelings of guests have relation with their happiness due to pleasant surprises at the hotels.

Fifth Indicative Hypothesis (H_5): Surpassing guests' expectations has relation with their perceived positive feelings in the hotels.
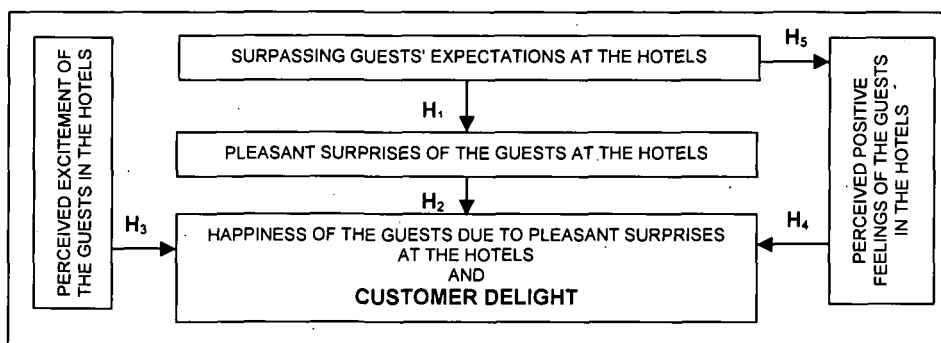
Fig. 4.4. Indicative Hypotheses for establishing the concept of Customer Delight

The above hypotheses are tested by a series of Pearson's Correlation, One-way ANOVA and Discriminant Analysis as discussed in Chapter 5.

The second objective of the study has been obtained through exploratory study with the help of the questionnaire. Factor Analysis (involving Principal

Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation) and One-way ANOVA has been used in this regard as discussed in Chapter 6.

The third objective of this study has been attained through the following:

i.   The first sub-objective has been obtained using a series of Independent Sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA. Pearson's Correlation has also been used in this regard (refer to Chapter 7).

ii. The second sub-objective has been attained using Factor Analysis. Besides, this attempt also involves a series of Independent Sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA. Pearson's Correlation has also been used in this case (refer to Chapter 7).

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CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

OF

CUSTOMER

DELIGHT

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER DELIGHT

The necessary data in this study is collected with the help of a survey through a well defined structured questionnaire for the respondents who are repeat guests in the hotels falling under 5 Star Deluxe, 4 Star, 3 Star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in North East India covered during the sample survey. This chapter focuses on establishing the sequence of customer delight with empirical evidence in the stated hotels in North East India. Before starting technical discussion, a brief profile of the respondent samples is given at the beginning of this Chapter.

5.1 Profile of the Respondents:

As it is stated already that the total number of respondents is 500. The following sections 5.1.1 to 5.1.8 offer the profile of the respondents on the basis of certain basic classification criteria.

5.1.1 Age Group:

This study involves analysis of the age group of the respondents in the stated hotels. As such, the following observations are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Age Group

	Age Group	Frequency	Percent
1	Below 20 years	5	1.0
2	Between 20 to 30 years	147	29.4
3	Between 31 to 40 years	141	28.2
4	Between 41 to 50 years	163	32.6
5	Between 51 to 60 years	44	8.8
	Total	**500**	**100**

From Table 5.1, it is seen that most of the respondents are between 41 to 50 years (32.6%), between 20 to 30 years in age (29.4%), and between 31 to 40 years (28.2%) in age. Only a small percentage of them are between 51 to 60 years (8.8%) and below 20 years (1%) in age.

5.1.2 Educational Qualification:

The respondents in the stated hotels can also be clubbed according to their educational qualifications. It is observed

Table 5.2 Educational Qualification

	Educational Background	Frequency	Percent
1	Passed 10th standard	6	1.2
2	Passed 12th standard	19	3.8
3	Graduate	152	30.4
4	Post Graduate	323	64.6
	Total	**500**	**100**

that most of them are post graduate (64.6%) (shown in Table 5.2). Few of them have passed 12th standard (3.8%) and 10th standard (1.2%).

5.1.3 Monthly Income:

The monthly income of the respondents in the stated hotels varies which is shown in Table 5.3. It is observed that most of the respondents have monthly income between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000 (35.4%). Only a small percentage of them have monthly income between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000 (9%), between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000 (8.4%), and less then Rs.12,000 (7.9%) per month. Nine (9) of the respondents who are mainly housewives or students stated that they have no sources of

Table 5.3 Monthly Income

	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent
1	Less then Rs.12,000	39	7.9
2	Between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000	41	8.4
3	Between Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000	143	29.1
4	Between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000	174	35.4
5	Between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000	44	9.0
6	Above Rs.1,50,000	50	10.2
	Total	491	100
	Non response	*9*	
	Total	500	

monthly income and hence did not provide any response to this question.

5.1.4 Sector of Employment:

The respondents in the stated hotels can also be classified according to their sectors of employment.

From Table 5.4, it is seen that most of the respondents are employed in the private sector (54.6%). Only a small percentage of them are unemployed (including housewives, students etc.) or are employed in any other sectors (other than those mentioned in Serial No. 1 to 4 in Table 5.4) (7.2%).

Table 5.4 Sector of Employment

	Sector of Employment	Frequency	Percent
1	Private Sector	273	54.6
2	Public Sector	73	14.6
3	Entrepreneurs	57	11.4
4	Self Employed/ Professional	61	12.2
5	Others	36	7.2
	Total	500	100

5.1.5 Place of Residence:

The place of residence of the respondents in the stated hotels is also studied in this study. From Table 5.5, it is seen that most of the respondents reside inside North East India (51.2%) or outside North East India (40%). Only a small

percentage of them reside in foreign countries (8.8%). It is evident from Table 4.2 in Chapter 4 that the ratio of visits of foreign and domestic tourists to India in 2009, 2010 and 2011 are respectively 0.021:1, 0.024:1 and 0.023:1. In this study involving a sample size of 500 respondent guests (tourists[#]), 44 of

Table 5.5 Place of Residence

	Place of Residence	Frequency	Percent
1	Inside North East India	256	51.2
2	Outside North East India	200	40.0
3	In foreign country	44	8.8
	Total	500	100

them reside in foreign countries and 456 of them reside in India. So, the ratio of foreign and domestic guests is 0.096:1 which is nearly same as the above mentioned ratios concerning tourist visits in India.

5.1.6 Purpose of Visit:

The respondents are also classified into different purposes of visit in the stated hotels. Table 5.6 indicates that most of the respondents visit the stated hotels for leisure purposes (38.6%), for official purposes as part of their jobs or businesses (31.2%), or both for leisure and official purposes (26.4%). Only a small percentage of them visit and stay

Table 5.6 Purpose of Visit

	Purpose of Visit	Frequency	Percent
1	Official	156	31.2
2	Leisure	193	38.6
3	Both official and leisure	132	26.4
4	Others	19	3.8
	Total	500	100

in the stated hotels for any other purposes (other than those mentioned in Serial No. 1 to 3 in Table 5.6) (3.8%).

It is to be noted that most of the respondents in this study are males (83%). Only a small percentage of the respondents are females (17%). Besides, most of the respondents are married (74.2%) and only a few of them are single (25.8%).

5.2 Important Variables of Customer Delight in Hotels:

5.2.1 Surpassing of Expectations:

Surpassing of guests' expectations form an important element that may lead to customer delight in hotels (Crotts and Magnini 719-720; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 463; Kumar, Olshavsky, and

Table 5.7 Surpassing of Expectations

	Levels of Surpassing of Expectations	Frequency	Percent
1	Never surpass	145	29.0
2	Rarely surpass	141	28.2
3	No knowledge	14	2.8
4	Sometimes surpass	198	39.6
5	Always surpass	2	0.4
	Total	500	100

[#] In case of the hospitality industry (particularly hotels), guests may also be referred to as tourists (Berno 656-674; Doering 3; UN and WTO 5-7) (refer to footnote in section 2.2 in Chapter 2).

King 14-19; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Oliver, Rust and Varki 311-320; Rust and

Fig. 5.1. Surpassing of Expectations

Oliver 86-89). Therefore, respondents in this study have been classified according to their levels of surpassing of their expectations in the stated hotels where they stay.
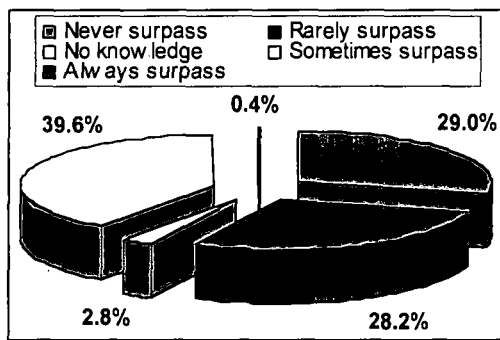
From Table 5.7 and Fig. 5.1, it is observed that most of the respondents have their expectations sometimes surpassed (39.6%) in these hotels. Only a few of them have their expectations always surpassed (0.4%) in these hotels.

5.2.2 Pleasant Surprises:

Pleasant surprises of guests from any act of hotels form a key element that may result in customer delight (in hotels) (Berman 134; Crotts and Magnini 719-720; Kumar et al. 14-19; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Magnini, Crotts and Zehrer 535-545; Oliver et al. 311-320; Rust and Oliver 86-89). As such, respondent guests' viewpoint regarding any pleasant surprises obtained in the stated hotels, where they stay, has been observed.

Table 5.8 Pleasant Surprises

Levels of Obtainment of Pleasant Surprises		Frequency	Percent
1	Never obtain	37	10.2
2	Rarely obtain	108	29.9
3	No knowledge	11	3.0
4	Sometimes obtain	181	50.1
5	Always obtain	24	6.6
	Total	361	100
	Non Response	139	
	Total	500	
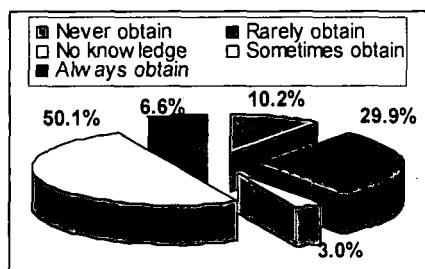
Fig. 5.2. Pleasant Surprises

From Table 5.8 and Fig. 5.2, it is seen that most of the respondents who responded to this question stated that they sometimes obtain pleasant surprises (50.1%) in these hotels. A small number of them stated that they always obtain pleasant surprises (6.6%) in these hotels.

5.2.2.1 Regular Expectations of Pleasant Surprises:

The respondents' viewpoint regarding their expectations of pleasant surprises regularly in the stated hotels where they stay has been obtained in this study. This is

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done with the help of a branching question administered only to those respondents who always obtain or sometimes obtain pleasant surprises in the hotels where they stayed.

Table 5.9 Regular Expectations of Pleasant Surprises

	Levels of Regular Expectations of Pleasant Surprises	Frequency	Percent
1	Rarely	40	19.7
2	Having no idea	38	18.7
3	Sometimes	106	52.2
4	Always	19	9.4
	Total	203	100
	Non Response	297*	
	Total	500	

* Due to branching question

From Table 5.9, it is seen that most of the respondents sometimes expect pleasant surprises regularly (52.2%) in these hotels. A few of them always expect pleasant surprises regularly (9.4%) in these hotels.

5.2.3 Perceived Excitement:

Perceived excitement of guests from resultant happiness through their pleasant surprises in hotels form an essential element that may result in customer delight (in hotels) (Berman 134; Crotts and Magnini 720; Kumar et al. 14-19; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Oliver et al. 311-320; Rust and Oliver 86-89). As stated earlier, the required data is collected with the aid of a branching question administered only to those respondents who always obtain or sometimes obtain pleasant surprises in the hotels where they stay.

Table 5.10 Perceived Excitement

	Levels of Perceived Excitement	Frequency	Percent
1	No excitement at all	17	8.5
2	Below average excitement	3	1.5
3	Average excitement	18	9.0
4	Moderate excitement	53	26.6
5	High excitement	108	54.3
	Total	199	100
	Non response	301*	
	Total	500	

* Due to branching question
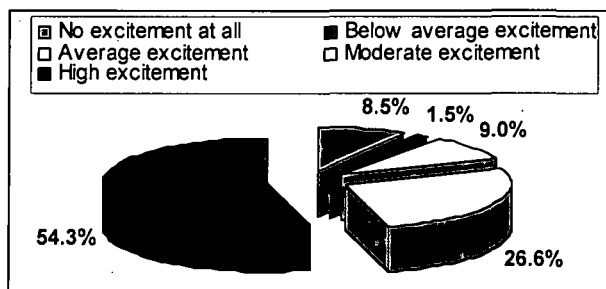
From Table 5.10 and Fig. 5.3, it is noticed that most of the respondents are highly excited from pleasant surprises (54.3%) in these hotels. Many of them experience moderate excitement from pleasant surprises (26.6%) in these hotels.

Fig. 5.3. Perceived Excitement

5.2.4 Perceived Positive Feelings:

Literature review has indicated that perceived positive feelings of guests from resultant happiness due to their pleasant surprises in hotels form an essential element that may result in customer delight (in hotels) (Crotts and Magnini 720; Kumar et al. 14-19; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Magnini et al. 535-545; Oliver et al. 311-320; Rust and Oliver 86-89). As stated earlier, the required data is collected with

Table 5.11 Perceived Positive Feelings

Levels of Perceived Positive Feelings	Frequency	Percent
1 No emotion	3	1.5
2 Feel good	92	46.2
3 Feel very good	104	52.3
Total	199	100
Non response	301*	
Total	500	
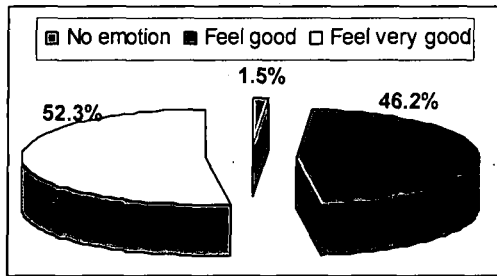
* Due to branching question

the assistance of a branching question administered only to those respondents who always obtain or sometimes obtain pleasant surprises in these hotels.

Fig. 5.4. Perceived Positive Feelings

From Table 5.11 and Fig. 5.4, it is observed that most of the respondents feel very good from excitement due to pleasant surprises (52.3%) in these hotels. Many of them feel good from excitement due to pleasant surprises (46.2%) in these hotels.

5.2.5 Happiness:

Crotts and Magnini (720), Berman (134), Kumar et al. (14-19), Kwong and Yau (260-262), Magnini et al. (535-545), Oliver et al. (311-320), and Rust and Oliver (86-89) have stated that happiness of guests due to pleasant surprises in hotels forms a vital element for customer delight (in

Table 5.12 Happiness

Levels of Happiness	Frequency	Percent
1 Never happy	153	30.6
2 Rarely happy	118	23.6
3 No knowledge	33	6.6
4 Sometimes happy	111	22.2
5 Always happy	85	17.0
Total	500	100
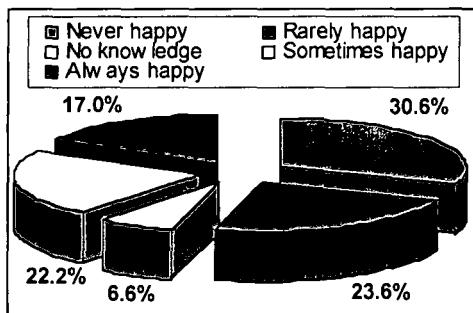
Fig. 5.5. Happiness

hotels).

From Table 5.12 and Fig. 5.5, it is noticed that most of the respondents never experience happiness due to pleasant surprises (30.6%) in these hotels. Besides, many of them rarely experience happiness due to pleasant surprises (23.6%) in these

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hotels. It is also seen that many of them sometimes experience happiness due to pleasant surprises (22.2%) in these hotels. Again, many of them always experience happiness due to pleasant surprises (17%) in these hotels.

5.3 Sequence of Customer Delight in Hotels:

5.3.1 Correlation between Different Factors of Customer Delight:

In order to determine the degree of relationship between different factors leading to customer delight, a series of Pearson's Correlation are conducted between the following pairs of variables. It is to be noted that surpassing of guests' expectations, their pleasant surprises and their resultant happiness along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings may lead to customer delight in hotels (Crotts et al. 463; Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Finn 19; Oliver et al. 318; Rust and Oliver 87):

Table 5.13 Correlation Coefficients between Different Factors leading to Customer Delight in Hotels

Variable 1	Variable 2	Coefficient of Correlation (r)
Surpassing Guests' Expectations at the Hotels	Pleasant Surprises of the Guests at the Hotels	0.774
Pleasant Surprises of the Guests at the Hotels	Happiness of the Guests due to Pleasant Surprises at the Hotels	0.792
Perceived Excitement of the Guests in the Hotels	Happiness of the Guests due to Pleasant Surprises at the Hotels	0.510
Perceived Positive Feelings of the Guests in the Hotels	Happiness of the Guests due to Pleasant Surprises at the Hotels	0.477

It is found from Table 5.13 that the pairs register moderate to high r among themselves, which signifies that the pairs of variables are related to each other. If these pairs are checked one by one, it is clear that the relationship forms a chain of short. This is depicted in Fig. 5.13.

5.3.2 Surpassing of Expectations and Pleasant Surprises:

A One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) is conducted to determine whether the means of guests' perception on obtaining pleasant surprises in hotels differ across their responses on surpassing of their expectations. For this purpose, respondent guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations is treated as the independent variable while respondents' viewpoint regarding pleasant surprises is treated as the dependent variable (refer to Question No.15(i) and 18 respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). The Table 5.14 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' perception on obtaining

pleasant surprises is rejected (p-value less than $\alpha= 0.05$). This implies that there is significant difference among

Table 5.14 ANOVA – Surpassing of Expectations and Pleasant Surprises

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	311.501	3	103.834	171.570	0.000
Within Groups	200.925	332	0.605		
Total	512.426	335			

the means of guests' perception regarding obtaining pleasant surprises across their levels of surpassing expectations in the hotels.

It is to be noted that respondents' opinions on always experiencing, sometimes experiencing, no knowledge regarding experiencing, rarely experiencing, and never experiencing pleasant surprises in the hotels are represented by codes +2, +1, 0, -1, and -2 respectively for this analysis (refer to Appendix-II). It is to be noted that respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding surpassing of their expectations in the hotels is excluded from this

Table 5.15 Mean of Pleasant Surprises across Levels of Surpassing of Expectations

	Levels of Surpassing of Expectations	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Never surpass	28	-1.86	0.36
2	Rarely surpass	122	-0.65	0.93
3	Sometimes surpass	184	0.96	0.72
4	Always surpass	2	1.00	0.00
Total		336	0.14	1.24

analysis as it does not carry any meaning. It is observed from Table 5.15 that the mean of guests' perception on obtaining pleasant surprises is high across their responses if their expectations are always surpassed and sometimes surpassed and low if their expectations are never surpassed in the hotels. Even though the mean for "always surpass" is highest across the categories, since this group consists of only 2 respondents, we may not give high emphasis on this. The resultant data show a linear positive relationship between levels of surpassing expectations and levels of pleasant surprises. This means that those who feel that their expectations have been surpassed might experience pleasant surprises. On the other hand, those who did not experience surpassing of expectations may not be pleasantly surprised.

Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are conducted as the presence of equal variances cannot be assumed in this case. The results in Table A.1 in the Appendix-IV indicate that significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' pleasant surprises with respect to different levels of surpassing of their expectations. However, no such significant differences exist between their expectations being sometimes surpassed and always surpassed. This verifies that these two levels can be treated as equal.

To further verify whether surpassing expectations of the guests is well related to their pleasant surprises in the hotels, Discriminant Analysis is employed. For this purpose, the variable, pleasant surprises of the respondents, is taken as the grouping variable, and the variable, surpassing of respondent guests' expectations is taken as the independent variable. The variable, pleasant surprise, is grouped into two groups-

- "Not obtained pleasant surprises" based on respondents' rating for "never pleasantly surprised" and "rarely pleasantly surprised".

- "Obtained pleasant surprises" based on respondents' rating for "always pleasantly surprised" and "sometimes pleasantly surprised".

It is to be noted that respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding obtainment of pleasant surprises in the hotels is excluded from this analysis as it does not carry any meaning. As mentioned earlier, respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding surpassing of their expectations in the hotels is also excluded from this analysis for the same reason.

For checking normality, skewness and kurtosis are determined in case of both surpassing expectations of the respondent guests and their pleasant surprises in the hotels. It is noticed from Table 5.16 that slight skewness is noticed in both cases. But keeping in view the large sample size, Discriminant Analysis can be applied

Table 5.16 Skewness and Kurtosis - Surpassing of Expectations and Pleasant Surprises

	Surpassing of Expectations	Pleasant Surprises
Respondents	500	361
Non-Responses	0	139
Skewness	0.09	-0.37
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.13
Kurtosis	-1.67	-1.26
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.22	0.26
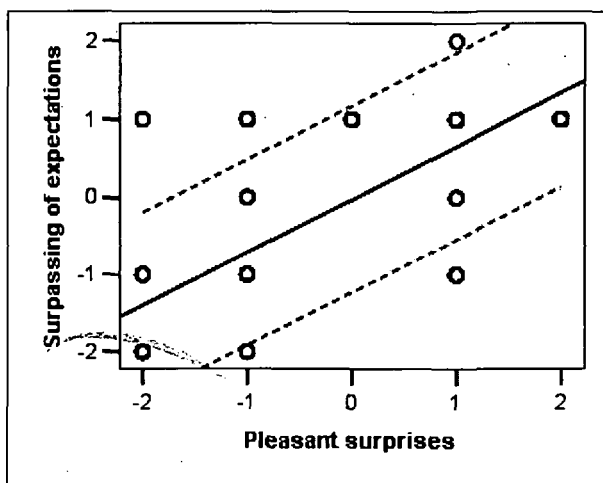
Fig. 5.6. Scatter Plot - Surpassing of Expectations and Pleasant Surprises

(Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson 283). Again, for checking linearity, scatter plots are checked for both surpassing expectations of the respondent guests and their pleasant surprises. It is noticed from Fig. 5.6, that some plots indicate departure from linearity. But, there is no visible proof of true curvilinearity. The equality of covariance matrices

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is assessed using Box M. Here, the *p-value*= 0.082 (greater than α= 0.05) indicates that the data do not differ significantly from the multivariate normal (Hair et al. 283). These tests suggest that Discriminant Analysis can be conducted for this study.

The results of Discriminant Analysis indicates Eigenvalue= 1.310, Canonical Correlation= 0.753, Wilks' Lambda= 0.433, Chi-square= 279.172, df= 1, significance= 0.000. It also indicates that 87.5% of the grouped cases are correctly classified. Based on the Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients (refer to Table 17(a)), the discriminant function between surpassing expectations (SE) of the respondent guests and their pleasant surprises in the hotels is derived as:

Table 17(a) Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

	Function
	1
Surpassing of expectations	1.346
(Constant)	-0.040

* Computer generated

$$D_1 = (-0.040) + (1.346)\ SE \qquad \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots(6.i)$$

Based on this equation, the following groupings are noticed for pleasant surprises of the respondent guests in the hotels based on the above discriminant score D_1 as shown in Table 5.17(b).

Table 5.17(b) Groupings for Pleasant Surprises based on Discriminant Score (D_1)

Independent variable (Surpassing of Expectations (SE))		Discriminant Score (D_1)	Group for Pleasant Surprises	Probabilities for Group Membership for Pleasant Surprises	
				Group 0	Group 1
Levels of SE	Codes			Not obtained Pleasant Surprises	Obtained Pleasant Surprises
Never surpass	-2	-2.732	0	0.995	0.004
Rarely surpass	-1	-1.386	0	0.914	0.085
Sometimes surpass	1	1.306	1	0.020	0.979
Always surpass	2	2.652	1	0.000	0.999

* Computer generated

The Table 5.17(b) indicates that those guests who never or rarely have their expectations surpassed are less likely to obtain pleasant surprises in the hotels. On the other hand, those guests who always or sometimes have their expectations surpassed are highly likely to obtain such pleasant surprises in these hotels. This shows that surpassing guests' expectations in hotels has positive relation with their pleasant surprises. This means that surpassing of expectations may result in pleasant surprises. The above analyses fulfills indicative hypothesis H_1 given in section 4.5 of Chapter 4.

5.3.3 Pleasant Surprises and Happiness:

A One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) is carried out to examine whether the means of guests' perception on their resultant happiness differ across their responses if they have always obtained pleasant surprises in hotels. Therefore, respondents' perception on obtaining pleasant surprises is treated as the independent variable while their resultant happiness is treated as the dependent variable (refer to Question No.18 and 15(ii) respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). The Table 5.18 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' perception on their resultant happiness is rejected (p-value less than α= 0.05). This implies that there is significant difference among

Table 5.18 ANOVA - Pleasant Surprises and Happiness

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	408.861	3	136.287	185.046	0.000
Within Groups	232.736	316	0.737		
Total	641.597	319			

the means of guests' perception on their resultant happiness across their responses if they have ever obtained pleasant surprises in the hotels.

- It is to be noted that codes +2, +1, 0, -1, and -2 have been allotted to respondents' view on always experiencing, sometimes experiencing, no knowledge regarding experiencing, rarely experiencing, and never experiencing happiness respectively in the hotels (refer to Appendix-II). Here, respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding obtainment of pleasant surprises in the hotels is excluded from this analysis as it does not carry any meaning. It is seen from Table 5.19 that the mean of guests' perception on resultant happiness is high across their responses if they have always obtained and sometimes obtained pleasant surprises and low if they have never obtained pleasant surprises in the hotels. It is seen that the mean for

Table 5.19 Mean of Happiness across Levels of Obtainment of Pleasant Surprises

Levels of obtainment of Pleasant Surprises		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Never obtain	36	-1.58	0.87
2	Rarely obtain	106	-0.71	0.97
3	Sometimes obtain	174	1.29	0.79
4	Always obtain	4	1.00	0.00
Total		320	0.30	1.42

"always obtain" pleasant surprises is comparatively high across the categories. However, high importance may not be given to this group as it consists of only 4 respondents. The descriptive data shown in Table 5.19 show a near linear relationship between levels of happiness and levels of pleasant surprises. This means that that those guests who are pleasantly surprised may

experience happiness. However, those guests who are never pleasantly surprised may not be happy.

Bonferroni Post Hoc tests are conducted as the presence of equal variances can be assumed in this case. The results are shown in Table A.2 in Appendix-IV. It is seen that significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' happiness with respect to different levels of obtainment of pleasant surprises in the hotels. However, no such significant differences exist between their pleasant surprises being sometimes obtained and always obtained. This verifies that these two levels can be taken as equal.

Discriminant Analysis is used to examine the existence of adequate relationship between pleasant surprise of the guests in the hotels and their resultant happiness. As such, the variable, pleasant surprises of the respondent guests' is taken as the independent variable, and the variable, resultant happiness of the respondents, is taken as the grouping variable. The variable, happiness, is grouped into two groups-

- "Not happy" based on respondents' rating for "never happy" and "rarely happy" as a result of pleasant surprises at the hotels.

- "Happy" based on respondents' rating for "always happy" and "sometimes happy" due to pleasant surprises at the hotels.

It is to be noted that respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding their happiness due to pleasant surprises in the hotels is excluded from this analysis as it does not carry any meaning. As stated earlier, respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding obtainment of pleasant surprises in the hotels is also excluded from this analysis for the same reason.

For checking normality, skewness and kurtosis are calculated in case of both pleasant surprises of the respondent guests and their resultant happiness in hotels. Table 5.20 shows slight skewness in both cases. However, Discriminant Analysis can be applied due to large sample size (Hair et al. 283). Again for checking linearity, scatter plots are

Table 5.20 Skewness and Kurtosis - Pleasant Surprises and Happiness

	Pleasant Surprises	Happiness
Respondents	361	500
Non-responses	139	0
Skewness	-0.37	0.26
Std. Error of Skewness	0.13	0.11
Kurtosis	-1.26	-1.47
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.26	0.22

checked for both pleasant surprises of the respondents and their consequent happiness. It is noticed from Fig. 5.7, that few plots show
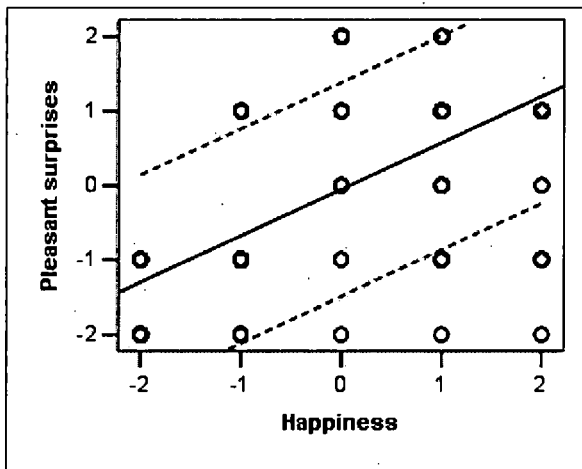
Fig. 5.7. Scatter Plot - Pleasant Surprises and Happiness

departure from linearity. However, there is no evidence of true curvilinearity. The equality of covariance matrices is determined using Box M. Here, the *p-value*= 0.064 (greater than α= 0.05) shows that the data do not differ significantly from the multivariate normal (Hair et al. 283). These tests suggest that Discriminant Analysis can be conducted for this study.

The results of Discriminant Analysis shows Eigenvalue= 1.678, Canonical Correlation= 0.792, Wilks' Lambda= 0.373, Chi-square= 312.816, df= 1, significance= 0.000. It also indicates that 90.3% of the grouped cases are correctly classified. Based on the Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients, the discriminant function between pleasant surprises (PS) of the respondent guests in the hotels and their resultant happiness is derived as:

$$D_2 = (-0.017) + (1.391) \text{ PS} \quad \quad \text{............(6.ii)}$$

Based on this equation, the following groupings are noticed for resultant happiness of the respondent guests due to pleasant surprises in the hotels based on the above discriminant score D_2 as shown in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21 Groupings for Happiness based on Discriminant Score (D_2)

Independent Variable (Pleasant Surprises (PS))		Discriminant Score (D_2)	Group for Happiness	Probabilities for Group Membership for Happiness	
				Group 0	Group 1
Levels of PS	Codes			Not Happy	Happy
Never obtain	-2	-2.799	0	0.998	0.002
Rarely obtain	-1	-1.408	0	0.944	0.056
Sometimes obtain	1	1.374	1	0.012	0.988
Always obtain	2	2.765	1	0.001	0.999

* Computer Generated

Table 5.21 indicates that those guests who never or rarely obtain pleasant surprises in the hotels are less likely to be happy. On the other hand, those guests

who always or sometimes obtain such pleasant surprises in these hotels are highly likely to be happy. This shows that pleasant surprises of the guests in the hotels have near positive relationship with their resultant happiness. This means that pleasant surprises may lead to happiness. It is observed that the above analyses fulfills indicative hypothesis H_2 mentioned in section 4.5 of Chapter 4.

5.3.4 Perceived Excitement, Positive Feelings and Happiness:

The following analyses have been conducted using One-way ANOVA and Discriminant Analysis to determine the effect of guests' perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings on guests' happiness due to pleasant surprises at the hotels.

5.3.4.1 Perceived Excitement and Happiness:

A One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) is conducted to find out whether the means of guests' perception on their happiness due to pleasant surprises in the hotels differ across their responses if they have ever perceived excitement (arousal) in the hotels. So, respondents' perception on their perceived excitement is treated as the independent variable

Table 5.22 ANOVA - Perceived Excitement and Happiness

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33.031	3	11.010	21.943	0.000
Within Groups	85.803	171	0.502		
Total	118.834	174			

while their happiness as a result of pleasant surprises at the hotels is treated as the dependent variable (refer to Question No.21 and 15(ii) respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). The Table 5.22 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' happiness is rejected (p-value less than $\alpha=$ 0.05). This implies that there is significant difference among the means of guests' perception on their happiness across their responses if they have ever perceived

Table 5.23 Mean of Happiness across Levels of Perceived Excitement

Levels of Perceived Excitement		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Below average excitement	3	-0.33	1.15
2	Average excitement	18	0.28	1.07
3	Moderate excitement	46	1.17	0.74
4	High excitement	108	1.53	0.60
Total		175	1.27	0.83

excitement (arousal) in the hotels. It is observed from Table 5.23 that the mean of guests' perception on their happiness is high across their responses if they perceive

high excitement and low if they perceive average excitement and below average excitement in the hotels. Although the mean for "below average excitement" is lowest across the categories, much emphasis may not be given to this group as it consists of only 3 respondents. The resultant descriptive data in Table 5.23 indicates a positive linear relationship between levels of perceived excitement and levels of happiness. This implies that those guests who experience high excitement are likely to be happy. On the other hand, those guests who experience less excitement have lesser chances of being happy. Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are conducted as the presence of equal variances cannot be assumed in this case. The results in Table A.3 in the Appendix-IV points out that significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' happiness due to pleasant surprises in the hotels with respect to average, moderate and high excitement in the hotels. However, no such significant pairwise differences exist between below average excitement and average excitement, between below average excitement and moderate excitement, between below average excitement and high excitement in the hotels. This verifies that these pairs can be considered as equal.

5.3.4.2 Perceived Positive Feelings and Happiness:

A One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) is accomplished to determine whether the means of guests' perception on their happiness because of pleasant surprises in the hotels differ across their responses if they ever perceive positive feelings there. As such, respondents' perception on their perceived positive feelings is treated as the independent variable, and their happiness owing to pleasant surprises at the hotels is treated as the dependent variable (refer to Question No.22 and 15(ii) respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). It is to be noted that respondent guests' perceived positive feelings in the hotels is depicted by their act of feeling very good or feeling good or having no emotion. The Table 5.24 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' perception on their happiness is rejected (p- value less than $\alpha= 0.05$). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' perception on their happiness across their responses if they

Table 5.24 ANOVA - Perceived Positive Feelings and Happiness

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	34.467	2	17.233	35.334	0.000
Within Groups	84.367	172	0.491		
Total	118.834	174			

ever perceive positive feelings in the hotels.

It is to be noticed from Table 5.25 that the mean of guests' perception on their happiness due to pleasant surprises in the hotels is high across their responses if they feel very good and low if they feel good and have no emotion in the hotels. It is observed that the mean for "no emotion" is lowest across the categories. But, since this group consists of only 3 respondents, we may not give high emphasis on this.

Table 5.25 Mean of Happiness across Levels of Perceived Positive Feelings

Levels of Perceived Positive Feelings		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	No emotion	3	-1.33	0.58
2	Feel good	68	0.97	0.77
3	Feel very good	104	1.55	0.65
Total		175	1.27	0.83

Table 5.25 indicates a positive linear relationship between levels of perceived positive feelings and levels of happiness. This means that those guests who perceive higher positive feelings (feel very good) may have higher chances of being happy. However, those guests who perceive lesser positive feelings (feel good or no emotion) are less likely to be happy. As the presence of equal variances can be assumed in this case, Bonferroni Post Hoc tests are conducted. The outcome in Table A.4 in the Appendix-IV show that significant pairwise differences exist among the means of guests' happiness with respect to different levels of their perceived positive feelings in the hotels.

5.3.4.3 Effect of Perceived Excitement and Positive Feelings on Happiness:

Discriminant Analysis is used to check whether guests' perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings is well associated with their happiness due to pleasant surprises in the hotels. Therefore, the variable, happiness of the respondents as a result of pleasant surprises at the hotels, is taken as the grouping variable, and the variables, respondents' perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings are taken as the independent variables. The variable, happiness, is grouped into two groups-

- "Not happy" based on respondents' rating for "never happy" and "rarely happy" because of pleasant surprises at the hotels.

- "Happy" based on respondents' rating for "always happy" and "sometimes happy" due to pleasant surprises at the hotels.

It is to be noted that respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding their happiness owing to pleasant surprises in the hotels is excluded from this analysis as it does not carry any meaning.

For checking normality, skewness and

Table 5.26 Skewness and Kurtosis - Perceived Excitement, Perceived Positive Feelings and Happiness

	Perceived Excitement	Perceived Positive Feelings	Happiness
Respondents	199	199	500
Non-responses	301	301	0
Skewness	-1.58	-0.34	0.26
Std. Error of Skewness	0.17	0.17	0.11
Kurtosis	1.61	-1.23	-1.47
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.34	0.34	0.22

kurtosis are determined in case of respondents' perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings, and their happiness due to pleasant surprises at the hotels. It is noticed from Table 5.26 that slight skewness is found for respondents' perceived positive feelings and happiness. However, Discriminant Analysis can be employed because of large sample size (Hair et al. 283). Again for checking linearity, scatter plots are checked for both perceived excitement of the respondents and their happiness. It is noticed from Fig.

Fig. 5.8. Scatter Plot - Perceived Excitement and Happiness

5.8, that some plots indicates departure from linearity. But, there is no visible proof of true curvilinearity.

In addition, for checking linearity, scatter plots are checked for both perceived positive feelings of the respondents and their happiness because of pleasant surprises at the hotels. It is noticed from Fig. 5.9, that some plots indicate departure from

Fig. 5.9. Scatter Plot - Perceived Positive Feelings and Happiness

linearity. However, there is no noticeable proof of true curvilinearity.

The equality of covariance matrices is assessed using Box M. Here, the p-value= 0.059 (greater than α= 0.05) indicates that the data do not differ significantly

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from the multivariate normal (Hair et al. 283). These tests suggest that Discriminant Analysis can be conducted for this study.

The results of Discriminant Analysis indicates Eigenvalue= 0.212, Canonical Correlation= 0.418, Wilks' Lambda= 0.825, Chi-square= 33.041, df= 2, significance= 0.000. It also indicates that 94.9% of the grouped cases are correctly classified. Based on the Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients, the discriminant function between respondent guests' perceived excitement (EX), their perceived positive feelings (PF) and their happiness owing to pleasant surprises in the hotels is derived as:

$$D_3 = (-6.674) + (1.309) \text{ EX} + (0.315) \text{ PF} \qquad ....(6.iii)$$

Based on this equation, the following groupings are noticed for happiness of the respondent guests due to pleasant surprises at the hotels based on the above discriminant score D_3 as shown in Table 5.27.

Table 5.27 Groupings for Happiness based on Discriminant Score (D_3)

Independent Variable (Perceived Excitement (EX))		Independent Variable (Perceived Positive Feelings (PF))		Discriminant Score (D_3)	Group for Happiness	Probabilities for Group Membership for Happiness	
						Group 0	Group 1
Levels of EX	Codes	Levels of PF	Codes			Not Happy	Happy
No excitement at all	1	No emotion	1	-5.050	No Response #		
	1	Feel good	2	-4.735	0	0.988	0.012
	1	Feel very good	3	-4.420	No Response #		
Below average excitement	2	No emotion	1	-3.741	No Response #		
	2	Feel good	2	-3.426	0	0.897	0.103
	2	Feel very good	3	-3.111	No Response #		
Average excitement	3	No emotion	1	-2.432	0	0.605	0.395
	3	Feel good	2	-2.117	1	0.469	0.531
	3	Feel very good	3	-1.802	No Response #		
Moderate excitement	4	No emotion	1	-1.123	No Response #		
	4	Feel good	2	-0.808	1	0.083	0.917
	4	Feel very good	3	-0.493	1	0.049	0.951
High excitement	5	No emotion	1	0.186	No Response #		
	5	Feel good	2	0.501	1	0.009	0.991
	5	Feel very good	3	0.816	1	0.005	0.995

* Computer Generated
# None of the respondents selected these options

Table 5.27 indicates that those guests who perceive high or moderate excitement and feel very good or good are highly likely to be happy due to pleasant surprises in the hotels. As mentioned earlier in section 5.3.4.2, guests' perceived positive feelings in the hotels is denoted by their act of feeling very good or feeling good or having no emotion. Again, those guests who perceive average excitement and feel good in the hotels are also more likely to be happy for the same reason. But, those guests who perceive average excitement and have no emotion in the hotels are

more likely to be unhappy in the hotels. Those guests who perceive below average or no excitement and feel good in the hotels are less likely to be happy due to the same cause. This relationship between guests' excitement, positive feelings and happiness because of pleasant surprises at the hotels is depicted in the Table 5.28.

Table 5.28 Perceived Excitement, Perceived Positive Feelings and Happiness

Perceived Excitement and Perceived Positive Feelings	Happiness
No excitement at all (even if feel good)	Not likely to be happy
Below average excitement (even if feel good)	Not likely to be happy
Average excitement (with no emotion present)	Possibility of being unhappy
Average excitement (with feel good)	Possibility of being happy
Moderate excitement (with feel good)	Likely to be happy
Moderate excitement (with feel very good)	Likely to be happy
High excitement (with feel good)	Likely to be happy
High excitement (with feel very good)	Likely to be happy

Table 5.28 shows that perceived excitement and perceived pleasant surprises of the guests in the hotels has almost positive relationship with their happiness due to pleasant surprises in the hotels. This means that perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings may also lead to happiness. It is seen that the above analyses in sections 5.3.4.1, 5.3.4.2 and 5.3.4.3 fulfills indicative hypotheses H_3 and H_4 shown in section 4.5 of Chapter 4.

5.3.5 Surpassing of Expectations and Perceived Positive Feelings:

A One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) is carried out to examine whether the means of guests' perception on their perceived positive feelings differ across their responses if their expectations are ever surpassed in the stated hotels. Therefore, respondents' perception on surpassing of their expectations is treated as the independent variable while their perceived positive feelings is treated as the dependent variable (refer to Question No.15(i) and 22 respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I). It is to be noted that respondent guests' perceived positive feelings in the hotels is indicated by their act of feeling very good or feeling good or having no emotion (refer to section 5.3.4.2). The Table 5.29 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' perception on their perceived positive

Table 5.29 ANOVA - Surpassing of Expectations and Perceived Positive Feelings

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.820	3	1.273	4.784	0.003
Within Groups	50.049	188	0.266		
Total	53.870	191			

feelings is rejected (*p*-value less than α= 0.05). This implies that there is significant difference among the means of guests' perceived positive feelings across their responses if their expectations are ever surpassed in the hotels.

It is to be noted that codes 3, 2, and 1 have been allotted to respondents' opinion on feeling very good, feeling good, and having no emotion respectively in the hotels (refer to Appendix-II). Here, respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding surpassing of their expectations in the hotels is excluded from this analysis as it does not carry any meaning. It is seen from Table 5.30 that the means of guests' perception on their perceived positive feelings is high if their expectations are always surpassed, sometimes surpassed and rarely surpassed and low if their expectations are never surpassed in the hotels. It is found that the mean for "never surpass" is lowest across the categories. However, much importance may be given to this group as it consists of only 1 respondent.

Table 5.30 Mean of Perceived Positive Feelings across Levels of Surpassing of Expectations

Levels of Surpassing of Expectations		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Never surpass	1	1.00	.
2	Rarely surpass	27	2.37	0.63
3	Sometimes surpass	162	2.57	0.50
4	Always surpass	2	2.00	0.00
Total		192	2.53	0.53

Again, the mean for "always surpass" is found to be comparatively high across the categories. However, since this group consists of only 2 respondents, higher emphasis may not be given to this also. The descriptive data in Table 5.30 indicates a near positive relationship between levels of surpassing of expectations and levels of perceived positive feelings. It is seen that guests who experience surpassing of their expectations may perceived positive feelings. But guests whose expectations are never surpassed may never perceive positive feelings.

To verify the presence of acceptable relationship between surpassing of the guests' expectations in the hotels and their perceived positive feelings, Discriminant Analysis is employed. So, the variable, perceived positive feelings of the respondents, is taken as the grouping variable, and the variable, surpassing of the respondents' expectations is taken as the independent variable. The variable, perceived positive feelings of the respondents, is grouped into two groups-

- "No positive feelings" based on respondents' rating for "no emotion".
- "Positive feelings present" based on respondents' rating for "feel very good" and "feel good".

As mentioned before, respondents' rating for lack of knowledge regarding surpassing of their expectations in the hotels is not included in this analysis as it does not have any meaning.

For checking normality, skewness and kurtosis are calculated in case of both surpassing of respondent guests' expectations and their perceived positive feelings in the hotels. It is observed from Table 5.31 that slight skewness is found in both cases. However, keeping in view the large sample size, Discriminant Analysis can

Table 5.31 Skewness and Kurtosis - Surpassing of Expectations and Perceived Positive Feelings

	Surpassing of Expectations	Perceived Positive Feelings
Respondents	500	199
Non-responses	0	301
Skewness	0.09	-0.34
Std. Error of Skewness	0.11	0.17
Kurtosis	-1.67	-1.23
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.22	0.34

be used in this case (Hair et al. 283). Again for checking linearity, scatter plots are
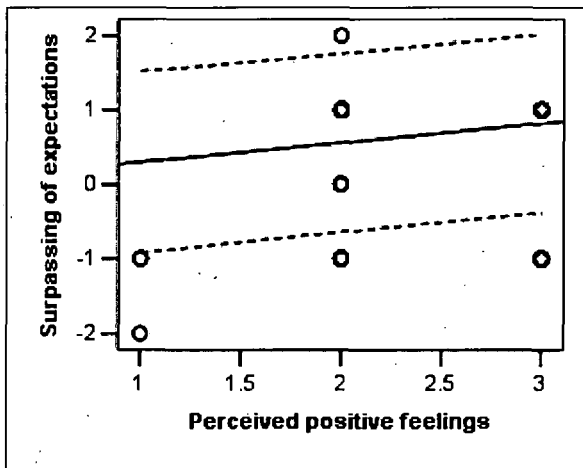
Fig. 5.10. Scatter Plot - Surpassing of Expectations and Perceived Positive Feelings

checked for both surpassing of respondent guests' expectations and their perceived positive feelings in the hotels. It is noticed from Fig. 5.10, that few plots show departure from linearity. However, there is no evidence of true curvilinearity. The equality of covariance matrices is determined using Box M. Here, the p-value$= 0.756$ (greater than $\alpha= 0.05$) shows that the data do not differ

significantly from the multivariate normal (Hair et al. 283). These tests suggest that Discriminant Analysis can be conducted for this study.

The results of Discriminant Analysis shows Eigenvalue= 0.141, Canonical Correlation= 0.352, Wilks' Lambda= 0.876, Chi-square= 25.017, df= 1, significance= 0.000. It also indicates that 90.3% of the grouped cases are correctly classified. Based on the Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients, the discriminant function between surprising expectations (SE) of the respondent guests and their perceived positive feelings is derived as:

$$D_4 = (-1.034) + (1.449) \text{ SE} \qquad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(6.iv)$$

Based on this equation, the following groupings are noticed for perceived positive feelings of the respondent guests based on the above discriminant score D_5 as shown in Table 5.32.

Table 5.32 Groupings for Perceived Positive Feelings based on Discriminant Score (D_4)

Independent Variable (Surpassing of Expectations (SE))		Discriminant Score (D_4)	Group for Perceived Positive Feelings	Probabilities for Group Membership of Perceived Positive Feelings	
				Group 0	Group 1
Levels of SE	Codes			No Positive Feelings	Positive Feelings Present
Never surpassed	-2	-3.932	0	0.965	0.035
Rarely surpassed	-1	-2.483	1	0.258	0.742
Sometimes surpassed	1	0.415	1	0.001	0.999
Always surpassed	2	1.864	1	0.000	1.000

* Computer generated

Table 5.32 indicates that those guests who never have their expectations surpassed in the stated hotels are not likely to have positive feelings. On the other hand, those guests who always or sometimes or rarely have their expectations surpassed in the stated hotels are highly likely to have positive feelings. This verifies the above observations from One-way ANOVA test. These analyses show that surpassing of the guests' expectations in the hotels is almost positively linked with their perceived positive feelings. Thereby, the above analyses fulfills indicative hypothesis H_5 mentioned in section 4.5 of Chapter 4.

Summary of the above analysis:

It can safely be concluded from the above analyses that surpassing of hotel guests' expectations is positively related with their pleasant surprises. Such pleasant surprises are nearly positively linked to their happiness in these hotels. Again, their happiness is almost positively related with their perceived excitement as well as their perceived positive feelings. Such happiness of the hotel guests along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings forms the basis of customer delight in hotels. Besides, it is also noticed that surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels is also having almost positive relationship with their perceived positive feelings. If all these links are joined one by one, it is observed that it forms a chain. This reflects the sequence of customer delight in hotels as per the viewpoints of other scholars (Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Crotts et al. 463; Finn 19; Oliver et al. 318; Rust and Oliver 87). This indicates the presence of customer delight in the

hospitality industry particularly in hotels. This sequence can be shown in the following Fig. 5.11.
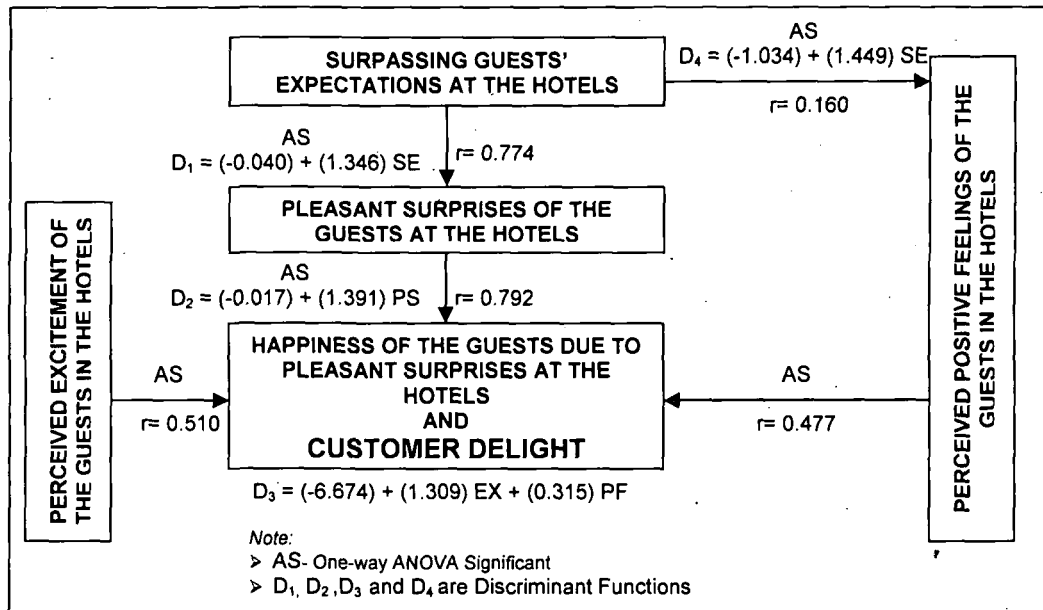
Fig. 5.11. Sequence of Customer Delight in Hotels

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CHAPTER 6

CONSTITUENTS

OF

CUSTOMER

DELIGHT

Chapter 6

CONSTITUENTS OF CUSTOMER DELIGHT

One of the objectives of this study involves determination of the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry in North East India. This chapter is devoted to this purpose. In this chapter, an analysis is carried out regarding the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the stated hotels in this region.

6.1 Analysis of the Common Hospitality Parameters that may create Customer Delight:

As discussed earlier, this study deals with determining the common hospitality parameters that may create customer delight in the hospitality industry (primarily hotels). Detailed discussion is offered below.

6.1.1 Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables that may create Customer Delight in Hotels:

This study involves analysis of the expectations of common hospitality variables that may lead to customer delight among the respondent guests in the stated hotels. The required data is collected through a series of questions in five (5) point scale and mean score for each of these variables (refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in chapter 4) is calculated based on the formula 6.i. The results are shown in Table 6.1 and Fig. 6.1.

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{(N_5 \times 5) + (N_4 \times 4) + (N_3 \times 3) + (N_2 \times 2) + (N_1 \times 1)}{(N_5 + N_4 + N_3 + N_2 + N_1)} \quad \ldots\ldots(6.i)$$

Where, N_5, N_4, N_3, N_2 and N_1 denotes the number of respondents who have highest expectations, above average expectations, average expectations, below average expectations and least expectations about these variables in hotels.

Table 6.1 Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables in Hotels

	Common Hospitality Variables in Hotels	Highest Expectation	Above Average Expectation	Average Expectation	Below Average Expectation	Least Expectation	Mean score
1	Food and beverage quality	272	216	12	0	0	4.52
2	Availability of food and beverage variety	87	353	60	0	0	4.05
3	Hygiene of food and beverage	385	101	14	0	0	4.74
4	Food and beverage at reasonable price	54	336	105	5	0	3.88
5	Quality of the restaurant	340	142	18	0	0	4.64
6	Location of the hotel	142	332	26	0	0	4.23
7	Physical appearance of the hotel	144	274	75	.7	0	4.11
8	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	179	218	94	5	0	4.15
9	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	395	86	19	0	0	4.75
10	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	388	111	1	0	0	4.77
11	Room furnishings and appearance	25	411	64	0	0	3.92
12	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	232	227	41	0	0	4.38
13	Quietness of the room	287	190	23	0	0	4.53
14	Cleanliness of the room	415	78	7	0	0	4.82
15	Quality of in-room temperature control	135	304	57	4	0	4.14
16	Room service	373	99	17	4	0	4.71
17	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	68	309	122	1	0	3.89
18	Internet connection	51	145	102	128	71	2.95
19	Reasonable price for the room	78	289	117	8	8	3.84
20	Helpful pre transaction information	305	155	24	5	8	4.50
21	Convenient and reliable reservation system	341	127	24	8	0	4.60
22	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	333	113	48	0	0	4.58
23	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	289	185	22	4	0	4.52
24	Special attention	198	217	54	6	25	4.11
25	Courtesy of the hotel staff	347	133	20	0	0	4.65
26	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	89	282	121	8	0	3.90
27	Efficient check-in and check-out	285	183	32	0	0	4.51
28	Neat appearance of staff	248	218	30	0	0	4.44
29	Convenient payment method	335	140	21	4	0	4.61
30	Availability of reliable wake-up call	152	301	20	16	7	4.16
31	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room	440	40	11	4	4	4.82
32	Responsible security personnel	409	80·	6	4	0	4.79
33	Availability of recreation facilities	13	321	162	4	0	3.69
34	Availability of transportation arrangements	210	234	56	0	0	4.31
35	Availability of 24 hours taxi service	121	106	243	30	0	3.64
36	Availability of business centre	50	194	207	42	7	3.48
37	Availability of meeting facilities	56	186	219	32	7	3.50
38	Availability of convenient parking facilities	113	238	128	14	7	3.87
39	Availability of efficient laundry service	144	285	59	12	0	4.12
40	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)	82	211	177	25	4	3.69
41	Availability of free newspaper	58	345	81	16	0	3.89
42	Availability of frequent travellers' program	19	124	183	152	22	2.93
43	Availability of swimming facilities	6	53	44	125	269	1.80
44	Availability of gymnasium facilities	1	40	77	193	186	1.95
45	Overall comfortability	78	335	86	1	0	3.98
46	Any other parameters	24	17	7	0	196	1.66

Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables in Hotels

VERY HIGH

HIGH

MEDIUM

LOW

Mean score of expectations of common hospitality variables in hotels

Common hospitality variables in hotels

1	Food and beverage quality
2	Availability of food and beverage variety
3	Hygiene of food and beverage
4	Food and beverage at reasonable price
5	Quality of the restaurant
6	Location of the hotel
7	Physical appearance of the hotel
8	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel
9	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel
10	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel
11	Room furnishings and appearance
12	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows
13	Quietness of the room
14	Cleanliness of the room
15	Quality of in-room temperature control
16	Room service
17	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio
18	Internet connection
19	Reasonable price for the room
20	Helpful pre transaction information
21	Convenient and reliable reservation system
22	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff
23	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service
24	Special attention
25	Courtesy of the hotel staff
26	Language proficiency of the hotel staff
27	Efficient check-in and check-out
28	Neat appearance of staff
29	Convenient payment method
30	Availability of reliable wake-up call
31	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
32	Responsible security personnel
33	Availability of recreation facilities
34	Availability of transportation arrangements
35	Availability of 24 hours taxi service
36	Availability of business centre
37	Availability of meeting facilities
38	Availability of convenient parking facilities
39	Availability of efficient laundry service
40	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)
41	Availability of free newspaper
42	Availability of frequent travellers' program
43	Availability of swimming facilities
44	Availability of gymnasium facilities
45	Overall comfortability
46	Other parameters

Fig. 6.1. Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables in Hotels

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From Table 6.1 and Fig. 6.1, the following findings are observed:

i. **Variables with Very High Mean Scores:** The mean scores for cleanliness of the hotel rooms, and security of belongings including valuables inside the room are highest (4.82). Besides, the mean scores for responsible security personnel (4.79), cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel (4.77), welcoming atmosphere (4.75) and hygiene of food and beverage (4.74) in the hotels are also very high. Similar observations have been noticed for the mean scores of room service (4.71), courtesy of the hotel staff (4.65), quality of the restaurant (4.64), convenient payment method (4.61), and convenient and reliable reservation system (4.60). In addition, the mean scores for friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff (4.58), quietness of the room (4.53), food and beverage quality (4.52), availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service (4.52), efficient check-in and check-out (4.51), and helpful pre transaction information (4.50) are also very high. This indicates very high importance of these factors for the respondent guests as far as their expectations in the hotels where they have stayed is concerned.

ii. **Variables with High Mean Scores:** It is also observed that mean scores for neat appearance of staff (4.44), comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows (4.38), availability of transportation arrangements (4.31), location of the hotel (4.23), availability of reliable wake-up call (4.16), view of the surrounding areas of the hotel (4.15), quality of in-room temperature control (4.14), availability of efficient laundry service (4.12), special attention, and physical appearance of the hotel (4.11) are high. It is also seen that mean scores for availability of food and beverage variety (4.05), overall comfortability (3.98), room furnishings and appearance (3.92), language proficiency of the hotel staff (3.90), availability of free newspaper and in-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio (3.89), and food and beverage at reasonable price (3.88) are also high. Again, the mean scores for availability of convenient parking facilities (3.87), reasonable price for the room (3.84), availability of recreation facilities, and availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.) (3.69) are high. Similarly, availability of 24 hours taxi service (3.64), and

availability of meeting facilities (3.50) register high mean scores. So, high emphasis should be accorded to these factors for the respondent guests concerning their expectations in the hotels where they have stayed.

iii. **Variables with Medium Mean Scores:** The mean scores for any availability of business centre (3.48), internet connection (2.95), and availability of frequent travellers' program (2.93) are medium. Hence, medium focus should be given to these factors in case of the respondent guests regarding their expectations in the hotels where they have stayed.

iv. **Variables with Low Mean Scores:** Availability of gymnasium facilities (1.95), availability of swimming facilities (1.80), and other parameters (1.66) register low mean scores. Still, medium focus may be accorded to these factors for the respondent guests in view of their expectations in the hotels where they have stayed.

The above findings can be attributed to the fact that cleanliness of the hotel rooms, security of belongings including valuables inside the room, responsible security personnel, cleanliness and tidiness, welcoming atmosphere and hygiene of food and beverage are highly emphasized by almost all hotel guests as essential parameters. Almost all the above observations are in line with the observations made in the literature review regarding possible delighter features in hotels (Choi and Chu 116-119, 121-124; Heung 311; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Mohsin and Lockyer 161, 164, 166; Management Development Review 112-113; Poon and Low 219, 222; Schneider and Bowen 35-45; Tsang and Qu 320).

6.1.1.1 Factors Analysis Results for Variables that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels:

This study involves Factor Analysis through Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation conducted on all the 46 common hospitality variables that may lead to customer delight in hotels. The variables are shown in Table 6.1. This is done with the objective to reduce them to few factors (refer to section 4.2.2 in Chapter 4). This endeavour may provide a proper understanding regarding customer delight in hotels with respect to these 46 hospitality variables. Thereby,

this can help in arriving at meaningful observations for achieving the second objective of this study as mentioned in the beginning of this Chapter.

Factor loadings have been considered for interpretation of the factors. These have been shown in the Rotated Component Matrix for these 46 common hospitality variables for customer delight in hotels (refer to Table A.5 in the Appendix-IV). According to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (111), factor loadings greater than 0.30 are considered to meet the minimal level; loadings of 0.40 are considered more important; and loadings of 0.50 or more than 0.50 are considered practically significant. Guidelines provided by these authors for assessing the statistical significance of such factor loadings indicate that for sample sizes of 350 or greater, factor loadings of 0.30 will be considered significant. Since all the variables in all the 10 factors (shown in Table 6.2) have loadings greater than 0.30, they have been used for analysis. For checking the reliability, Reliability coefficients have been calculated for each factor. Hotelling's T-squared Test is used to verify that all items in the scale do not have the same mean (Hair et al. 329, 334-335). All factors with a Reliability coefficient above 0.6 are considered acceptable for the study as it is taken as the lower limit of acceptability (Hair et al. 117-118). The complete list of the initial 10 factors has been shown in Table 6.2 below. The details regarding each of these factors are discussed below (shown in Table 6.2).

The first factor labeled as "Comfortability and convenience" includes 10 items as shown in Table 6.2. It has a high Reliability Coefficient of 0.910. The second factor labeled as "Facilities in the hotel rooms" consisting of 8 items as shown in Table 6.2, has a high Reliability Coefficient of 0.692. The third factor labeled as "Corporate Facilities" includes 5 items as shown in Table 6.2. It shows a Reliability Coefficient of 0.664. The fourth factor labeled as "Cleanliness and quality" comprising of 4 items as shown in Table 6.2, has a high Reliability Coefficient of 0.760. The fifth factor labeled as "Recreation and transportation facilities" includes 7 items as shown in Table 6.2. It has a high Reliability Coefficient of 0.770. The sixth factor labeled as "Physical evidence" consisting of 4 items as shown in Table 6.2, with a Reliability Coefficient of 0.731. The seventh factor labeled as "Language proficiency and transportation arrangements" consisting of 2 items with a Reliability Coefficient of 0.658. The eighth factor

labeled as "Affordability and assurance" comprising of 3 items has a Reliability Coefficient of 0.779. The ninth factor labeled as "Overall comfortability" consisting of only one item as shown in Table 6.2. The tenth factor labeled as "Physical appearance and other facilities" consists of 2 items as shown in Table 6.2. It has low Reliability Coefficient of -0.637. As such, the ninth and the tenth factors have been excluded from further analysis. Therefore, only 8 of these factors have been utilized for further analysis.

In all the items in these factors, Hotelling's T-squared Test shows significance (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This indicates that all items in the scale do not have the same mean.

Table 6.2 Final factors in case of All Common Hospitality Variables that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels

Comfortability and convenience		Loadings	Recreation and transportation facilities		Loadings
1	Convenient payment method	0.769	1	Availability of gymnasium facilities	0.790
2	Availability of reliable wake-up call	0.751	2	Availability of frequent travellers' program	0.752
3	Quietness of the room	0.694			
4	Convenient and reliable reservation system	0.689	3	Availability of swimming facilities	0.600
			4	Availability of recreation facilities	0.520
5	Room Service	0.683	5	Availability of personal care amenities	0.499
6	Responsible security personnel	0.674	6	Availability of 24 hour taxi service	0.471
7	Efficient check-in and check-out	0.651	7	Availability of convenient parking facilities	0.439
8	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	0.645			
9	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	0.503	*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.770*		
			Physical evidence		
10	Quality of restaurant	0.482	1	Location of the hotel	0.704
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.910			2	Availability of food and beverage variety	0.675
Facilities in the hotel rooms			3	Quality of in-room temperature control	0.525
1	Room furnishings and appearance	0.811	4	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	0.487
2	Special Attention	0.707	*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.731*		
3	Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel staff	0.656	**Language proficiency and transportation arrangements**		
4	Cleanliness of the room	0.565	1	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	0.699
5	Courtesy of hotel staff	0.557	2	Availability of transportation arrangements	0.504
6	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	0.539	*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.658*		
7	Food and beverage at reasonable price	0.521	**Affordability and assurance**		
			1	Helpful pre transaction information	0.718
8	Internet connection	0.385	2	Reasonable price for the room	0.623
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.692			3	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room	0.591
Corporate facilities			*Cronbach's Alpha = 0.779*		
1	Availability of meeting facilities	0.889	**Overall comfortability**		
2	Availability of business centre	0.868	1	Overall comfortability	0.766
3	View of surrounding areas of the hotel	-0.607	**Physical appearance and other facilities**		
4	Availability of efficient laundry service	0.533	1	Other facilities	0.867
5	Availability of free newspaper	0.497	2	Physical appearance of the hotel	0.561
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.664			*Cronbach's Alpha = -0.637*		
Cleanliness and quality					
1	Hygiene of food and beverage	0.819			
2	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	0.814			
3	Food and beverage quality	0.456			
4	Neat appearance of staff	0.447			
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.760					

The above factors have eigenvalues greater than 1. The extracted 8 factors explains 66.73% of the total variance (refer to Table 6.3). This is acceptable since it has been recommended that the factors should account for at least 60% of the total variance (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Hair et al. 103; Malhotra 614-615). Thereafter, two measures have been used to access whether the factors analysis is appropriate. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is used to measure the appropriateness of the factor model. Values below 0.5 imply that the factors analysis may not be appropriate (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Hair et al. 99; Malhotra 612, 614). Here, the value obtained is 0.802 which is considered satisfactory showing that the data is appropriate for Factor Analysis. In addition, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has been used to examine the hypothesis that the extracted factors are uncorrelated in the population (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Hair et al. 99; Malhotra 612, 614). It is significant (p-value = 0.000 less than α= 0.05) which indicates that the correlation matrix is not orthogonal and is, therefore, appropriate for factoring.

Table 6.3 Total Variance Explained in case of All Common Hospitality Variables that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative percentage
1	13.08	28.43	28.43
2	4.16	9.04	37.47
3	3.85	8.37	45.83
4	2.65	5.77	51.60
5	2.23	4.86	56.46
6	1.74	3.78	60.24
7	1.61	3.50	63.74
8	1.38	3.00	66.73

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

6.1.1.2 Variables for Customer Delight and Surpassing Expectations:

The study attempts to measure the responses on respondent guests' expectations regarding 46 common hospitality variables (measured in 5 point scale) that may lead to customer delight in the stated hotels (refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in chapter 4). The respondents are also asked about their experiences regarding any incidence leading to surpassing of their expectations. Thereafter, the perceptions of the guests on surpassing of their expectations are tested with respect to their levels of expectations regarding each of these 46 variables. This is done by equal number of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests at a significance

level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) with an intention to check if the mean of their perception on surpassing of their expectations differ with respect to their levels of expectations regarding each of these 46 variables. For this purpose, respondents' perception on levels of expectations regarding each of these 46 variables is treated as the independent variable while the variable, surpassing expectations of the respondents is treated as the dependent variable. This effort is carried out to examine which of these variables have satisfactory relationship with surpassing of guests' expectations in hotels. The latter itself comprises an important element for customer delight in hotels (Crotts and Magnini 719; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 462; Kumar, Olshavsky and King 14-19; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Magnini, Crotts and Zehrer 535-545; Oliver, Rust and Varki 311-320; Rust and Oliver 86-89). The presence of such a satisfactory relationship will ascertain whether the variables can be considered as essential constituents of customer delight in the hotels or not. The results are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4   ANOVA – Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels – Surpassing of Expectations

Sr. No.	Name of the Variables	Highest Expectation		Above Average Expectation		Average Expectation		Below Average Expectation		Least Expectation		p-value	Result of Hypothesis Testing
		Mean of Surpassing of Expectations											
		N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean		
1	Food and beverage quality	265	-0.51	214	-0.39	7	-1.29	0		0		0.149	H₀ not rejected
2	Availability of food and beverage variety	87	0.07	346	-0.56	53	-0.75	0		0		0.000	H₀ rejected
3	Hygiene of food and beverage	378	-0.62	97	0.08	11	-0.36	0		0		0.000	H₀ rejected
4	Food and beverage at reasonable price	54	-0.70	329	-0.52	98	-0.16	5	-1.00	0		0.037	H₀ rejected
5	Quality of the restaurant	333	-0.46	140	-0.52	13	-0.15	0		0		0.608	H₀ not rejected
6	Location of the hotel	142	-0.542	323	-0.47	21	0.048	0		0		0.152	H₀ not rejected
7	Physical appearance of the hotel	137	-0.09	274	-0.54	68	-0.94	7	-0.71	0		0.000	H₀ rejected
8	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	179	-0.31	207	-0.66	91	-0.37	5	-1.60	0		0.010	H₀ rejected
9	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	393	-0.575	79	0.076	14	-0.64	0		0		0.000	H₀ rejected
10	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	381	-0.61	105	0.04	0		0		0		0.000	H₀ rejected

Table 6.4   ANOVA – Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels – Surpassing of Expectations

Sr. No.	Name of the Variables	Highest Expectation		Above Average Expectation		Average Expectation		Below Average Expectation		Least Expectation		p-value	Result of Hypothesis Testing
		Mean of Surpassing of Expectations											
		N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean		
11	Room furnishings and appearance	25	-0.88	404	-0.52	57	0.05	0		0		0.002	H_0 rejected
12	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	232	-0.73	214	-0.35	40	0.38	0		0		0.000	H_0 rejected
13	Quietness of the room	287	-0.46	184	-0.55	15	0.20	0		0		0.095	H_0 not rejected
14	Cleanliness of the room	408	-0.53	72	-0.10	6	-0.67	0		0		0.029	H_0 rejected
15	Quality of in-room temperature control	135	-0.30	304	-0.54	43	-0.42	4	-1.50	0		0.114	H_0 not rejected
16	Room service	373	-0.55	97	-0.32	5	1.00	4	-1.50	0		0.009	H_0 rejected
17	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	68	-0.57	302	-0.41	115	-0.59	1	1.00	0		0.333	H_0 not rejected
18	Internet connection	51	0.39	143	-0.29	101	-1.24	128	-0.54	60	-0.28	0.000	H_0 rejected
19	Reasonable price for the room	78	-0.90	289	-0.48	103	-0.17	8	0.00	8	-0.25	0.004	H_0 rejected
20	Helpful pre transaction information	305	-0.80	148	0.13	21	-0.71	1	-1.00	8	1.00	0.000	H_0 rejected
21	Convenient and reliable reservation system	341	-0.54	125	-0.31	16	-0.63	4	1.00	0		0.042	H_0 rejected
22	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	333	-0.62	111	-0.35	36	0.33	0		0		0.000	H_0 rejected
23	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	289	-0.61	178	-0.25	19	-0.47	0		0		0.014	H_0 rejected
24	Special attention	198	-0.80	215	-0.33	42	-0.14	6	-1.50	25	0.64	0.000	H_0 rejected
25	Courtesy of the hotel staff	347	-0.59	126	-0.16	13	-0.46	0		0		0.007	H_0 rejected
26	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	89	-0.90	282	-0.37	107	-0.43	8	0.00	0		0.005	H_0 rejected
27	Efficient check-in and check-out	285	-0.51	181	-0.41	20	-0.45	0		0		0.745	H_0 not rejected
28	Neat appearance of staff	248	-0.82	205	-0.07	29	-0.24	0		0		0.000	H_0 rejected
29	Convenient payment method	335	-0.54	138	-0.37	13	0.23	0		0		0.061	H_0 not rejected
30	Availability of reliable wake-up call	152	-0.57	299	-0.44	19	-0.68	12	-0.08	0		0.455	H_0 not rejected
31	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room	433	-0.52	38	-0.18	10	0.00	4	1.00	0		0.029	H_0 rejected

Table 6.4 ANOVA – Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels – Surpassing of Expectations

Sr. No.	Name of the Variables	Highest Expectation		Above Average Expectation		Average Expectation		Below Average Expectation		Least Expectation		p-value	Result of Hypothesis Testing
		Mean of Surpassing of Expectations											
		N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean	N*	Mean		
32	Responsible security personnel	409	-0.47	71	-0.44	5	-1.60	0		0		0.148	H₀ not rejected
33	Availability of recreation facilities	13	0.85	321	-0.56	148	-0.37	4	-1.25	0		0.001	H₀ rejected
34	Availability of transportation arrangements	209	-0.78	227	-0.20	50	-0.40	0		0		0.000	H₀ rejected
35	Availability of 24 hours taxi service	120	-0.53	106	-0.35	234	-0.47	26	-0.65	0		0.633	H₀ not rejected
36	Availability of business centre	50	-1.20	194	-0.54	204	-0.21	38	-0.58	0		0.000	H₀ rejected
37	Availability of meeting facilities	56	-0.96	186	-0.55	216	-0.24	28	-0.79	0		0.001	H₀ rejected
38	Availability of convenient parking facilities	112	-0.40	229	-0.58	124	-0.25	14	-1.57	7	0.14	0.002	H₀ rejected
39	Availability of efficient laundry service	143	-0.66	283	-0.49	55	0.16	5	-1.00	0		0.001	H₀ rejected
40	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)	81	-0.53	211	-0.75	168	-0.04	21	-0.67	4	-1.50	0.000	H₀ rejected
41	Availability of free newspaper	57	-0.16	343	-0.47	77	-0.61	9	-1.44	0		0.026	H₀ rejected
42	Availability of frequent travellers' program	18	-0.11	122	-0.49	183	-0.54	148	-0.29	15	-1.67	0.001	H₀ rejected
43	Availability of swimming facilities	6	1.00	53	0.30	41	-0.59	125	-0.38	258	-0.68	0.000	H₀ rejected
44	Availability of gymnasium facilities	1	1.00	40	-0.25	74	-0.46	193	-0.10	175	-0.93	0.000	H₀ rejected
45	Overall comfortability	70	0.06	333	-0.51	82	-0.76	1	-1.00			0.001	H₀ rejected
46	Other variables	24	-0.54	17	-0.29	6	1.00	0		193	-0.42	0.096	H₀ not rejected

H₀ -Null Hypothesis

* Does not include the mean of those respondent guests who have selected "Do not know" option regarding surpassing of their expectations in the hotels

The Table 6.4 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of surpassing of guests' expectations across their responses of their levels of expectations regarding the following 34 common hospitality variables in hotels is rejected (p-value less than $\alpha = 0.05$) (refer to Table 6.5). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of surpassing of guests' expectations across their responses of their levels of expectations regarding these variables. This

means that these 34 variables have satisfactory relation with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. In short, these variables (shown in Table 6.5) can be considered as essential constituents of customer delight in hotels.

Table 6.5 Common Hospitality Variables related to Surpassing of Expectations in Hotels

Sr. No.	Name of the Variables	Sr. No.	Name of the Variables
1	Availability of food and beverage variety	18	Special attention
2	Hygiene of food and beverage	19	Courtesy of the hotel staff
3	Food and beverage at reasonable price	20	Language proficiency of the hotel staff
4	Physical appearance of the hotel	21	Neat appearance of staff
5	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	22	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
6	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	23	Availability of recreation facilities
7	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	24	Availability of transportation arrangements
8	Room furnishings and appearance	25	Availability of business centre
9	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	26	Availability of meeting facilities
10	Cleanliness of the room	27	Availability of convenient parking facilities
11	Room service	28	Availability of efficient laundry service
12	Internet connection	29	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)
13	Reasonable price for the room	30	Availability of free newspaper
14	Helpful pre transaction information	31	Availability of frequent travellers' program
15	Convenient and reliable reservation system	32	Availability of swimming facilities
16	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	33	Availability of gymnasium facilities
17	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	34	Overall comfortability

Analysis of the Results of One-way ANOVA:

Results of One-way ANOVA in Table 6.4 indicate that the means of surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels are high if they have lower expectation regarding the following 12 common hospitality variables (shown in Fig. 6.2). It is seen that the same means are low if guests have higher expectations regarding these variables. These 12 variables are among the 34 variables that may lead to customer delight in hotels (refer to Table 6.5).

i. Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel

ii. Room furnishings and appearance

iii. Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows

iv. Reasonable price for the room

v. Convenient and reliable reservation system

vi. Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff

vii. Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service

viii. Language proficiency of the hotel staff

ix. Neat appearance of staff

x. Security of belongings including valuables inside the room

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xi. Availability of transportation arrangements

xii. Availability of business centre

The above analysis implies that those guests who have high expectations regarding any of these 12 variables have lower chances of their expectations being surpassed in the hotels. Again, that those guests who have low expectations regarding any of these 12 variables have higher chances of having their expectations surpassed in the hotels.

Thus, it is seen that the relationship between guests' expectations on these 12 variables and surpassing of their expectations is almost positively linear. This verifies the normal occurrences wherein a product with high expectation may not meet the customer expectation so easily and hence the curves are dipping towards the origin. On the other hand, the guests with low expectation have a high chance of being surprised with better services and hence their average score on surpassing expectation is higher. Thus, the upward curves towards the right hand corner of the graph. This shows that the management may offer standard attention to these 12 variables. This is because these variables offer only normal challenges. However, the challenge of surprising guests with higher expectation shall remain for these 12 variables also.
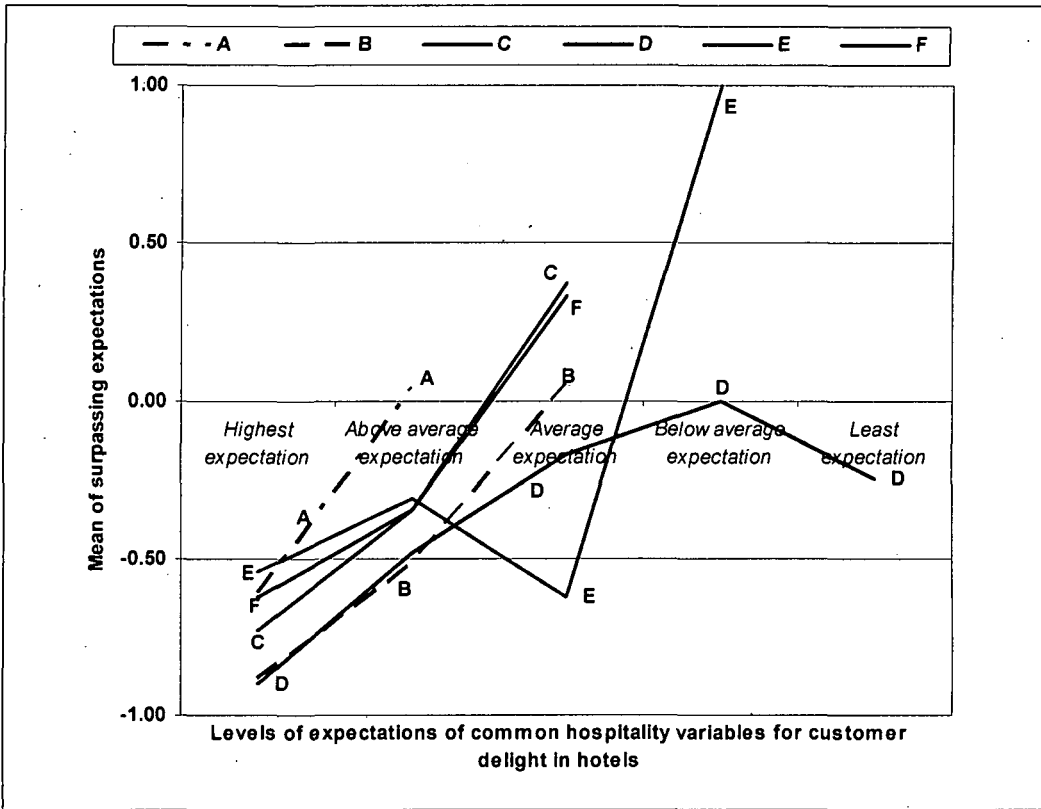
A- Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	D- Reasonable price for the room
B- Room furnishings and appearance	E- Convenient and reliable reservation system
C- Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	F- Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff
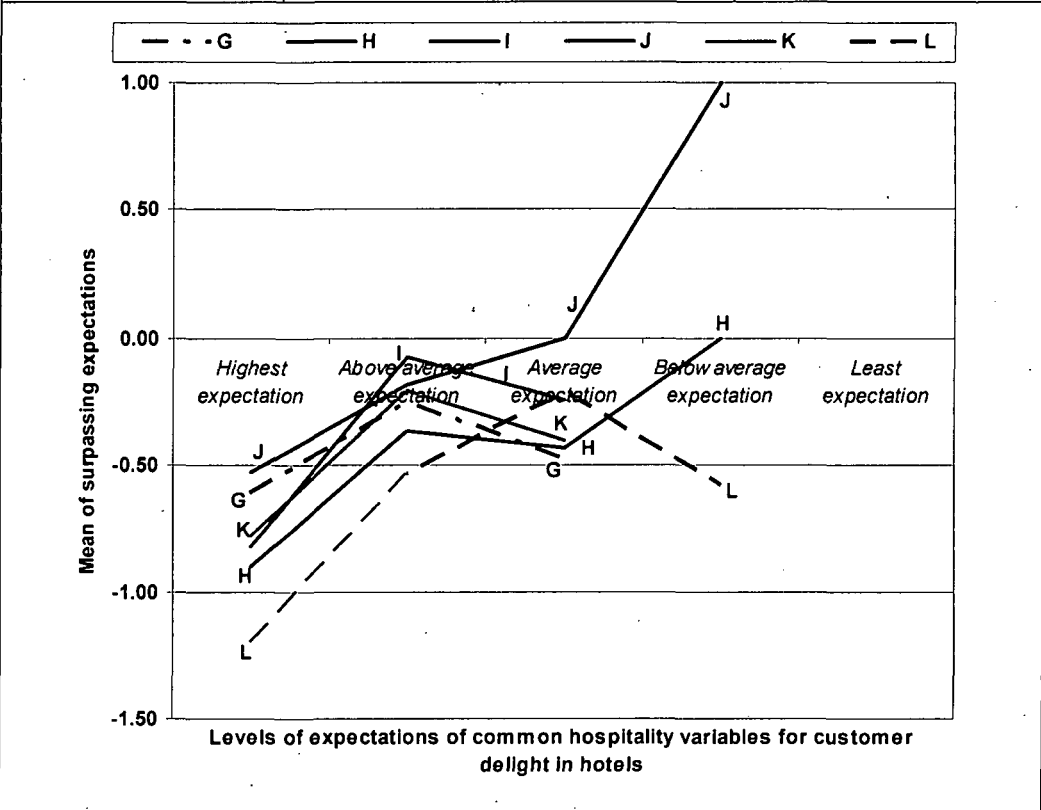
G- Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	J- Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
H- Language proficiency of the hotel staff	K- Availability of transportation arrangements
I- Neat appearance of staff	L- Availability of business centre

Fig. 6.2. Mean of Surpassing Expectations across Levels of Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables for Customer Delight in Hotels

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The outcome of One-way ANOVA in Table 6.4 also indicates that the means of surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels are high if they have higher expectation regarding the following 9 common hospitality variables (shown in Fig. 6.3). It is also found that the same means are low if guests have lower expectations regarding these variables. These 9 variables are among the above mentioned 34 variables that may lead to customer delight in hotels (shown in Table 6.5).

i. Availability of food and beverage variety

ii. Physical appearance of the hotel

iii. View of the surrounding areas of the hotel

iv. Availability of recreation facilities

v. Availability of free newspaper

vi. Availability of frequent travellers' program

vii. Availability of swimming facilities

viii. Availability of gymnasium facilities

ix. Overall comfortability

It is found that those guests who have high expectations regarding any of these 9 variables have higher likelihood of having their expectations surpassed in the hotels. However, guests having low expectations regarding any of these 9 variables have lower probability of having their expectations surpassed in the hotels.

Therefore, it is observed that the relationship between guests' expectations on these 9 variables and surpassing of their expectations is nearly negatively linear. This indicates an interesting occurrence wherein a product with low expectation may not meet the customer expectation easily and so the curves are dipping towards the right. However, the guests with high expectation have a high chance of being surprised with improved services and so their average score on surpassing expectation is higher. Thus, the upward curves towards the left hand corner of the graph. This shows that the management may offer special attention as these 9 variables are behaving abnormally. Therefore, hotel management should provide special attention for understanding the role of these variables for customer delight.
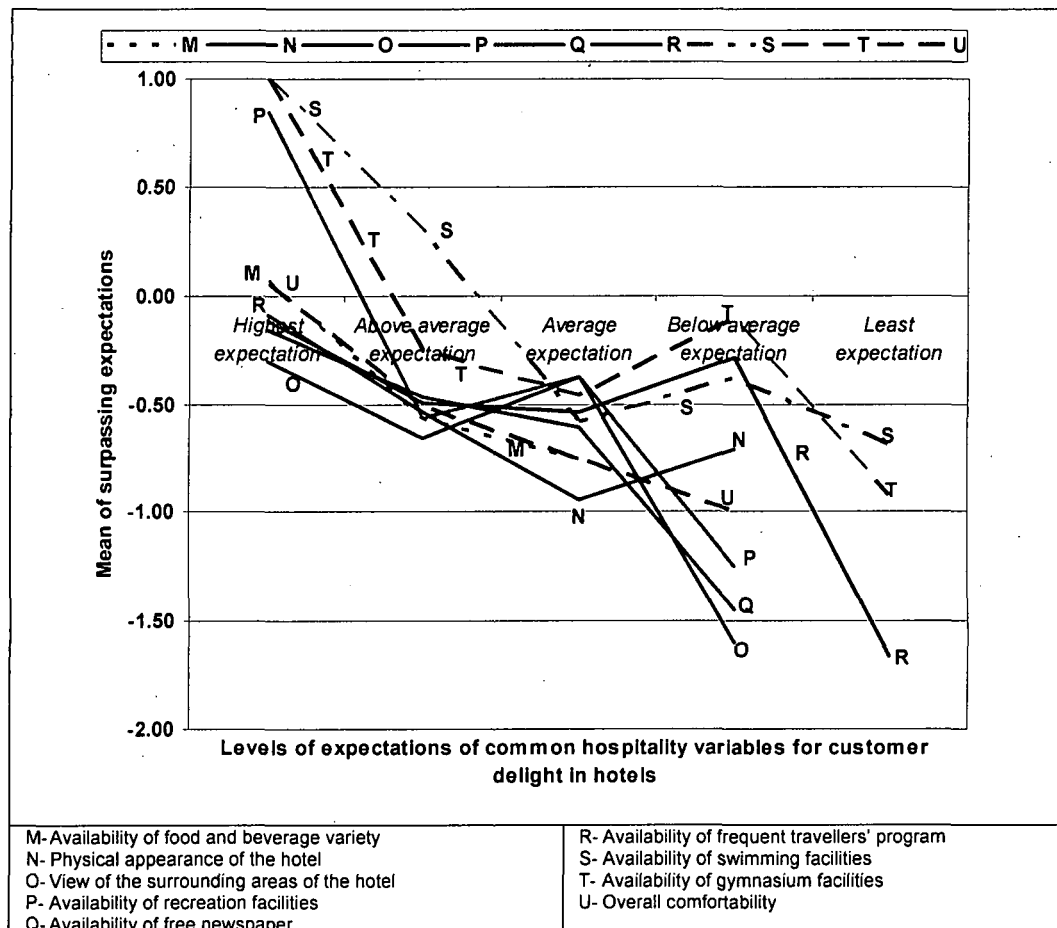
Fig. 6.3. Mean of Surpassing Expectations across Levels of Expectations of Common Hospitality Variables for Customer Delight in Hotels

M- Availability of food and beverage variety	R- Availability of frequent travellers' program
N- Physical appearance of the hotel	S- Availability of swimming facilities
O- View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	T- Availability of gymnasium facilities
P- Availability of recreation facilities	U- Overall comfortability
Q- Availability of free newspaper	

If we observe the descriptive statistics in Table 6.4, it is seen that the mean of guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations do not have any similar linear relationship (as seen in Fig. 6.2 and Fig. 6.3) with their expectations for the following 13 common hospitality variables. It is to be noted that these 13 variables are among the above stated 34 variables that may result in customer delight in hotels (shown in Table 6.5).

i.   Hygiene of food and beverage

ii. Food and beverage at reasonable price

iii. Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel

iv. Cleanliness of the room

v.   Room service

vi. Internet connection

vii. Helpful pre transaction information

viii. Special attention

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ix. Courtesy of the hotel staff

x. Availability of meeting facilities

xi. Availability of convenient parking facilities

xii. Availability of efficient laundry service

xiii. Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)

Since any pattern of behaviour is noticed in the case of these 13 variables, understanding the role of these variables with respect to surpassing of expectations is difficult. Practically, this throws an important challenge before the hotel authorities.

The results of One-way ANOVA in Table 6.4 also points out that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of surpassing of guests' expectations across their responses of their levels of expectations regarding the following 12 common hospitality variables in hotels cannot be rejected (p-value more than $\alpha=$ 0.05) (refer to Table 6.6). This means that there are no significant differences among the means of surpassing of guests' expectations across their responses of their expectations regarding these variables. Therefore, these 12 variables do not have any satisfactory relationship with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. So, these 12 variables may not be considered as essential elements for customer delight in hotels.

Table 6.6 Common Hospitality Variables not related to Surpassing of Expectations in Hotels

Sr. No.	Name of the Variable	Sr. No.	Name of the Variable
1	Food and beverage quality	7	Efficient check-in and check-out
2	Quality of the restaurant	8	Convenient payment method
3	Location of the hotel	9	Availability of reliable wake-up call
4	Quietness of the room	10	Responsible security personnel
5	Quality of in-room temperature control	11	Availability of 24 hours taxi service
6	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	12	Other variables

6.1.2 Frequency of Obtaining Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises in Hotels:

This study involves analysis of the frequency of obtaining 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises (refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in chapter 4) among the respondent guests that may lead to customer delight in the stated hotels where they stay. These elements of pleasant surprises may result in customer delight among guests in hotels. The required data is collected through question no. 19 (refer to

Questionnaire in Appendix-I) in five (5) point scale and mean score for each of these elements of pleasant surprises is calculated based on the following formula:

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{(M_5 \times 5) + (M_4 \times 4) + (M_3 \times 3) + (M_2 \times 2) + (M_1 \times 1)}{(M_5 + M_4 + M_3 + M_2 + M_1)} \quad \text{.......(6.ii)}$$

Where, M_5, M_4, M_3, M_2 and M_1 denotes the number of respondents who have always obtained, sometimes obtained (predictable), sometimes obtained (unpredictable), rarely obtained and obtained only once respectively these probable elements of pleasant surprises during their stay in the stated hotels.

The results are shown in Table 6.7 and Fig. 6.4.

Table 6.7 Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises in Hotels

	Probable elements of pleasant surprises	Always Obtain	Sometimes Obtain (Predictable)	Sometimes Obtain (Unpredictable)	Rarely Obtain	Obtained Only Once	Mean score
1	Free gifts	1	3	37	33	53	1.94
2	Special discounts	3	13	52	25	1	2.91
3	Special foods	2	5	39	56	29	2.20
4	Special entertainment	2	1	19	34	9	2.28
5	Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.	0	5	21	23	24	2.10
6	Other pleasant surprises	0	2	0	0	14	1.38

From Table 6.7 and Fig. 6.4, it is observed that the mean score for obtainment of special discounts (2.91) is high. This means that very high emphasis should be given towards providing such discounts as pleasant surprises in hotels. Besides, the mean scores for special entertainment (2.28), special foods (2.20), and free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc. (2.10) are higher as per the viewpoint of the respondents. This calls for

1. Free gifts	4. Special entertainment
2. Special discounts	5. Free access to facilities like upgradation
3. Special foods	of room, gym, swimming pool etc.
	6. Other pleasant surprises

Fig. 6.4. Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises in Hotels

high focus on providing such probable elements of pleasant surprises in hotels. In comparison, the mean score for obtainment of free gifts (1.94) is medium.
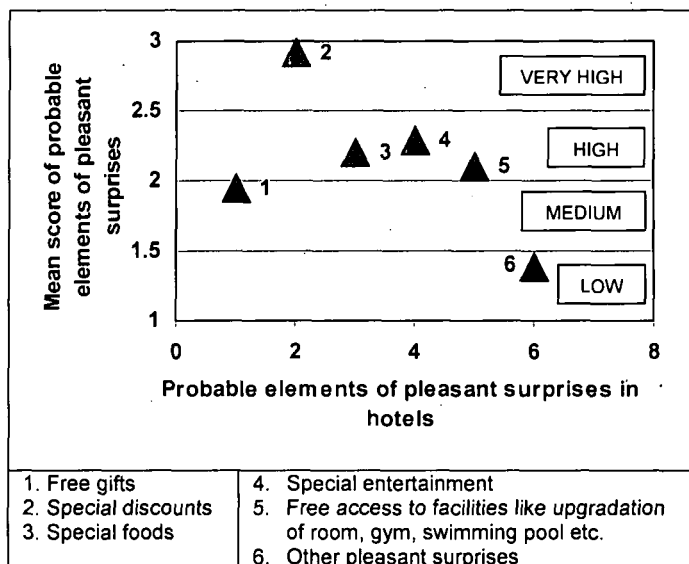
Thereby, moderate importance may be accorded towards providing free gifts as pleasant surprises in hotels. In addition, the mean score for other probable elements of pleasant surprises (other than those mentioned in Serial No.1 to 5 in Table 6.7) (1.38) in the hotels is low as per the opinion of the respondents. Still, moderate focus may be given in providing such elements of pleasant surprises in the hotels.

6.1.2.1 Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises and Surpassing Expectations:

The study also tries to measure the samples' responses on the frequency of obtainment of 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises (measured in 5 point scale) that may lead to customer delight in hotels. The respondents are also enquired about their experiences regarding any occurrence leading to surpassing of their expectations in hotels. Guests' responses on the frequency of obtainment of these 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises are tested with their responses on surpassing of their expectations. This is also done by equal number of One-Way ANOVA tests at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) with an intention to confirm if the mean of their perception on surpassing of their expectations differ in relation to frequency of obtainment of these 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises in hotels. Here, respondent guests' responses on the frequency of obtainment of these 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises are treated as the independent variable while the variable, surpassing expectations of the respondents is treated as the dependent variable. This attempt is done to examine which of these elements of pleasant surprises have significant relationship with surpassing of guests' expectations in hotels, which is a basic element for customer delight (Crotts and Magnini 719; Crotts et al. 462; Kumar et al. 14-19; Kwong and Yau 260-262; Magnini et al. 535-545; Oliver et al. 311-320; Rust and Oliver 86-89). The presence of such a satisfactory relationship will determine which of these elements of pleasant surprises can be considered as essential constituents of customer delight in the hotels. The results are shown in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 ANOVA – Obtainment of Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels – Surpassing of Expectations

Sr. No.	Name of Pleasant Surprises	Always Obtained		Sometimes (Predictable)		Sometimes (Un-predictable)		Rarely		Only Once		p-value	Result of Hypothesis Testing
		N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean		
1	Free gifts	1	1.00	3	1.00	30	0.67	33	0.82	53	0.81	0.825	H_0 not rejected
2	Special discounts	3	1.00	13	0.85	52	0.73	25	0.28	4	1.00	0.000	H_0 rejected
3	Special foods	2	1.00	5	1.00	39	0.90	56	0.79	29	0.52	0.177	H_0 not rejected
4	Special entertainment	2	1.00	1	1.00	13	1.00	33	1.00	9	1.00	1.000	H_0 not rejected
5	Free access to facilities	0		5	0.20	21	1.00	23	0.91	24	1.00	0.006	H_0 rejected
6	Other pleasant	0		2	1.00	0		0		14	0.71	0.598	H_0 not rejected

H_0 - Null Hypothesis

Analysis of the results of One-way ANOVA:

One-way ANOVA results in Table 6.8 shows that the null hypotheses that there is equality of means of guests' perceptions on surpassing of their expectations across their responses of their frequency of obtainment of special discounts and free access to facilities (like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.) in hotels is rejected (p-value less than $\alpha = 0.05$). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' perceptions on surpassing of their expectations across their responses on obtainment of these two elements of pleasant surprises. This means that these two elements of pleasant surprises have significant relationship with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. This shows that these two elements of pleasant surprises can be considered as important constituents of customer delight in hotels. The mean of guests' opinion on surpassing of their expectations is highest whenever they always obtain special discounts in hotels (refer to Fig.6.5). However, the same mean is lowest when they obtain special discounts in the hotels only once. Therefore, it is observed that the relationship between guests' obtainment of special discounts and surpassing of their expectations is nearly negatively linear. This is an interesting occurrence wherein surprises with low frequency may not meet the customer expectation easily and so the curves are dipping towards the right.

Again, the mean of guests' view on surpassing of their expectations is low when they obtain free access to the above mentioned facilities sometimes (predictably) in the hotels. On the other hand, this mean is comparatively, high

when they obtain free access to facilities in the hotels only once, sometimes (unpredictably) and rarely (refer to Fig. 6.5). This seems to be little abnormal.
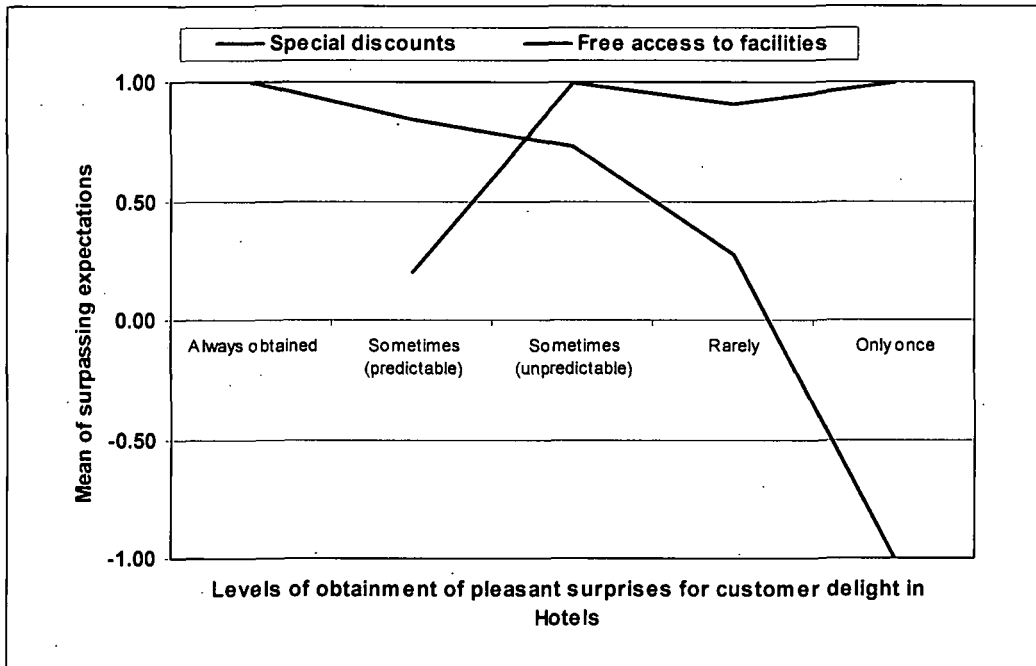
Fig. 6.5. Mean of Surpassing Expectations across Frequency of Obtainment of Elements of Pleasant Surprises for Customer Delight in Hotels

Results of One-way ANOVA in Table 6.8 also reveal that the null hypotheses that there are equality of means of surpassing of guests' expectations across their responses of the frequency of obtainment of free gifts, special foods, special entertainment and other probable elements of pleasant surprises in the hotels cannot be rejected (p-value more than $\alpha= 0.05$). This means that there are no significant differences among the means of surpassing of guests' expectations across their responses of the frequency of obtainment of these probable elements of pleasant surprises. Thus, these 4 probable elements of pleasant surprises do not have any satisfactory relationship with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. As such, these 4 probable elements of pleasant surprises may not be considered as significant elements for customer delight in hotels.

Summary of the above analysis:

It can be observed from the above analyses that 46 common hospitality variables like food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage etc. may lead to customer delight in hotels. Besides, it is also seen that 6 pleasant surprises like free gifts, special foods, special

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discounts etc. may result in customer delight in hotels. Factor Analysis, conducted to reduce these 46 variables into few factors, resulted in 8 factors. Some of these factors include comfortability and convenience, facilities in the hotel rooms, corporate facilities etc. (refer to Table 6.2 in this Chapter). It is noticed that 34 common hospitality variables (among these 46 variables) are significant with respect to surpassing of the guests' expectations in these hotels, which itself is an essential component of customer delight (refer to Chapter 5). Among these 34 variables, three sets of variables have significance with respect to surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. Among these sets of variables, the first set (consisting of 12 variables) exhibits normal behaviour (positive linear relationship) with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. Some of these variables include cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel, room furnishings and appearance, comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows etc. The second of set of such variables (comprising of 9 variables) show abnormal behaviour (negative linear relationship) with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. Few of these variables include availability of food and beverage variety, physical appearance of the hotel, view of surrounding areas of the hotel etc. (refer to Fig 6.3 in this Chapter). The third set of variables (consisting of 13 variables) also indicates abnormal behaviour with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. Few of these variables are hygiene of food and beverage, food and beverage at reasonable price, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel etc. Therefore, hotels should be careful regarding the second and third sets of variables for delighting guests. This calls for greater emphasis on these variables. Again, it is noticed that 2 elements of pleasant surprises from among the 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises are significant with respect to surpassing of the guests' expectations in these hotels. These two elements of pleasant surprises include special discounts and free access to facilities (like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.) in hotels. In fact, the above discussion reveals that the above mentioned 34 common hospitality variables and 2 elements of pleasant surprises can be considered to be important common hospitality parameters for creating customer delight in hotels in North East India.

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CHAPTER 7

MANAGEMENT

OF

CUSTOMER

DELIGHT

Chapter 7

MANAGEMENT OF CUSTOMER DELIGHT

Customer delight is highly important for any firm or hotel for gaining and maintaining loyal customers and for higher profitability and sustainability in the future. Thus, management of customer delight in the hospitality industry, particularly in hotels, is an important issue. This chapter emphasizes on the development of strategy for management of customer delight through reenacted delight and transitory delight, and skilled and well trained employees in hotels in North East India. Initially, this chapter attempts to provide an insight on staggered delivery of customer delight in hotels which is possible through reenacted delight and transitory delight. Thereafter, this chapter tries to present an understanding on continuous delivery of customer delight in hotels in North East India which is achievable through skilled and well trained employees involving reenacted delight and transitory delight.

7.1 Importance of Management of Customer Delight:

Customer delight in any hotel can be obtained by providing attractive additional features along with the basic hotel service (Crotts and Magnini 719; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 462; Keiningham, Goddard, Vavra and Laci 54-64; Keiningham and Vavra 25; Kumar, Olshavsky and King 14; Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler and Pandit 100-101). This can be clearly depicted with the help of a balloon (Fig. 7.1). The basic attributes (features) of the hotel service are located at the centre while the satisfier features have been depicted in the Satisfier
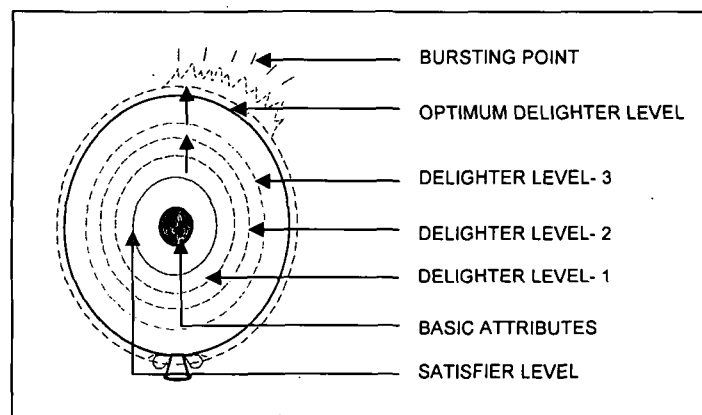
Fig. 7.1. Balloon Model of Optimum Delighter Level

level surrounding it. The surprising unexpected features of the hotel service that provides delight are indicated by the Delighter level-1 surrounding the Satisfier

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level. The Delighter level-2, Delighter level-3 and beyond indicates the successive levels of delight from the services for any guest. However, in every successive visit, the same guests expect the earlier delighter features for his/her satisfaction (Rust and Oliver 88). In this manner, their expectations keep on increasing. The direction of the arrows indicates the increase of the delighter level of guests (indicated as increase in size of the balloon through blowing of air). This is due to the increase in the expectation level of the guests resulting from surprising unexpected delighter features. As the hotels continue to fulfill such increase in guests' expectations, their profitability may be affected negatively in the future through increase in costs (White 16). Therefore, there is a limit to which the hotels can keep on delighting their guests keeping in view the constraints of costs and profitability. In Fig. 7.1, the maximum size of the balloon indicates the Optimum Delighter Level (which is the optimum size of the balloon that can be obtained by blowing of air). If the balloon is blown beyond this level, it may burst (at the Bursting Point). In short, if the hotels keep on delighting the same guests beyond this level, it may seriously affect their profitability due to higher costs incurred in delighter features.

This problem of management of customer delight may be tackled by the following two pronged strategies as per the viewpoints of various scholars:

i. Staggered delivery of customer delight through the following (Rust and Oliver 88):

    a) Reenacted delight (by providing similar value addition during guests' subsequent visits to the hotels) (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1).

    b) Transitory delight (by offering changes in value addition during guests' subsequent visits to the hotels) (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1).

ii. Continuous delivery of customer delight through skilled and well trained hotel employees involving Reenacted delight and Transitory delight (Rust and Oliver 88; Torres and Kline 290-300) (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1 and section 4.1 in Chapter 4).

7.2 Strategy for Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight:

As discussed in section 7.1, the role of staggered delivery of customer delight in hotels as a possible strategy for its management has been studied in the sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2.

7.2.1 Management of Customer Delight through Reenacted Delight:

The study deals with the establishment of a strategy for management of customer delight in hospitality industry, particularly in the hotels in North East India, through reenacted delight as discussed in section 1.1 of Chapter 1. As per the studies of Rust and Oliver (88), guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels, their expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits, and their resultant happiness and likelihood of staying in their same preferred hotels during their next visits may form a basis for any proposed strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight (refer to section 1.1 in Chapter 1). The following analysis is carried out to form a basis for such a future strategy (refer to sections 7.2.1.1 to 7.2.1.4).

7.2.1.1 Similar Value Addition and Pleasant Surprises:

The study involves measurement of similar value addition during the guests' subsequent visits to the hotels among the 46 common hospitality variables that may lead to customer delight (refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in chapter 4). The study also includes measurement of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels. These form a basis of reenacted delight in hotels as discussed in section 7.2.1 in this Chapter.

One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) is conducted to find out whether the means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises differ across their responses if they ever expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels. For this purpose, the variable, respondents' regular expectation of pleasant surprises is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is treated as the independent variable (refer to Question No.20 and 25 respectively in the questionnaire given in Appendix-I).

Table 7.1 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels is rejected (*p*-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are

Table 7.1 ANOVA - Similar Value Addition and Regular Expectation of Pleasant Surprises

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.002	2	14.001	7.658	0.000
Within Groups	128.447	162	0.793		
Total	156.448	164			

significant differences among the means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises across their responses if they are expecting similar value addition during their subsequent visits to the hotels.

It is to be noted from Table 7.2 and Fig. 7.2 that the mean of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises at the hotels is highest across their responses if they are sometimes expecting similar value addition during their subsequent visits to the

Table 7.2 Mean of Regular Expectation of Pleasant Surprises across Levels of Expectation of Similar Value Addition

	Levels of Similar Value Addition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Rarely expecting	9	-0.78	0.67
2	Sometimes expecting	125	0.83	0.79
3	Always expecting	31	0.23	1.26
	Total	165	0.63	0.98

hotels. This mean is lowest if they are rarely expecting similar value addition during their next visits to the hotels. Descriptive data in Table 7.2 indicate almost positive relationship between levels of regular expectations of pleasant surprises and levels of expectations of similar value addition during subsequent visits. This means that those guests who have high regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels may sometimes expect similar value addition during their subsequent visits. However, those guests who have low regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the

Fig. 7.2. Mean of Regular Expectation of Pleasant Surprises across Levels of Expectation of Similar Value Addition

hotels may rarely expect such similar value addition. As presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case, Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are conducted. The results are shown in Table A.6 in the Appendix-IV. It is observed that significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels with respect to different levels of their expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits.

The above observations from One-way ANOVA have clearly highlighted that if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among guests in the hotels on a regular basis, they sometimes expect similar value addition during their subsequent visits there. Therefore, this relationship can form the initial basis of a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight. In

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a similar manner, One-way ANOVA has been used to analyze the nature of relationship between the other pairs of variables for management of customer delight through reenacted delight in the hotels in sections 7.2.1.2 to 7.2.1.4 (as indicated in section 7.2.1).

7.2.1.2 Similar Value Addition and Guests' Profiles:

The study also attempts to analyze whether there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their profiles. This is essential to find out which group of guests has higher or lower expectation of such similar value addition. Thereby, this can facilitate the development of a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight. The analyses are discussed from section 7.2.1.2(a) to 7.2.1.2(h).

7.2.1.2(a) Similar Value Addition and Gender:

The study also tries to assess whether there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their gender. As stated earlier, guests' expectation of similar value addition during their next visits form a basis of reenacted delight in hotels.

An Independent sample t-test at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) is carried out to determine whether the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels differ across their gender. Therefore, the variable, respondent guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is treated as the test variable (dependent variable) while the variable, respondents' gender is taken as the grouping variable (independent variable).

The Table 7.3 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their ensuing visits to the hotels across their gender cannot be rejected (p-value= 0.454 more than α= 0.05). This indicates that guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels has no connection with their gender.

Table 7.3 Independent Sample t-test - Gender and Similar Value Addition

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Levels of Similar Value Addition	Equal variances assumed	1.063	0.303	-0.749	459	0.454
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.784	118.127	0.434

Hence, guests' gender may not be given higher emphasis while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

In a similar manner, the nature of relationship between guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits and their marital status has been analysed using independent sample t-test as shown in section 7.2.1.2(b).

7.2.1.2(b) Similar Value Addition and Marital Status:

The results of Independent sample t-test at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) indicates that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their ensuing visits to the hotels across their marital status cannot be rejected (p-value= 0.626 more than α= 0.05). This implies that guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels has no links with their marital status.

So, guests' marital status may not be given higher importance while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

7.2.1.2(c) Similar Value Addition and Sectors of Employment:

The study also attempts to determine whether there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their sectors of employment.

A One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) is carried out to determine whether the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels differ across their sectors of employment. Therefore, the variable, respondent guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' sectors of employment is taken as the independent variable.

The Table 7.4 shows that the p-value= 0.051 is marginally greater than α= 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests'

expection of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their sectors

Table 7.4 ANOVA - Sectors of Employment and Similar Value Addition

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.831	4	1.958	2.374	0.051
Within Groups	375.970	456	0.824		
Total	383.800	460			

of employment can be rejected. This means that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with regard to their sectors of employment.

It is noticed from Table 7.5 that the mean of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests

Table 7.5 Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Sectors of Employment

	Sectors of Employment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Private Sector Employees	261	0.94	0.85
2	Public Sector Employees	70	0.76	1.12
3	Entrepreneurs	53	0.70	0.87
4	Self Employed/ Professional	42	0.90	1.10
5	Others	35	1.23	0.60
Total		461	0.90	0.91

who are employed in other sectors (other than private sector or public sector or being entrepreneurs or being self employed/ professional). The same mean is lowest across those guests' who are entrepreneurs. This shows that those guests' who have highest level of expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels are employed in other sectors. As such category of guests is difficult to define, their inclusion may create dilemma while forming any strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight. Therefore, such guests may not be targeted in this regard.

In a similar manner, One-way ANOVA is carried out to determine whether the guests' place of work, place of residence, purpose of visit, educational qualification, age group and monthly income have to be emphasized while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight. The results are explained in the sections 7.2.1.2(d) to 7.2.1.2(h) below.

7.2.1.2(d) Similar Value Addition and Places of Residence:

The outcome of One-way ANOVA shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their places of residence is rejected (p-value= 0.034 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the

means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to their places of residence.

It is observed from Table 7.6 that the mean of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests who are residing in foreign countries and lowest across those guests who are residing inside North East India. This reveals that those guests' who have highest level of expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels are residing in foreign countries. Hence, such guests'

Table 7.6 Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Places of Residence

	Places of Residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Inside North East India	247	0.81	0.97
2	Outside North East India	195	1.01	0.86
3	In foreign country	19	1.16	0.37
Total		461	0.90	0.91

have to be targeted while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

The outcome of the above analysis shows that if hotel guests are residing in foreign countries, they are likely to expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits. Hence, this should be emphasized while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

7.2.1.2(e) Similar Value Addition and Purposes of Visit:

One-way ANOVA results indicate that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their purposes of visit is rejected (p-value= 0.012 less than α= 0.05). Hence, there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels in relation to their purposes of visit.

It is noticed from Table 7.7 that the mean of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests who have visited due to other purposes (other than for official or leisure purposes or both). The same mean is lowest across those

Table 7.7 Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Purposes of Visit

	Purposes of Visit	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Official	152	1.03	0.86
2	Leisure	165	0.93	0.92
3	Both official and leisure	125	0.69	1.00
4	Others	19	1.11	0.32
Total		461	0.90	0.91

guests who have visited for both official and leisure purposes. This indicates that

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those guests who have highest level of expectation of similar value addition have visited due to other purposes. It is difficult to define such category of guests. So, their inclusion may lead to impasse while forming any strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight. So, such guests may not be targeted in such a strategy.

7.2.1.2(f) Similar Value Addition and Educational Qualification:

The outcome of One-way ANOVA shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their educational qualification cannot be rejected (p-value= 0.440 is more than α= 0.05). This means that there is no significant difference between the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their next visits to the hotels in relation to their educational qualification. This implies that guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits has no effect on their educational qualification. This means that guests' educational qualification may not be given high emphasis while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

7.2.1.2(g) Similar Value Addition and Age Group:

The outcome of One-way ANOVA indicates that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to their age groups is rejected (p-value= 0.002 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their age groups.

It is observed from Table 7.8 that the mean of guests' expectation of same value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is high for respondents who are below 20 years and between 20 to 30 years in age and low for respondents who are between 41 to 50 years in age. Although the mean for "below 20 years" is

Table 7.8 Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Age Groups

	Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Below 20 years	5	1.20	0.45
2	Between 20 to 30 years	123	1.17	0.70
3	Between 31 to 40 years	136	0.88	0.89
4	Between 41 to 50 years	153	0.74	1.01
5	Between 51 to 60 years	44	0.77	1.05
Total		461	0.90	0.91

highest across the categories, since this group consists of only 5 respondents, we may not give high emphasis on this. Since the presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case, Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are conducted. The results reproduced in Table A.7 in Annexure-IV show that no significant pairwise differences exists between the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition across guests who are below 20 years in age and those between 20 to 30 years in age. So, these two groups may be treated as one. This verifies that guests below 30 years in age have to be given high importance while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

The above outcome of One-way ANOVA shows that if hotel guests are below 30 years in age, they are more likely to expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits. Therefore, this should be emphasized while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

7.2.1.2(h) Similar Value Addition and Monthly Income:

One-way ANOVA results confirm that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their monthly income is rejected (p-value= 0.009 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to their monthly income.

It is found from Table 7.9 that the mean of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests who have monthly income less than Rs.12,000 and lowest across those respondents who have

Table 7.9 Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Monthly Income

	Monthly Income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Less then Rs.12,000	38	1.13	0.53
2	Between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000	40	0.88	0.69
3	Between Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000	.135	1.05	0.82
4	Between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000	151	0.71	1.09
5	Between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000	44	0.70	1.00
6	Above Rs.1,50,000	44	0.98	0.73
Total		452	0.89	0.91

monthly income between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000. This indicates that those guests who have highest level of expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels have monthly income less than Rs.12,000. This means

that this category of guests has to be given high importance while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

The above result of One-way ANOVA highlights that if hotel guests earn below Rs.12,000 per month, they are highly likely to expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits. So, this should be focused while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight.

7.2.1.3 Happiness and Similar Value Addition:

The outcome of One-way ANOVA indicates that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits across their responses if they are ever happy in the hotels due to such value addition is rejected (p-value less than $\alpha= 0.05$). This means that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their repeat visits with respect to such happiness.

It is to be observed from Table 7.10 and Fig. 7.3 that the mean of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits is high across their responses if they are always happy in their preferred hotels and low if they are sometimes happy and rarely happy in

Table 7.10 Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Levels of Happiness

Levels of Happiness		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Rarely happy	5	-1.00	0.00
2	Sometimes happy	138	0.59	1.02
3	Always happy	313	1.10	0.77
Total		456	0.92	0.90

their preferred hotels. It is seen that the mean for "rarely happy" is lowest across the categories. However, since this group consists of only 5 respondents, we may not give high emphasis on this. The descriptive data in Table 7.10 shows a positive relationship between levels of expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits and levels of happiness. This shows that those guests' who have high expectation of such similar value addition are likely to be always happy
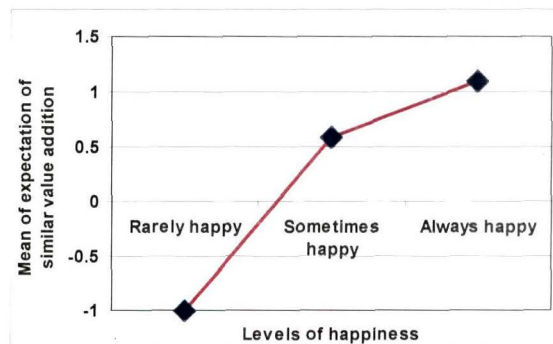
Fig. 7.3. Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Levels of Happiness

if they find the expected value addition. Again, those guests who have low expectation of such similar value addition are less likely to be happy in their

preferred hotels if they do not find the expected value addition. Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are conducted as presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case. Post Hoc Test reproduced in Table A.8 in the Appendix-IV indicate that significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to different levels of their happiness.

The above observations from One-way ANOVA clearly indicate that there remains a positive relationship between guests' happiness and their expectation of similar value addition. So, if hotels want to make the guests happy, they are to take recourse to reenacted delight.

7.2.1.4 Likelihood to stay in the Same Preferred Hotels and Similar Value Addition:

The results of One-way ANOVA indicate a p-value= 0.000 which is less than $\alpha= 0.05$. This shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits across their responses if they are ever likely to stay in the same preferred hotels due to such value addition is rejected. Thereby, there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of such similar value addition in relation to their likelihood to stay in these hotels due to such value addition.

Table 7.11 *Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Levels of Likelihood to stay in the Same Preferred Hotels*

	Levels of Likelihood to stay in the Same Preferred Hotels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Rarely stay	8	-0.25	1.04
2	Sometimes stay	166	0.71	0.91
3	Always stay	254	1.17	0.78
Total		428	0.96	0.88

It is observed from Table 7.11 and Fig. 7.4 that the mean of guests' expectation of similar value addition is highest across their responses if they are always likely to stay in their same preferred hotels and lowest if they are rarely likely to stay in their same preferred hotels. Table 7.11 shows a positive relationship between levels of guests' expectations of similar value addition in their next

Fig. 7.4. *Mean of Expectation of Similar Value Addition across Levels of Likelihood to stay in the Same Preferred Hotels*

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visits to hotels and levels of their resultant likelihood to stay in the same preferred hotels during these visits. This means that those guests who have higher expectation of such similar value addition are always likely to stay in their same preferred hotels during their next visit. Further, those guests who have low expectation of such similar value addition are less likely to stay in their same preferred hotels during their next visit. Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are performed since the presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case. The outcome in Table A.9 in the Appendix-IV show that significant pairwise differences exists among these means with respect to different levels of guests' likelihood to stay in these hotels in their subsequent visits. But, no such differences exist between their likelihood to sometimes and rarely stay in their preferred hotels in their next visits. This means that these two levels can be treated as equal.

The above observations from One-way ANOVA clearly show the presence of a positive relation between guests' likelihood to stay in their same preferred hotels and their expectation of similar value addition. Therefore, hotels should take note of the fact that reenacted delight is a promising means for ensuring repeat visits among guests.

Summary of the analysis in section 7.2.1:

It is found from the above discussion that, if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among guests in hotels on a regular basis, they sometimes expect similar value addition during their subsequent visits there. It is also found that if guests in the hotels always expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits, there are greater probabilities that they are always happy. It is further noticed that if guests in the hotels always expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits, there are high possibilities that they will always stay there in their successive visits. It is also finally observed that there is satisfactory correlation between happiness of the guests in the hotels due to similar value addition in their subsequent visits, and their likelihood to stay in the same hotels ($r = 0.672$). In this manner, guest loyalty and customer delight is maintained in future. If these observations are verified one by one, it is evident that this can be the basis of any future strategy for maintenance of customer delight in hotels in North East India through reenacted delight. This is depicted in Fig. 7.5.

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│  │ IF THERE ARE HIGHER  │          │ GUESTS SOMETIMES     │              │
│  │ EXPECTATIONS OF      │   ━━▶    │ EXPECT SIMILAR VALUE │              │
│  │ PLEASANT SURPRISES   │          │ ADDITION DURING      │              │
│  │ AMONG THE GUESTS IN  │          │ THEIR SUBSEQUENT     │              │
│  │ THE HOTELS ON A      │          │ VISITS               │              │
│  │ REGULAR BASIS        │          └──────────────────────┘              │
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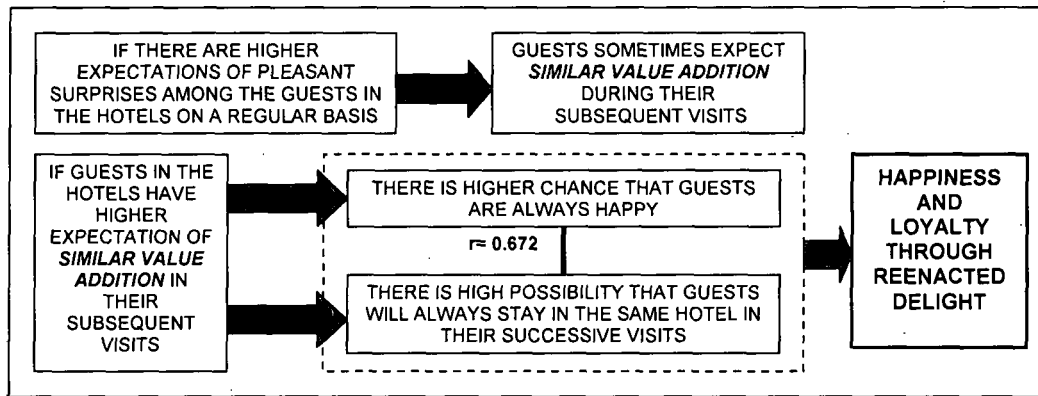
Fig. 7.5. Strategy for Maintenance of Customer Delight in Hotels through Reenacted Delight

The following groups of hotel guests are found to be sensitive towards reenacted delight in hotels in North East India:

i.   Guests residing in foreign countries, *or*

ii.   Guests below 30 years in age, *or*

iii. Guests having monthly income less than Rs.12,000/-

Therefore, the above segments of hotel guests may be targeted for management of customer delight in hotels in North East India through reenacted delight.

7.2.2 Management of Customer Delight through Transitory Delight:

The study focuses on the creation of a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels in North East India with the help of transitory delight. The theory is discussed in section 1.1 of Chapter 1. As per the views of Rust and Oliver (88), guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels, their expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits, and their resultant happiness and likelihood to stay in their same preferred hotels during their next visits may form a foundation for any future strategy for maintenance of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight. For this purpose, the following analysis is carried out in a similar manner as in sections 7.2.1.1 to 7.2.1.4 to formulate the basis of such a future strategy (refer to sections 7.2.2.1 to 7.2.2.4).

7.2.2.1 Changes in Value Addition and Pleasant Surprises:

The outcome of One-way ANOVA indicates that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the

hotels across their responses if they are expecting changes in value addition during their subsequent visits is rejected (p-value= 0.040 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises at the hotels with respect to their expectations of changes in value addition during their repeat visits.

It is seen from Table 7.12 and Fig. 7.6 that the mean of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises at the hotels is highest across their responses if they are sometimes expecting changes in value addition during their subsequent visits to the hotels and lowest if they are always expecting changes

Table 7.12 Mean of Regular Expectation of Pleasant Surprises across Levels of Expectations of Changes in Value Addition

	Levels of Expectations of Changes in Value Addition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Rarely expecting	24	0.33	1.20
2	Sometimes expecting	122	0.73	0.86
3	Always expecting	9	0.11	1.05
Total		155	0.63	0.95

in value addition during such visits. Descriptive data in Table 7.12 indicate a near positive relationship between levels of regular expectations of pleasant surprises and levels of expectations of changes in value addition. This implies that those guests who have high regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels may sometimes expect changes in value addition during their next visits. On the other hand, those guests who have low regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels may always expect such changes in value addition. Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are carried out because the presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case. The outcome is shown in Table A.10 in Appendix-IV. These indicate
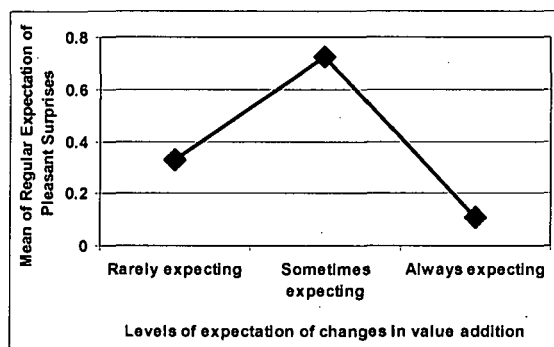
Fig. 7.6. Mean of Regular Expectation of Pleasant Surprises across Levels of Expectations of Changes in Value Addition

that no significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' regular expectation of pleasant surprises in the hotels with respect to different levels of their expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits. This means that each of these levels can be treated as one level.

The above observations from One-way ANOVA have clearly shown that if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among guests in hotels on a

regular basis, they sometimes expect changes in value addition during their subsequent visits there. So, this relationship can form the initial basis of a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.2.2.2 Changes in Value Addition and Guests' Profiles:

The study also tries to examine whether there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits across their profiles. This is essential to find out which group of guests has higher or lower expectation of such changes in value addition. Transitory delight can be managed if the same significant findings based on these profiles are established. The analyses have been conducted using Independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA as in sections 7.2.1.2(a) to 7.2.1.2(h). These are discussed in the following sections 7.2.2.2(a) to 7.2.2.2(h).

7.2.2.2(a) Changes in Value Addition and Gender:

The results of Independent sample t-test show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their gender is rejected (p-value=0.013 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there is significant difference between the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their next visits to the hotels across their gender.

It is evident from Table 7.13 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across female guests and lowest across male guests. This shows that those guests' who have highest level of

Table 7.13 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Gender

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Male	275	0.20	1.26
2	Female	47	0.60	0.92

expectation of changes in value addition in their next visits to the hotels are females. Therefore, female guests' have to be highly emphasized while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.2.2.2(b) Changes in Value Addition and Marital Status:

The outcome of Independent sample t-test shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their

ensuing visits to the hotels across their marital status is rejected (*p*-value=0.027 is less than α= 0.05). This implies that there is significant difference between the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels in relation to their marital status.

It is found from Table 7.14 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests who are single and lowest across those guests who are married. This reveals that those guests who have highest level of expectation of changes in value addition in their next visits to the hotels are single. Therefore, single (unmarried) guests have to be targeted while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

Table 7.14 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Marital Status

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Single	102	0.47	1.10
2	Married	220	0.16	1.27

7.2.2.2(c) Changes in Value Addition and Sectors of Employment:

One-way ANOVA shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their sectors of employment is rejected (*p*-value= 0.045 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their next visits to the hotels with respect to their sectors of employment.

It is seen from Table 7.15 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests who are working in public sector and lowest across those guests who are engaged as entrepreneurs. This shows that those guests' who have highest level of expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels are working in public sector.

The above result of One-way ANOVA highlights that if hotel guests are public sector employees, they are

Table 7.15 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Sectors of Employment

	Sectors of Employment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Private Sector Employees	193	0.24	1.18
2	Public Sector Employees	47	0.60	0.85
3	Entrepreneurs	36	-0.14	1.62
4	Self Employed/Professional	20	0.00	1.72
5	Others	26	0.54	0.86
Total		322	0.26	1.22

highly likely to expect changes in value addition in their subsequent visits. So, this

should be focused while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.2.2.2(d) Changes in Value Addition and Places of Residence:

The outcome of One-way ANOVA indicates that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their places of residence is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their next visits to the hotels with respect to their places of residence.

It is noticed from Table 7.16 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across those guests who are residing in foreign countries and lowest across those guests who are residing outside North East India. It is to be noted in Table 7.16 that there are only 4 sample respondents residing in foreign countries.

Table 7.16 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Places of Residence

	Places of Residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Inside North East India	197	0.49	1.12
2	Outside North East India	121	-0.14	1.30
3	In foreign country	4	1.00	0.00
Total		322	0.26	1.22

However, since the sample for this study consists of few such respondents, it may be considered prudent to emphasize on these 4 respondents in this analysis. This analysis shows that those guests who have highest level of expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels are residing in foreign countries.

The above discussion indicates that if hotel guests reside in foreign countries, they are more likely to expect changes in value addition in their subsequent visits.

7.2.2.2(e) Changes in Value Addition and Purposes of Visit:

One-way ANOVA outcome shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their purposes of visit is rejected (p-value= 0.044 less than α= 0.05). This means that significant differences exist among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in relation to their purposes of visit.

It is observed from Table 7.17 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest for guests visiting for leisure purposes and lowest for guests who visit for other purposes (other than for official or leisure purposes or for both

Table 7.17 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Purposes of Visit

	Purposes of visit	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Official	103	0.17	1.24
2	Leisure	119	0.43	1.09
3	Both official and leisure	85	0.26	1.33
4	Others	15	-0.47	1.30
Total		322	0.26	1.22

purposes). This reveals that those guests who have highest level of expectation of changes in value addition are leisure tourists.

The above analysis highlights that if guests visit hotels for leisure purposes, they are highly likely to expect changes in value addition in their subsequent visits. Hence, this should be focused while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.2.2.2(f) Changes in Value Addition and Educational Qualification:

The results of One-way ANOVA indicate that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their educational qualification cannot be rejected (p-value= 0.348 more than α= 0.05). This denotes that there are no significant differences among guests' average expectation of such changes across their educational qualification. This implies that educational qualification of guests may not have any effect on changes in value addition.

7.2.2.2(g) Changes in Value Addition and Age Group:

One-way ANOVA results indicate that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their age groups is rejected (p-value= 0.003 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to their age groups.

It is observed from Table 7.18 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is highest across

those guests who are below 20 years and between 51 to 60 years in age and lowest across those guests who are between 41 to 50 years in age. It is found that the mean for "below 20 years" is highest across the categories. Since this group consists of only 4 respondents, it may not be emphasized.

Table 7.18 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Age Groups

	Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Below 20 years	4	1.00	0.00
2	Between 20 to 30 years	107	0.36	1.17
3	Between 31 to 40 years	84	0.11	1.15
4	Between 41 to 50 years	100	0.06	1.38
5	Between 51 to 60 years	27	1.00	0.68
Total		322	0.26	1.22

The above outcome of One-way ANOVA shows that if hotel guests are between 51 to 60 years in age, they are more likely to expect changes in value addition in their next visits. Therefore, this should be focused while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.2.2.2(h) Changes in Value Addition and Monthly Income:

One-way ANOVA results show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels across their monthly income is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of such changes in value addition in relation to their monthly income.

It is found from Table 7.19 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their ensuing visits to the hotels is highest for guests having monthly income above Rs.1,50,000 and lowest for guests who have monthly income between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000. This indicates that those guests' who have highest level of expectation of such

Table 7.19 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Monthly Income

	Monthly Income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Less then Rs.12,000	32	0.72	0.89
2	Between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000	33	-0.18	1.42
3	Between Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000	110	0.33	1.08
4	Between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000	92	0.27	1.14
5	Between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000	30	-0.70	1.70
6	Above Rs.1,50,000	25	1.08	0.28
Total		322	0.26	1.22

changes in value addition have monthly income above Rs.1,50,000. This signifies that this type of guests have to be targeted while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.2.2.3 Happiness and Changes in Value Addition:

The results of One-way ANOVA show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits across their stated happiness level due to such value addition is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition with respect to their responses on their resultant happiness level in the hotels.

It is found from Table 7.20 and Fig. 7.7 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits is high across their responses if they are always happy with their preferred hotels and low if they are rarely happy and never happy with their preferred hotels. Even though the mean

Table 7.20 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Levels of Happiness

Levels of Happiness		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Never happy	4	-2.00	0.00
2	Rarely happy	17	-1.47	0.51
3	Sometimes happy	147	0.54	0.95
4	Always happy	105	0.94	0.68
Total		273	0.53	1.04
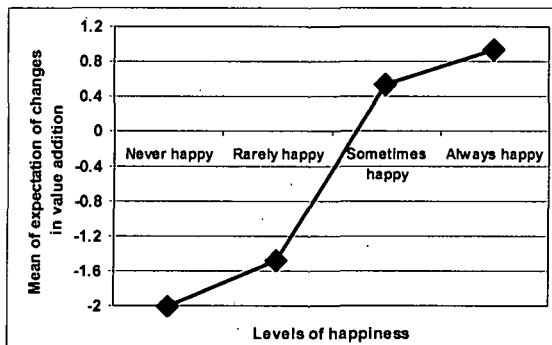
for "never happy" is lowest across the categories, it is seen that this group consists of only 4 respondents. So, we may not give high emphasis on this. Table 7.20 shows a positive relationship between levels of guests' expectations of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits and levels of resultant happiness. This means that those guests' who have high expectation of such changes in value addition may have greater chances of being always happy with their preferred hotels. In

Fig. 7.7. Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Levels of Happiness

addition, those guests' who have low expectation of such changes in value addition in their next visits have lesser possibility of being happy with their preferred hotels. Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are carried out as presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case. The results in Table A.11 in the Appendix-IV indicate that significant pairwise differences exists among the means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to different levels of their happiness.

The above analysis clearly reflects a positive relation between guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits, and their resultant happiness in hotels. Therefore, hotels should focus on transitory delight to make their guests happy.

7.2.2.4 Likelihood to Stay in the Same Preferred Hotels and Changes in Value Addition:

One-way ANOVA results show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits across their responses on their resultant likelihood to stay in the same preferred hotels is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05).

It is found from Table 7.21 and Fig. 7.8 that the mean of guests' expectation of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits is highest across their responses if they are always likely to stay in their same preferred hotels and lowest if they are never likely to stay in such hotels. Table 7.21 shows a positive relationship between levels of guests'

Table 7.21 Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Levels of Likelihood to stay in the Same Preferred Hotels

Levels of Likelihood among the Guests to stay in their Preferred Hotels		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Never stay	10	-2.00	0.00
2	Rarely stay	33	-0.33	1.05
3	Sometimes stay	162	0.65	0.89
4	Always stay	61	0.95	0.67
Total		266	0.50	1.05

expectation of changes in value addition in their next visits and levels of their resultant likelihood to stay in their same preferred hotels in these visits. This implies that those guests' who have high expectation of such changes in value addition are highly likely to always stay in their same preferred hotels during their next visits. Besides, those guests' who have low expectation of such changes in value addition are less likely to stay in such hotels during their ensuing visits. As presence of equal variance cannot be assumed in this case, Games-Howell Post Hoc tests are conducted. The outcome in Table A.12 in the Appendix-IV show that significant pairwise differences exist among the means of guests' expectation of
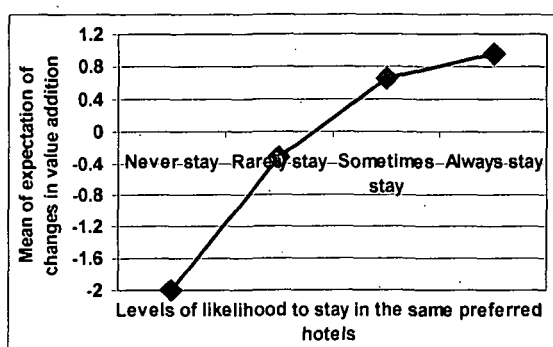
Fig. 7.8. Mean of Expectation of Changes in Value Addition across Levels of Likelihood to stay in the Same Preferred Hotels

changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels with respect to different levels of their likelihood to stay in their same preferred hotels in these visits.

The above observations clearly signify that guests' expectations of changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to hotels, and their resultant likelihood to stay there in such visits are positively related. So, hotels should stress upon transitory delight for ensuring repeat visits among guests..

Summary of the analysis in section 7.2.2:

It is found from the above analysis that if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among guests in hotels on a regular basis, they sometimes expect changes in value addition during their subsequent visits there. It is also observed that if guests in the hotels always expect changes in value addition in their next visits, there are greater chances that they are always happy. It is further seen that if guests in the hotels always expect changes in value addition in their next visits, there are high potential that they will always stay there in their consecutive visits. Besides, a satisfactory correlation in seen between guests' happiness due to changes in value addition in their ensuing visits, and their likelihood to stay in their same preferred hotels in their subsequent visits ($r= 0.802$). In this way, guest loyalty and customer delight is maintained in future. If these observations are checked one by one, it is obvious that this can be the foundation of a proposed strategy for maintenance of customer delight in hotels in North East India through transitory delight (refer to Fig. 7.9).
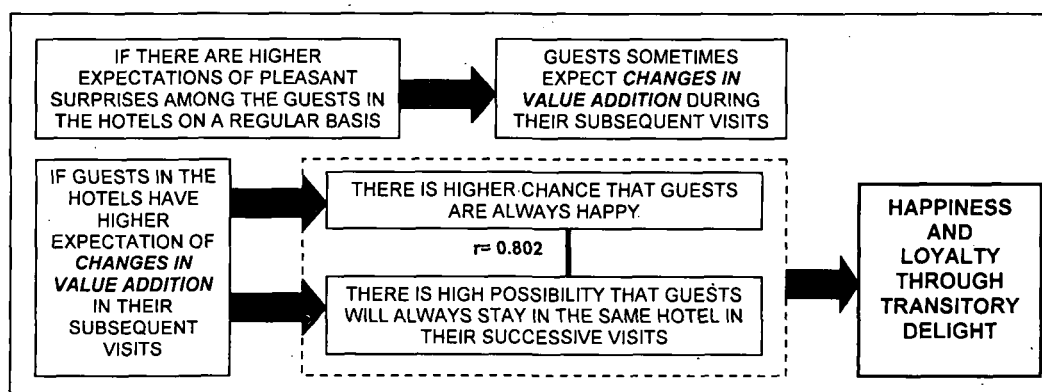
Fig. 7.9. Strategy for Maintenance of Customer Delight in Hotels through Transitory Delight

It is noticed that the following groups of hotel guests are sensitive towards transitory delight in hotels:

i.   Female guests, *or;*

ii.   Single (unmarried) guests, *or*

iii. Guests working in public sector, *or*

iv.   Guests residing in foreign countries, *or*

v.   Guests visiting the hotels for leisure purposes, *or*

vi.   Guest between 51 to 60 years in age, *or*

vii. Guests having monthly income above Rs.1,50,000/-

Hence, the above segments of hotel guests may be targeted for maintenance of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight.

7.3 Strategy for Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight:

Continuous delivery of customer delight in hotels can be a possible strategy for its management. This is possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees involving reenacted and transitory delight. This is evident through the works of various scholars as discussed in section 1.1 in Chapter 1 and section 4.1 in Chapter 4 (Rust and Oliver 88; Torres and Kline 290-300). This can be done through proper Human Resource Management policy in any hotel. These points have been explained in section 7.3.1.

7.3.1 Management of Customer Delight through Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees:

The study involves development of a strategy for management of customer delight in hospitality industry, particularly in the hotels in North East India, through skilled and well trained hotel employees (as stated in the literature review in section 1.1 of chapter 1). It is to be noted that management of the following 7 variables that may lead to customer delight in hotels out of 46 common hospitality variables (already discussed in section 4.3.2.7(a) in Chapter 4) are directly possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees as observed in the literature review:

i.   Helpful pre transaction information

ii.   Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff

iii. Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service

iv.   Special attention

v.   Courtesy of the hotel staff

vi.   Language proficiency of the hotel staff

vii. Neat appearance of staff

The study also tries to find the variables that are repeatedly focused by the respondent guests in the hotels out of the above 7 common hospitality variables (possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees) that may result in customer delight in North East India by a question (refer to Question no.23 in the questionnaire given in the Appendix-I). This is done in order to determine the important variables for customer delight that are stressed upon by the hotel guests. The Fig. 7.10 indicates the frequency of repetition of these 7 variables by the respondent guests in the hotels.

A- Helpful pre transaction information
B- Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff
C- Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service
D- Special attention

E- Courtesy of the hotel staff
F- Language proficiency of the hotel staff
G- Neat appearance of staff
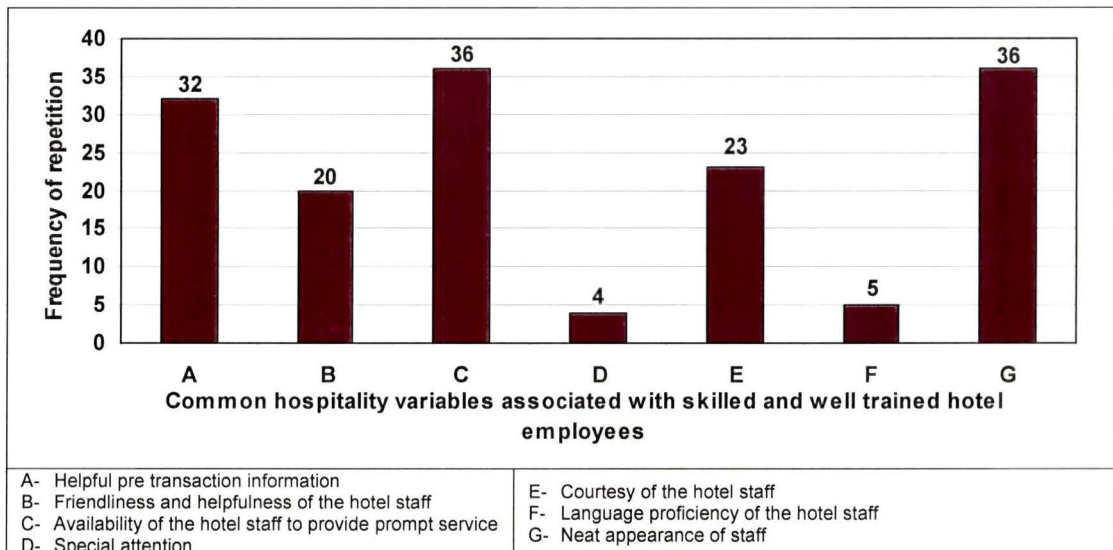
Fig. 7.10. Repetition of Common Hospitality Variables Associated with Skilled and Well Trained Employees in the Hotels

It is observed from Fig. 7.10 that the following common hospitality variables (that may result in customer delight and which are possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees) are mainly emphasized by guests in hotels in North East India:

i.   Helpful pre transaction information

ii.   Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service

iii. Neat appearance of staff

Therefore, hotels should always focus on these common hospitality variables so as to provide a delighting experience for their guests. The role of these variables

on overall customer delight management through reenacted delight and transitory delight are discussed in the sections 7.3.1.1 to 7.3.1.3.

7.3.1.1 Factors Analysis Results for Variables Associated with Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees:

Factor Analysis (through Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation) is carried out on all the above 7 important common hospitality variables associated with skilled and well trained employees in the stated hotels (refer to Fig. 7.4). Such variables may result in customer delight in the stated hotels. Factor Analysis is conducted to reduce these 7 variables into few composite dimensions. This is done to find out a few dimensions underlying the original variables (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson 329, 334-335).

The first factor labeled as "Responsiveness" includes 4 items as shown in Table 7.22 (also refer to Table A.13 in Appendix-IV). It has a high Reliability Coefficient of 0.803. The second factor labeled as "Presentability" consisting of 3 items as shown in Table 7.22, has a high Reliability Coefficient of 0.705. Thereby, only two factors have been utilized for further analysis.

In all the items in these factors, Hotelling's T-squared Test showed significance (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This showed that all items in the scale do not have the same mean (Hair et al. 329, 334-335).

Table 7.22 Final Factors in case of All Variables Associated with Skilled and Well Trained Employees in Hotels

Responsiveness	Loadings
Special Attention	0.889
Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel staff	0.878
Courtesy of hotel staff	0.746
Helpful pre transaction information	0.559
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.803	
Presentability	**Loadings**
Neat appearance of staff	0.781
Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	0.778
Language proficiency of the hotel staff	0.719
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.705	

It is to be noted that the above factors have eigenvalues greater than 1. The above extracted 2 factors explains 66.28% of the total variance

Table 7.23 Total Variance Explained in case of All Variables Associated with Skilled and Well Trained Employees in Hotels

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative percentage
1	3.56	50.79	50.79
2	1.08	15.49	**66.28**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

(refer to Table 7.23). This is feasible since it has been suggested that the factors should account for at least 60% of the total variance (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Hair et. al. 103; Malhotra 612, 615). Next, two measures are used to examine the appropriateness of the factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is found to be 0.824. This shows that that the data is suitable for Factor Analysis (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Hair et al. 99; Malhotra 612, 614). Besides, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is found to be significant (p-value = 0.000 less than α= 0.05) which indicates that the correlation matrix is not orthogonal and is appropriate for factoring (Chawla and Sondhi 489-521; Hair et al. 99; Malhotra 612, 614).

Final Factors in case of Skilled and Well Trained Employees and Guests' Profiles:

The study attempts to test the presence of significant differences among the means of the scores of guests' perception regarding the above mentioned final 2 factors associated with skilled and well trained employees in hotels with respect to guests' profiles. This is required to find out which group of guests has higher or lower perception regarding these factors in hotels. This can also help in the development of a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through reenacted and transitory delight. The analyses have been conducted using Independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) in sections 7.3.1.1(a) to 7.3.1.1(h) (as in the earlier sections 7.2.1.2(a) to 7.2.1.2(h)).

Respondent guests' perceptions of the above mentioned final 2 factors associated with skilled and well trained employees in hotels have been represented as factor scores for each factor. Such factor scores are calculated for each of these factors using weighted average of the factor loadings as shown in the following formula, adapted from Sarma (110).

$$\text{Weighted Factor Score} = \frac{\Sigma\,(\text{Loading } V_{ij})^2 \times (\text{Score } V_{ij})}{\Sigma\,(\text{Loading } V_{ij})^2} \quad\quad\dots\dots\dots\dots(7.i)$$

Where, Loading V_{ij} = Loading of the variable i under Factor j

Score V_{ij} = Score of respondents against raw variable i under Factor j

In this way, the weighted means of the scores of respondent guests' perception for each new factor have been determined by the above formula. These factors scores are used in the following analysis as discussed in the following sections 7.3.1.1(a) to 7.3.1.1(h).

7.3.1.1(a) Final Factors and Gender:

An Independent sample t-test is carried out to determine whether the means of the scores of guests' perception regarding the first factor, Responsiveness (in case of well trained and skilled hotel employees) differ across their gender. So, the variable, factor scores of respondents' perception regarding Responsiveness is treated as the test variable while the variable, respondents' gender is taken as the grouping variable.

The Table 7.24 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their gender cannot be rejected (p-value= 0.582 more than α= 0.05). This indicates that there is no significant difference between the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their gender.

Table 7.24 Independent Sample t-test - Gender and Factor Scores of Responsiveness

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Factor Scores of Responsiveness in the hotels	Equal variances assumed	1.451	0.229	-0.551	498	0.582
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.523	115.383	0.602

However, results of Independent sample t-tests indicate that there is significant difference between the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability in the hotels across their gender (p-value= 0.002 less than α= 0.05).

From Table 7.25, it is evident that the mean of the factor scores of Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across female guests. This indicates that female guests have highest level of perception regarding Presentability in the hotels.

Table 7.25 Mean of Factor Scores of Presentability across Gender

	Gender	N	Mean
1	Male	415	4.27
2	Female	85	4.46

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Hence, guests' gender may be given higher emphasis while forming a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels through skilled and well trained employees with respect to Presentability.

7.3.1.1(b) Final Factors and Marital Status:

Independent sample t-test result indicates that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their marital status is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This shows that there is significant difference of the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels with respect to their marital status. This is also noticed for the factors scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability.

It is evident from Table 7.26 that the mean of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across those guests who are married. This shows that those guests who have highest level of perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels are married.

Table 7.26 Mean of Factor Scores across Marital Status

Marital status	Factors			
	Responsiveness		Presentability	
	N	Mean	N	Mean
1	Single	129	4.26	129	4.10
2	Married	371	4.50	371	4.38

Same results are seen in case of Presentability. This observation implies that married guests should be given greater emphasis regarding Responsiveness and Presentability while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

7.3.1.1(c) Final Factors and Sectors of Employment:

One-way ANOVA is conducted to examine whether the means of the scores of guests' perception regarding the first factor, Responsiveness (in case of well trained and skilled hotel employees) differ across their sectors of employment. So, the variable, factor scores of respondent guests' perception regarding Responsiveness is treated as the dependent variables while the variable, respondents' sectors of employment is taken as the independent variable.

The Table 7.27 shows that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels

with respect to their sectors of employment is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their sectors of employment. Same observations have been noticed in case of the factors scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability.

Table 7.27 ANOVA - Sectors of Employment and Factor Scores of Responsiveness

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.21.433	4	5.358	14.338	0.000
Within Groups	184.987	495	0.374		
Total	206.420	499			

It is observed from Table 7.28 that the mean of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across those guests who are entrepreneurs. This indicates that those guests who have highest level of perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels are entrepreneurs. Hence, this category of guests should be targeted with respect to Responsiveness while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

Table 7.28 Mean of Factor Scores across Sectors of Employment

Sectors of Employment		Factors			
		Responsiveness		Presentability	
		N	Mean	N	Mean
1	Private Sector	273	4.47	273	4.27
2	Public Sector	73	4.25	73	4.14
3	Entrepreneurs	57	4.79	57	4.34
4	Self Employed/ Professional	61	4.03	61	4.53
5	Others	36	4.65	36	4.48
Total		500	4.44	500	4.30

Similarly, results of One-way ANOVA indicate that guests who are self employed/ professional should be given high emphasis regarding Presentability in the hotels. This is essential while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

7.3.1.1(d) Final Factors and Places of Residence:

The results of One-way ANOVA show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels with respect to their places of residence is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their places of residence. Similar results are noticed in case of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability.

It is seen from Table 7.29 that the mean of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across those guests who reside outside North East India. This indicates that those guests who have highest level of perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels reside outside North East India.

Table 7.29 Mean of Factor Scores across Places of Residence

Places of Residence		Factors			
		Responsiveness		Presentability	
		N	Mean	N	Mean
1	Inside North East India	256	4.35	256	4.11
2	Outside North East India	200	4.70	200	4.48
3	In foreign country	44	3.73	44	4.68
Total		500	4.44	500	4.30

This means that such guests should be given greater emphasis regarding Responsiveness while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

It is also seen from Table 7.29 that those guests who have highest perception regarding Presentability in the hotels reside in foreign countries. This implies that such category of guests should be given greater emphasis regarding Presentability while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

7.3.1.1(e) Final Factors and Purposes of Visit:

One-way ANOVA outcome has shown that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels with respect to their purposes of visit cannot be rejected (p-value= 0.129 more than α= 0.05). This implies that there are no significant differences among the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their purposes of visit. However, in case of the factors scores of Presentability, similar null hypothesis is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05).

It is seen from Table 7.30 that the mean of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability in the hotels is highest across those guests who visit for other purposes (other than for official or leisure purposes or both). This specifies that those guests who have highest level of perception regarding Presentability in the hotels visit for other purposes. Because such category of guests

Table 7.30 Mean of Factor Scores across Purposes of Visit

Purposes of visit		Factors	
		Presentability	
		N	Mean
1	Official	156	4.27
2	Leisure	193	4.35
3	Both official and leisure	132	4.21
4	Others	19	4.80
Total		500	4.30

is difficult to describe, their addition may result in dilemma while formulating any strategy for management of customer delight in hotels involving skilled and well trained hotel employees. Therefore, such guests may not be targeted in these strategies.

7.3.1.1(f) Final Factors and Educational Qualification:

The results of One-way ANOVA show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their educational qualification is rejected (p-value= 0.007 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels with respect to their educational qualification. Same observations are seen in case of the factor scores of Presentability (p-value= 0.008).

It is noticed in Table 7.31 that the mean of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across those guests who have passed 12th standard. This denotes that those guests who

Table 7.31 Mean of Factor Scores across Educational Qualification

Educational qualification	Factors			
	Responsiveness		Presentability	
	N	Mean	N	Mean
1 Passed 10th standard	6	4.66	6	4.31
2 Passed 12th standard	19	4.79	19	4.69
3 Graduate	152	4.32	152	4.32
4 Post Graduate	323	4.46	323	4.28
Total	500	4.44	500	4.30

have highest level of perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels have passed 12th standard. Similar observations are noticed in case of the factors scores of Presentability. So, such guests should be targeted with respect to these two factors while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

7.3.1.1(g) Final Factors and Age Group:

One-way ANOVA results indicate that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels with regard to their age group is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This implies that there are significant differences among the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their age group. Same outcome have been seen in case of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability in the hotels.

It is observed in Table 7.32 that the mean of factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across those guests who are between 41 to 50 years in age. This demonstrates that those guests who have highest level of perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels are between 41 to 50 years in age. Same observations are noticed for Presentability in the hotels. Therefore, when considering all these two factors, such guests should be targeted while framing a strategy for management of customer delight in hotels.

Table 7.32 Mean of Factor Scores across Age Group

	Age group	Factors			
		Responsiveness		Presentability	
		N	Mean	N	Mean
1	Below 20 years	5	4.58	5	4.12
2	Between 20 to 30 years	147	4.13	147	4.19
3	Between 31 to 40 years	141	4.47	141	4.35
4	Between 41 to 50 years	163	4.69	163	4.41
5	Between 51 to 60 years	44	4.39	44	4.21
Total		500	4.44	500	4.30

7.3.1.1(h) Final Factors and Monthly Income:

One-way ANOVA results show that the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels across their monthly income is rejected (p-value= 0.000 less than α= 0.05). This means that there are significant differences among the means of the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels with regard to their monthly income. Same observations are noticed for the factor scores of guests' perception regarding Presentability (p-value= 0.000).

It is observed in Table 7.33 that the mean of factor scores of guests' perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels is highest across those guests who have monthly income between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000. This demonstrates

Table 7.33 Mean of Factor Scores across Monthly Income

	Monthly income	Factors			
		Responsiveness		Presentability	
		N	Mean	N	Mean
1	Less then Rs.12,000	39	4.54	39	4.40
2	Between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000	41	4.19	41	3.92
3	Between Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000	143	4.41	143	4.26
4	Between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000	174	4.34	174	4.40
5	Between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000	44	4.68	44	4.29
6	Above Rs.1,50,000	50	4.65	50	4.36
Total		491	4.43	491	4.30

that those guests who have highest level of perception regarding Responsiveness in the hotels have monthly income between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000. Therefore, such guests should be given higher importance while framing a strategy for

management of customer delight. Similarly, Table 7.33 denotes that guests having monthly income less than Rs.12,000 and between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000 should be targeted keeping in view Presentability in hotels while developing such a strategy.

Summary of the above analysis:

It is noticed that the following groups of hotel guests in North East India are sensitive towards the factor, Responsiveness:

i.   Married guests, *or*

ii. Guests who are entrepreneurs, *or*

iii. Guests residing outside North East India, *or*

iv. Guests who have passed 12th standard, *or*

v.   Guests who are between 41 to 50 years in age, *or*

vi. Guests having monthly income between Rs.1,00,000/- to Rs.1,50,000/-

Similarly, it is also found that the following categories of hotel guests in North East India are sensitive towards the factor, Presentability:

i.   Female guests, *or*

ii. Married guests, *or*

iii. Guests who are self employed/ professional, *or*

iv. Guests residing in foreign countries, *or*

v.   Guests who have passed 12th standard, *or*

vi. Guests who are between 41 to 50 years in age, *or*

vii. Guests having monthly income less than Rs.12,000/-

Therefore, the above segments of hotel guests may be targeted for management (continuation) of customer delight involving skilled and well trained employees through reenacted and transitory delight in hotels. These are discussed below in sections 7.3.1.2 and 7.3.1.3:

7.3.1.2 Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees and Similar Value Addition:

The study tries to determine the relationship between skilled and well trained hotel employees and guests' expectation of similar value addition (that may result in customer delight) in their subsequent visits to the hotels (Rust and Oliver 88; Torres

and Kline 290-300). As per these scholars, the hotel guests' expectations of each of the following 7 important common hospitality variables (that may result in customer delight (refer to section 6.1.1.2 in Chapter 6)) in Table 7.34 are associated with skilled and well trained hotel employees. As such, the above extracted 2 factors (in section 7.3.1.1) cannot be used in this case as this may jeopardize accurate results for the study. Hence, the guests' expectations of each of the following 7 important common hospitality variables are tested with their responses on their expectations of same value addition through One-way ANOVA at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05). This is done with an intention to verify if guests' preferences towards each of these 7 variables differ with respect to their perception on expectations of same value addition. Therefore, the variable, respondent guests' expectations on each of these 7 variables is treated as the dependent variable while the variable, respondents' expectations of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels is treated as the independent variable. The results of One-way ANOVA are shown in Table 7.34.

Table 7.34 ANOVA - Similar Value Addition and Important Common Hospitality Variables related to Skilled and Well Trained Employees

Sr. No.	Dependent Variables	Expectation of Similar Value Addition								p-value	Result of Hypothesis Testing
		Always Expect		Sometimes Expect		Rarely Expect		Never Expect			
		N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean		
1	Helpful pre transaction Information	95	4.19	299	4.64	62	4.60	5	3.00	0.000	H_0 rejected
2	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	95	4.57	293	4.68	62	4.77	5	4.00	0.006	H_0 rejected
3	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	95	4.51	299	4.51	62	4.56	5	3.00	0.000	H_0 rejected
4	Special attention	95	4.25	299	4.25	62	4.42	5	4.00	0.313	H_0 not rejected
5	Courtesy of the hotel staff	95	4.57	299	4.74	62	4.82	5	3.00	0.000	H_0 rejected
6	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	95	3.77	299	3.98	62	3.89	5	3.00	0.002	H_0 rejected
7	Neat appearance of staff	95	4.44	295	4.42	62	4.37	5	4.00	0.404	H_0 not rejected

H_0- Null Hypothesis

One-way ANOVA results in Table 7.34 shows that the null hypothesis that there are equality of means of guests' expectations for the following 5 common hospitality variables out of 7 variables associated with skilled and well trained employees are rejected (p-value less than α= 0.05) in case of their expectations for similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels.

  i.   Helpful pre transaction information
 ii.   Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff

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iii. Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service

iv. Courtesy of the hotel staff

v. Language proficiency of the hotel staff

This implies that there are significant differences among the means of guests' expectation for these 5 common hospitality variables (that may result in customer delight) across levels of their expectations of similar value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels. But, similar null hypothesis with respect to means of guests' expectations for special attention and neat appearance of staff in the hotels cannot be rejected (p-values more than $\alpha = 0.05$).

Table 7.34 indicates that the means of guests' expectations for the 5 common hospitality variables in the hotels (shown in Fig. 7.11) are low whenever guests never expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits. The same means are higher whenever guests always expect same value addition in their next visits. This means that those hotel guests who never expect similar value addition respectively in their next visits in relation to skilled and well trained hotel employees have low expectations regarding these variables. However, those hotel guests who always expect similar such value addition have comparatively higher expectations regarding these variables. So, this relationship of these 5 variables with guests' expectation of similar value addition in their subsequent visits can be termed as positive. This is an interesting observation in case of any hotel. So, hotel management should carefully employ, train and empower its employees dealing with these 5 variables. This fact should be noted while devising a strategy for continuous management of customer delight for the same guests in these hotels in the form of reenacted delight with the help of skilled and well trained employees.
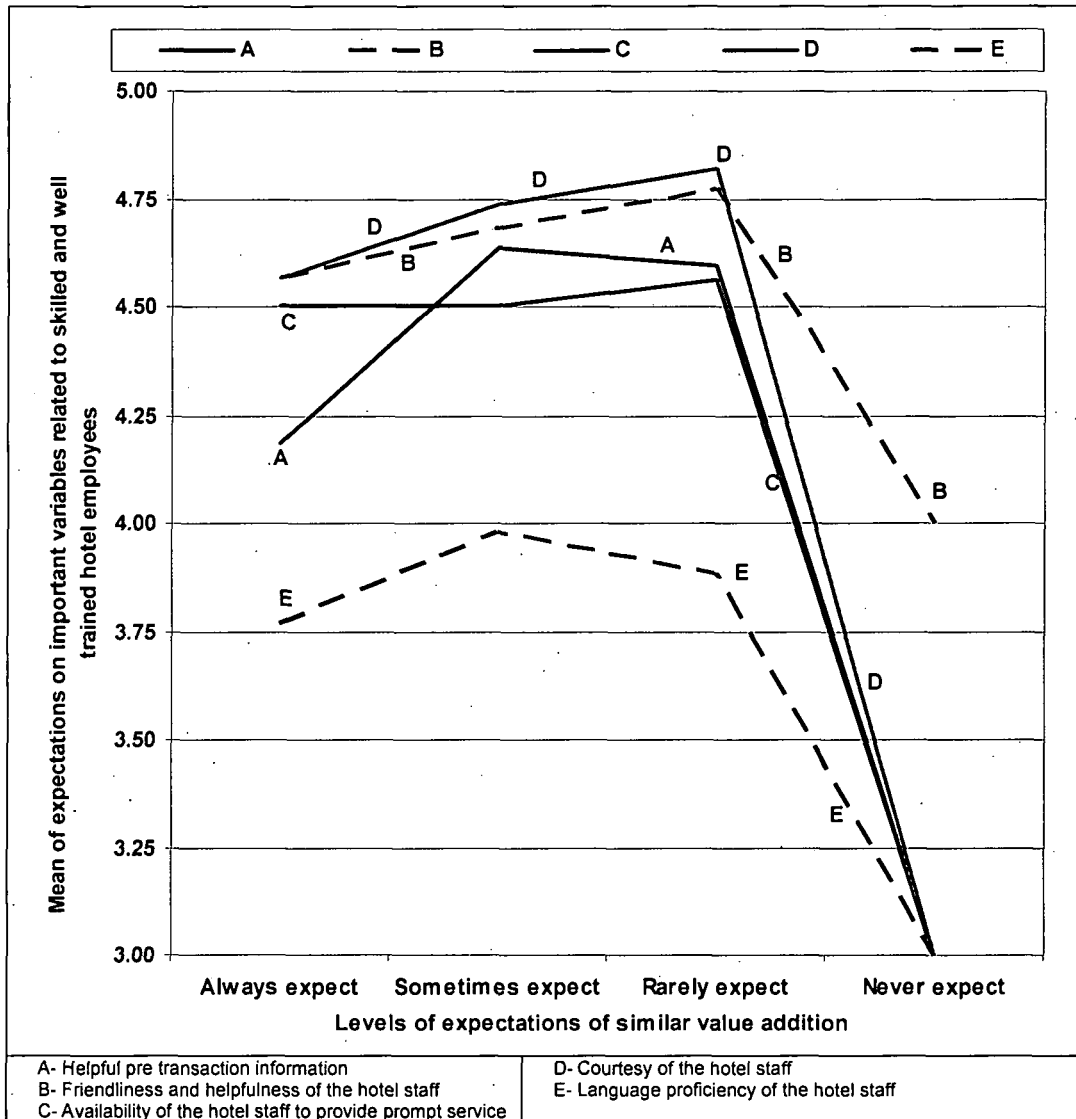
Fig. 7.11. Mean of Expectations of Important Common Hospitality Variables related to Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees across Levels of Expectations of Similar Value Addition

A- Helpful pre transaction information	D- Courtesy of the hotel staff
B- Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	E- Language proficiency of the hotel staff
C- Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	

Summary of the analysis in section 7.3.1.2:

The above discussion clearly shows that 5 common hospitality variables (as shown in Fig. 7.11) have to be emphasized by hotels in order to offer similar value addition to manage customer delight through skilled and well trained manpower. It is seen in section 7.2.1.1 that if guests have higher expectations of pleasant surprises in hotels on a regular basis, they sometimes expect such similar value addition. Besides, it is also found that if guests in the hotels always expect such similar value addition, there are higher chances that they are always happy and are highly likely to stay there in such visits (refer to sections 7.2.1.3 and 7.2.1.4 in this Chapter). Guests' happiness is also correlated with their resultant likelihood to stay in the same hotels due to such similar value addition (r= 0.691) (refer to Fig 7.5 in this

Chapter). The above mentioned 5 variables may be taken into account in these already mentioned strategies for management of customer delight through reenacted delight. Thereby, this can be the basis of other strategies for continuation of such delight involving well trained and skilled hotel employees in North East India through reenacted delight. These findings can be reproduced through a strategic model as shown in Fig. 7.12.
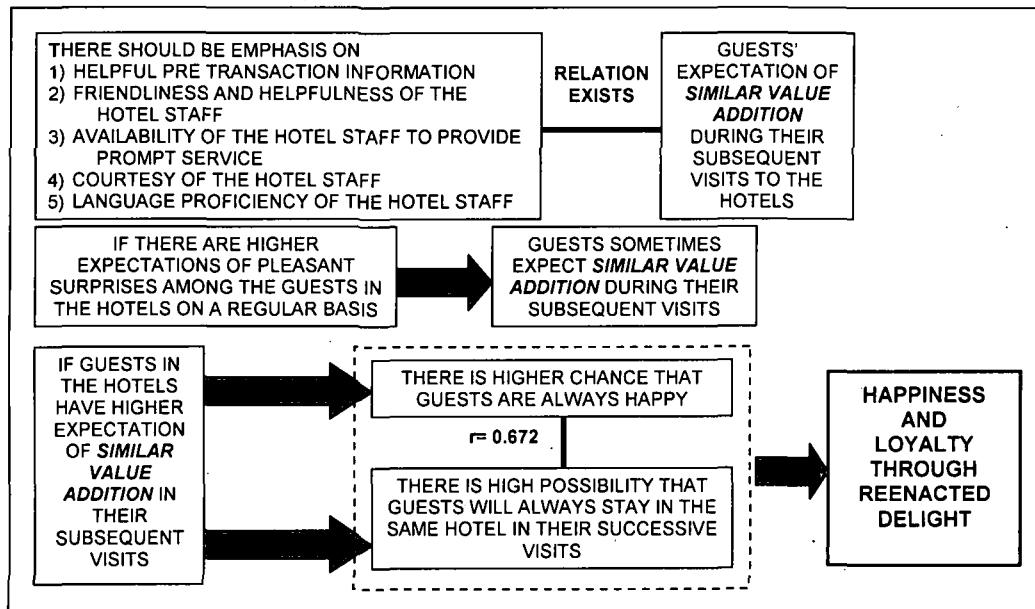
Fig. 7.12. Strategy for Overall Customer Delight Management through Reenacted Delight involving Skilled and Well Trained Employees in Hotels

7.3.1.3 Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees and Changes in Value Addition:

The relationship between skilled and well trained hotel employees and guests' expectation of changes in value addition (that may result in customer delight) in their subsequent visits to the hotels (Rust and Oliver 88; Torres and Kline 290-300) is also analyzed in this study. The guests' expectations of each of the 7 important common hospitality variables, associated with skilled and well trained hotel employees (refer to section 7.3.1), are tested with their responses on their expectations of changes in value addition through One-Way ANOVA in a similar manner as in section 7.3.1.2. It is to be noted that these 7 variables may lead to customer delight in hotels (refer to section 6.1.1.2 in Chapter 6). The outcome of One-way ANOVA is shown in Table 7.35.

Table 7.35 ANOVA – Changes in Value Addition and Important Common Hospitality Variables related to Skilled and Well Trained Employees

Sr. No.	Dependent Variables	Expectation of Changes in Value addition in their Subsequent Visits								p-value	Result of Hypothesis Testing
		Always Expect		Sometimes Expect		Rarely Expect		Never Expect			
		N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean		
1	Helpful pre transaction information	16	4.00	201	4.44	61	4.41	44	4.93	0.000	H_0 rejected
2	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	16	4.00	195	4.64	61	4.74	44	4.82	0.000	H_0 rejected
3	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	16	4.00	201	4.42	61	4.57	44	4.61	0.001	H_0 rejected
4	Special attention	16	3.25	201	4.18	61	4.26	44	4.61	0.000	H_0 rejected
5	Courtesy of the hotel staff	16	3.81	201	4.72	61	4.70	44	4.84	0.000	H_0 rejected
6	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	16	3.31	201	3.78	61	3.95	44	4.14	0.000	H_0 rejected
7	Neat appearance of staff	16	3.75	197	4.31	61	4.51	44	4.61	0.000	H_0 rejected

H_0- Null Hypothesis

The outcome of One-way ANOVA Table 7.3.1.3(a) indicates that the null hypothesis that there are equality of means of guests' expectations for all the 7 common hospitality variables associated with skilled and well trained hotel employees are rejected (p-value less than $\alpha= 0.05$). This is in case of levels of their expectations for changes in value addition in their subsequent visits to the hotels. It found from Table 7.13 that the means of guests' expectations for all the 7 common hospitality variables are highest whenever they never expect changes in value addition respectively in their subsequent visits (refer to Fig. 7.5). The means for guests' expectations about these variables are lowest when guests always expect changes in value addition respectively in their subsequent visits. This implies that those hotel guests who always expect changes in value addition in their subsequent visits have low expectations regarding these variables. However, those hotel guests who never expect changes in value addition in their next visits have higher expectations regarding these variables.

This means those guests who do not want any change in value addition with respect to these 7 variables offer higher expectations than those who want changes. This corroborates our earlier finding in section 7.3.1.2. Thus, for transitory delight, skilled and well trained manpower (as indicated by these 7 variables) may not have a very important role. However, this should not mean that the emphasis should be taken away from the employees with respect to these variables. Further, hotels management should be careful regarding these 7 variables with respect to transitory delight.

A-	Helpful pre transaction information	E-	Courtesy of the hotel staff
B-	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	F-	Language proficiency of the hotel staff
C-	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	G-	Neat appearance of staff
D-	Special attention		
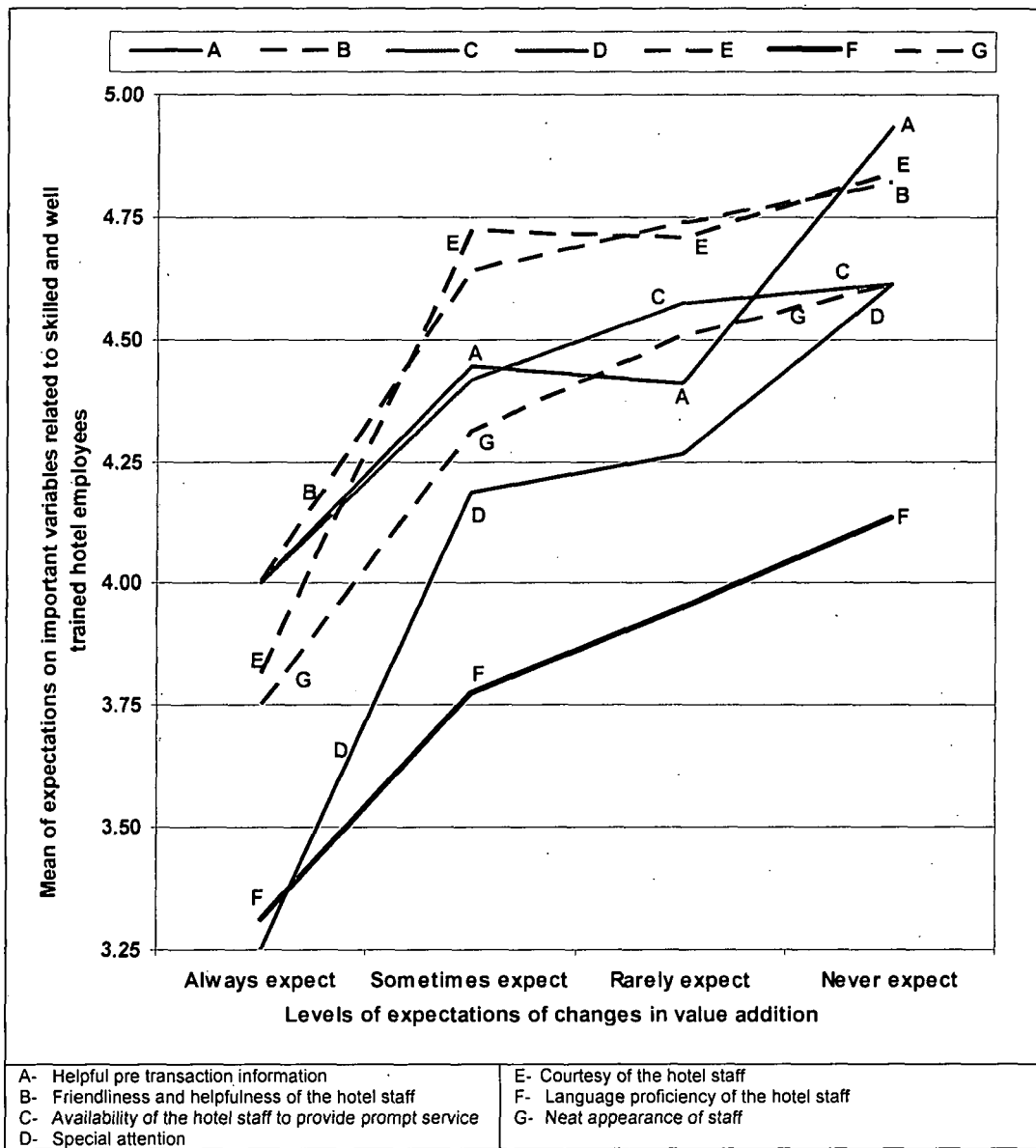
Fig. 7.13. Mean of Expectations of Important Common Hospitality Variables related to Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees across Levels of Changes in Value Addition

Summary of the analysis in section 7.3.1.3:

The above discussion clearly shows that hotel authorities should be careful regarding 7 common hospitality variables (as shown in Fig. 7.13) while offering changes in value addition to manage customer delight through skilled and well trained manpower. Analysis in section 7.2.2.1 indicates that if guests have higher expectations of pleasant surprises in hotels on a regular basis, they sometimes expect such changes in value addition. The same analysis also shows that if guests in the hotels always expect such changes in value addition, they are highly likely to be always happy and to stay there in such visits (refer to sections 7.2.2.3 and 7.2.2.4 in this Chapter). Guests' happiness and their resultant likelihood to stay in the same

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hotels due to such value addition are also correlated with each other (r= 0.802) (refer to Fig 7.9 in this Chapter). Extra care should be taken by hotel management in case of the above mentioned 7 variables with respect to the earlier mentioned strategies for management of customer delight through transitory delight (refer to section 7.2.2). Thereby, this can be the foundation of other strategies for continuation of such delight involving well trained and skilled hotel employees through transitory delight in North East India (refer to Fig. 7.14).
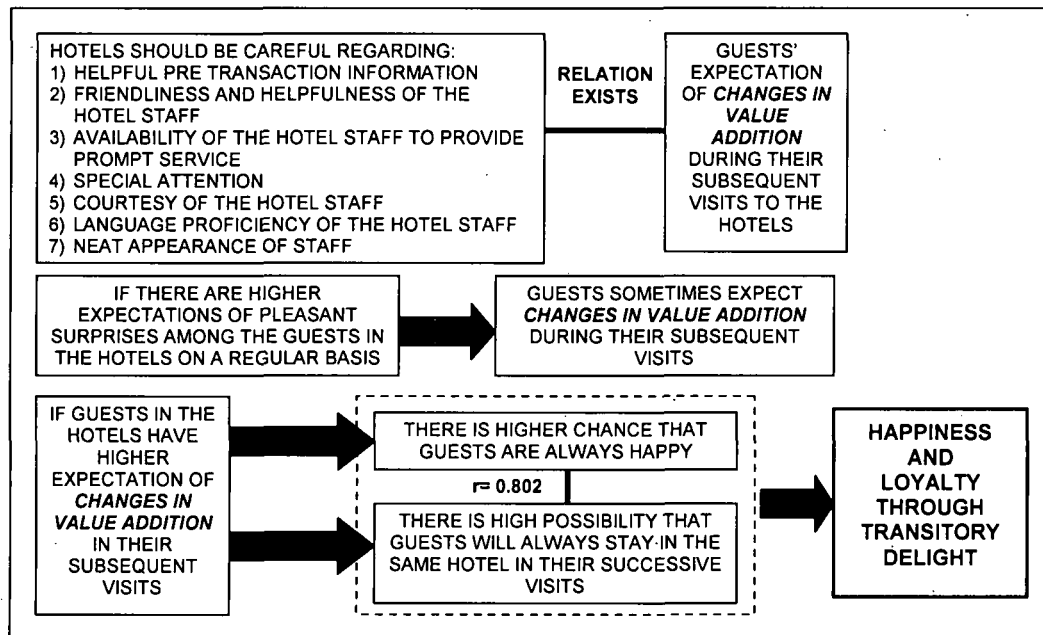
Fig. 7.14. Strategy for Overall Customer Delight Management through Transitory Delight Involving Skilled and Well Trained Employees in Hotels

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CHAPTER 8

MAJOR

FINDINGS

Chapter 8

MAJOR FINDINGS

The analyses of the collected data have been presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The findings from these analyses have also been discussed in these Chapters with respect to repeat guests in 5 star deluxe, 4 star, 3 star, Heritage Grand and unclassified hotels in North East India. The sequence of customer delight in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels) has been empirically proved in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 presents the role of common hospitality parameters in creating customer delight in the hospitality industry (mainly in hotels). Again, Chapter 7 offers strategy for management of customer delight through reenacted and transitory delight, and through skilled and well trained employees in the hospitality industry (particularly hotels). This chapter provides a summary of major findings of this research based on its objectives.

8.1 Major Findings:

The major findings of this research study are summarized in the following sections 8.1.1 to 8.1.3.

8.1.1 Sequence of Customer Delight in the Hospitality Industry:

The review of literature related to customer delight (and related issues) led to the identification of variables like surpassing of guests' expectations, their pleasant surprises and consequent happiness along with their perceived excitement and positive feelings that may lead to customer delight in hotels (Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Crotts, Pan and Raschid 463; Finn 19; Oliver, Rust and Varki 318; Rust and Oliver 87). Pearson's Correlation analyses show medium to high coefficient of correlation (r) between different pairs of these variables (refer to section 5.3.1 in Chapter 5). Next, One-way ANOVA and Discriminant Analysis are carried out among these variables to empirically establish the sequence of customer delight in hotels with the following observations:

i. The results of One-way ANOVA indicate that those guests who feel that their expectations have been surpassed in hotels may experience pleasant surprises in hotels (refer to section 5.3.2 in Chapter 5). However, those guests who feel that

their expectations have never been surpassed may not pleasantly surprised. The results of Discriminant Analysis indicate that the discriminant function between surpassing expectations (SE) of the respondent guests and their pleasant surprises is:

$$D_1 = (-0.040) + (1.346) \text{ SE} \qquad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (8.i).$$

Equation (8.i) reveals the following observations (refer to Table 5.17(b) in Chapter 5).

EXPECTATIONS ALWAYS OR SOMETIMES SURPASSED	⟶	HIGHER CHANCES OF OBTAINING PLEASANTSURPRISES
EXPECTATIONS RARELY OR NEVER SURPASSED	⟶	LOWER CHANCES OF OBTAINING PLEASANTSURPRISES
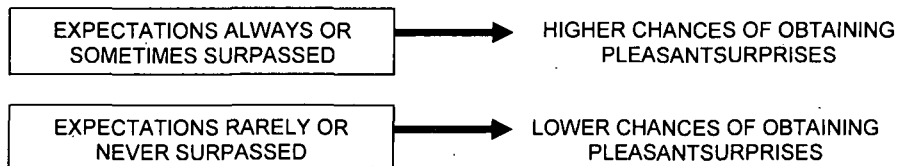
These analyses show that surpassing guests' expectations in hotels has positive relation with their pleasant surprises, i.e. surpassing of expectations may cause pleasant surprises.

ii. The results of One-way ANOVA indicate those guests who are pleasantly surprised in hotels may be happy (refer to section 5.3.3 in Chapter 5). On the other hand, those who are never pleasantly surprised may not experience happiness. The results of Discriminant Analysis indicate that the discriminant function between pleasant surprises (PS) of the guests and their resultant happiness is:

$$D_2 = (-0.017) + (1.391) \text{ PS} \qquad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (8.ii)$$

Equation (8.ii) denotes the following observations (refer to Table 5.21 in Chapter 5).

PLEASANT SURPRISES ALWAYS OR SOMETIMES OBTAINED	⟶	HIGHER CHANCES OF BEING HAPPY
PLEASANT SURPRISES RARELY OR NEVER OBTAINED	⟶	LOWER CHANCES OF BEING HAPPY
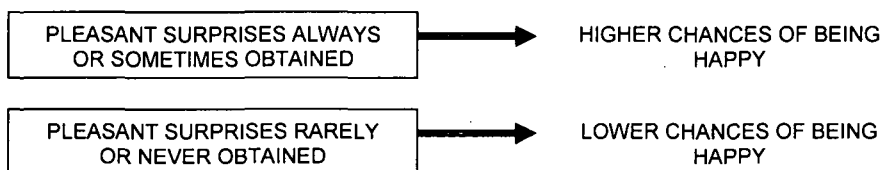
Thereby, this analyses show that pleasant surprises of the guests in the hotels is almost positively related with their resultant happiness. This means that pleasant surprises may lead to happiness.

iii. The results of One-way ANOVA indicate that those guests who are highly excited in hotels are highly likely to be happy (refer to section 5.3.4.1 in Chapter 5). However, those guests who less excited have lesser chances of being happy. Again, those guests who who perceive higher positive feelings (feel very good)

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in hotels may have higher chances of being happy (refer to section 5.3.4.2 in Chapter 5). On the other hand, those guests who perceive lesser positive feelings (feel good or no emotion) have lesser chances of being happy. It is to be noted that guests' perception regarding feeling very good, feeling good, and having no emotion are an indication of their perceived positive feelings in the hotels. The results of Discriminant Analysis indicate that the discriminant function between guests' perceived excitement (EX), guests' perceived positive feelings (PF) and their happiness owing to pleasant surprises at the hotels is (refer to section 5.3.4.3 in Chapter 5):

$$D_3 = (-6.674) + (1.309)\ EX + (0.315)\ PF \qquad ....(8.iii)$$

Equation (8.iii) indicates the following observations (refer to Table 5.27 and Table 5.28 in Chapter 5).

MODERATE EXCITEMENT (WITH FEEL GOOD)

MODERATE EXCITEMENT (WITH FEEL VERY GOOD)

HIGHER CHANCES OF BEING HAPPY

HIGH EXCITEMENT (WITH FEEL GOOD)

HIGH EXCITEMENT (WITH FEEL VERY GOOD)

NO EXCITEMENT AT ALL (EVEN IF FEEL GOOD)

BELOW AVERAGE EXCITEMENT (EVEN IF FEEL GOOD)

LOWER CHANCES OF BEING HAPPY

AVERAGE EXCITEMENT (WITH NO EMOTION PRESENT)

AVERAGE EXCITEMENT (WITH FEEL GOOD)
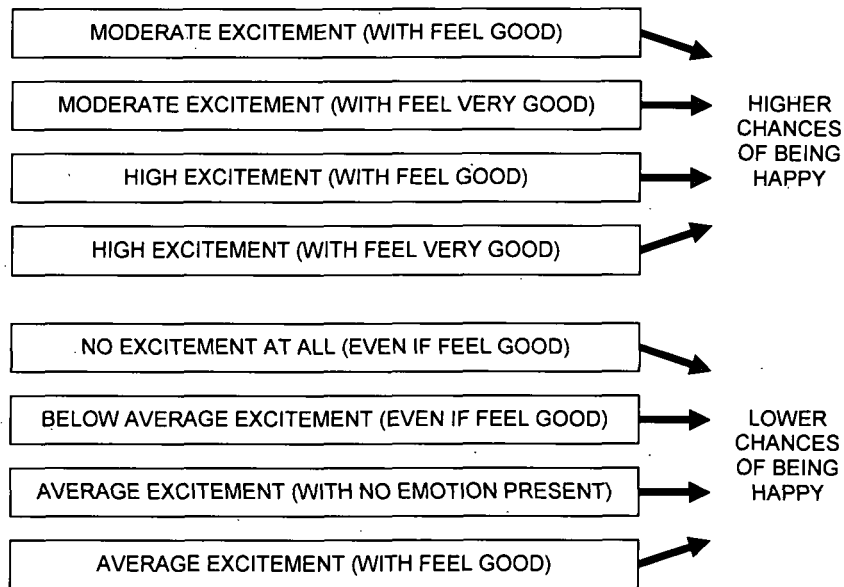
These observations show that guests' happiness due to pleasant surprises in hotels is almost positively linked to their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings. This means that perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings may lead to happiness.

iv. The results of One-way ANOVA indicate that those guests whose expectations are surpassed in hotels may perceive positive feelings (refer to section 5.3.5 in Chapter 5). But guests whose expectations are never surpassed may never perceive positive feelings. The results of Discriminant Analysis show that discriminant function between surprising expectations (SE) of the guests and their perceived positive feelings is:

$$D_4 = (-1.034) + (1.449) \text{ SE} \qquad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(8.iv)$$

Equation (8.iv) indicates the following observations (refer to Table 5.32 in Chapter 5).

| EXPECTATIONS ALWAYS OR SOMETIMES OR RARELY SURPASSED | → | HIGHER CHANCES OF PERCEIVING POSITIVE FEELINGS |

| EXPECTATIONS NEVER SURPASSED | → | LOWER CHANCES OF PERCEIVING POSITIVE FEELINGS |
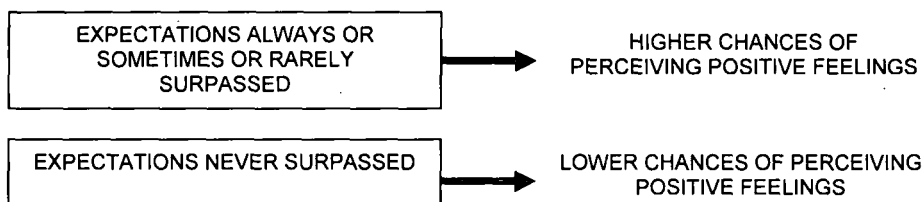
Therefore, surpassing of the guests' expectations in the hotels is almost positively related with their perceived positive feelings. This means that surpassing of expectations may result in perceived positive feelings.

Thus the process of achieving customer delight in hotels in North East India is established in this study with empirical data. This is shown in Figure 8.1. This sequence is in line with observations of other scholars (Crotts and Magnini 719-722; Crotts et al. 463; Finn 19; Oliver et al. 318; Rust and Oliver 87).
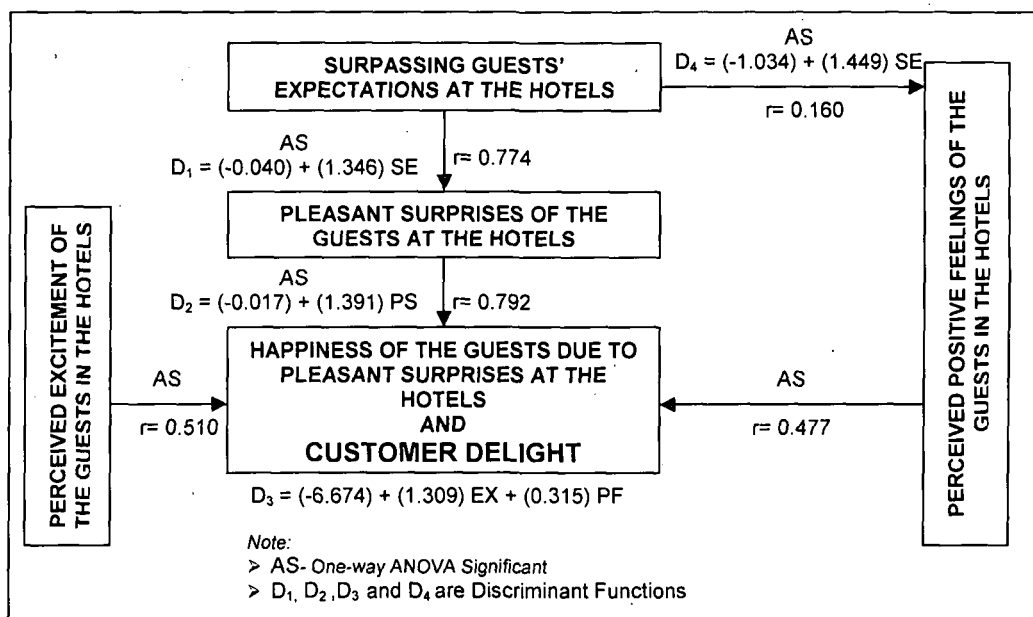
Figure 8.1: Sequence of Customer Delight in Hotels

8.1.2 Common Hospitality Parameters for Customer Delight in the Hospitality Industry:

The review of literature related to customer delight (and related issues) resulted in the identification of a set of 46 variables like food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage etc. as common hospitality parameters that may lead to customer delight in hotels. In the same way, 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises like free gifts, special foods,

special discounts etc. (as common hospitality parameters) that may result in customer delight in hotels are identified. The complete list of these common hospitality parameters comprising 46 variables and 6 elements of pleasant surprises are shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Common Hospitality Parameters that may result in Customer Delight in Hotels

Common Hospitality Variables	
1. Food and beverage quality	24. Special attention
2. Availability of food and beverage variety	25. Courtesy of the hotel staff
3. Hygiene of food and beverage	26. Language proficiency of the hotel staff
4. Food and beverage at reasonable price	27. Check-in and check-out are efficient
5. Quality of the restaurant	28. Staff have neat appearance
6. Location of the hotel	29. Convenient payment method
7. Physical appearance of the hotel	30. Availability of reliable wake-up call
8. View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	31. Security of belongings including valuables
9. Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	inside the room
10. Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	32. Responsible security personnel
11. Room furnishings and appearance	33. Availability of recreation facilities
12. Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	34. Availability of transportation arrangements
13. Quietness of the room	35. Availability of 24 hours taxi
14. Cleanliness of the room	36. Availability of business centre
15. Quality of in-room temperature control	37. Availability of meeting facilities
16. Room service	38. Availability of convenient parking facilities
17. In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	39. Availability of efficient laundry service
	40. Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)
18. Internet connection	41. Availability of free newspaper
19. Reasonable price for the room	42. Availability of frequent travellers' program
20. Helpful pre transaction information	43. Availability of swimming facilities
21. Convenient and reliable reservation system	44. Availability of gymnasium facilities
22. Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	45. Overall comfortability
23. Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	46. Other facilities
Probable Elements of Pleasant Surprises	
1. Free gifts	4. Special entertainment
2. Special discounts	5. Free access to facilities
3. Special foods	6. Other pleasant surprises

Source: Literature Review
Refer to section 4.3.2.7(a) in Chapter 4

Out of these 46 common hospitality variables it is found that cleanliness of the hotel rooms, and security of belongings are the most influential. This observation is on the basis of mean scores of these variables calculated using formula 6.i mentioned in section 6.1.1 and Table 6.1 in Chapter 6. This observation also revealed that the least influential variables include availability of gymnasium and swimming facilities.

Factors analysis is used to reduce the above 46 common hospitality variables into a smaller manageable number of factors. This is aimed at providing a meaningful understanding regarding customer delight in hotels with respect to these variables so that the second objective of this study (refer to section 6.1.1.1 in Chapter 6) may be achieved. These 8 factors are subsequently named. The factors are as follows (refer to Table 6.2 in Chapter 6).

i.   Comfortability and convenience

ii.   Facilities in the hotel rooms

iii. Corporate facilities

iv.   Cleanliness and quality

v.   Recreation and transportation facilities

vi.   Physical evidence

vii. Language proficiency and transportation arrangements

viii. Affordability and assurance

Next, One-way ANOVA results show significant differences among the means of surpassing of the guests' expectations across their level of expectations for 34 common hospitality variables out of these 46 variables. This means that these 34 variables may specifically contribute towards surpassing of guests' expectations that might ultimately lead to customer delight in hotels (refer to section 6.1.1.2 in Chapter 6).

These analyses also reveal three groups of variables which have different levels of influence (among these 34 variables) towards surpassing of guests' expectations. Here, the first group (consisting of 12 variables) exhibits normal influence (positive linear relationship) with surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. Some of these variables include cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel, room furnishings and appearance, comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows etc. (refer to Fig 6.2 in this Chapter). Abnormal influence (negative linear relationship) is seen in case of 9 variables comprising the second group. Few of these variables include availability of food and beverage variety, physical appearance of the hotel, view of surrounding areas of the hotel etc. (refer to Fig 6.3 in this Chapter). Again, the third set of variables (consisting of 13 variables) also indicates non normal influence on surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotels. Few of these variables are hygiene of food and beverage, food and beverage at reasonable price, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel etc. As such, hotels should be careful regarding the second and third sets of variables. In fact, higher greater emphasis should be provided on these variables for delighting guests.

Similar One-way ANOVA tests indicate significant differences between the means of surpassing of the guests' expectations across their expectations regarding each of the 2 elements of pleasant surprises (from among 6 probable elements of pleasant surprises (as common hospitality parameters) that may lead to customer

delight in hotels) (refer to Table 6.8 in Chapter 6). Thereby, these 2 elements of pleasant surprises (special discounts and free access to facilities (like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.)) have significance towards surpassing of their expectations in the hotels. In fact, surpassing of guests' expectations is one of the main component for customer delight in the hotels (refer to section 8.1.1 in this Chapter). From the above discussion, it can be stated that these 34 common hospitality variables and 2 elements of pleasant surprises can be considered to be important common hospitality parameters for creating customer delight in hotels in North East India.

8.1.3 Strategy for Management of Customer Delight in the Hospitality Industry:

8.1.3.1 Strategy for Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight:

8.1.3.1(a) Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight through Reenacted Delight:

Results of One-way ANOVA show that if there are higher expectations of pleasant surprises among the guests in the hotels in North East India on a regular basis, they sometimes expect similar value addition during their subsequent visits (refer to section 7.2.1.1 in Chapter 7). Similarly, results of One-way ANOVA indicate that if the guests in the hotels always expect similar value addition in their subsequent visits:

a) There are greater probabilities that they are always happy (refer to section 7.2.1.3 in Chapter 7).

b) There are high possibilities that they will always stay there in their successive visits (refer to section 7.2.1.4 in Chapter 7).

It is also seen that happiness of guests in the hotels due to similar value addition in their subsequent visits is highly correlated with their possibility to stay there in their subsequent visits ($r= 0.691$) (refer to Figure 7.2 in Chapter 7).

The above points can ensure continuation of guest loyalty and customer delight in hotels in future. This can be the basis of any future strategy for maintenance of customer delight in hotels in North East India through reenacted delight. The results of Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA also indicate that hotels may target on the following types of guests in such a strategy (refer to section 7.2.1.2 in Chapter 7):

i. Guests residing in foreign countries, *or*

ii. Guests below 30 years in age, *or*

iii. Guests having monthly income less than Rs.12,000/-

8.1.3.1(b) Staggered Delivery of Customer Delight through Transitory Delight:

In a similar manner, the results of One-way ANOVA indicate that if there are higher expectations of regular pleasant surprises guests sometimes expect changes in value addition during their subsequent visits there (refer to section 7.2.2.1 in Chapter 7). In the same manner, it is seen that if hotel guests always expect changes in value addition in their subsequent visits,

a) There are greater chances that they are always happy (refer to section 7.2.2.3 in Chapter 7).

b) There is higher probability that they will always stay there in their consecutive visits (refer to section 7.2.2.4 in Chapter 7).

It is also found that happiness of guests in the hotels due to changes in value addition in their next visits is closely related with their likelihood to stay there in these visits ($r= 0.803$) (refer to Figure 7.3 in Chapter 7).

The above points can ensure maintenance of guest loyalty and customer delight in the hotels in North East India in future. This can be the foundation of any proposed strategy for maintenance of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight. The outcome of Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA also show that hotels may target on the following categories of guests in such a strategy (refer to section 7.2.2.2 in Chapter 7):

i. Female guests, *or*

ii. Single (unmarried) guests, *or*

iii. Guests working in public sector, *or*

iv. Guests residing in foreign countries, *or*

v. Guests visiting the hotels for leisure purposes, *or*

vi. Guest between 51 to 60 years in age, *or*

vii. Guests having monthly income above Rs.1,50,000/-

8.1.3.2 Strategy for Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight:

Continuous delivery of customer delight is possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees. It is found that 7 common hospitality variables (among the above mentioned 34 variables of customer delight) can be manipulated directly through skilled and well trained hotel employees. These variables are repeatedly emphasized by guests in the hotels in NE region (refer to section 7.3.1.1 in Chapter 7). Besides, two factors from these variables are obtained using Factor Analysis. These are named as Responsiveness and Presentability (of the staff). Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA results indicate that the following categories of hotel guests may be targeted with respect to the factor, Responsiveness (refer to section 7.3.1.1 in Chapter 7):

i. Married guests, *or*

ii. Guests who are entrepreneurs, *or*

iii. Guests residing outside North East India, *or*

iv. Guests who have passed 12th standard, *or*

v. Guests who are between 41 to 50 years in age, *or*

vi. Guests having monthly income between Rs.1,00,000/- to Rs.1,50,000/-

Similarly, the outcome of Independent sample t-tests and One-way ANOVA indicate that the following types of hotel guests may be targeted with respect to the factor, Presentability (refer to section 7.3.1.1 in Chapter 7):

i. Female guests, *or*

ii. Married guests, *or*

iii. Guests who are self employed/ professional, *or*

iv. Guests residing in foreign countries, *or*

v. Guests who have passed 12th standard, *or*

vi. Guests who are between 41 to 50 years in age, *or*

vii. Guests having monthly income less than Rs.12,000/-

The above points should be emphasized while framing any proposed strategy for continuation of customer delight involving skilled and well trained employees through reenacted and transitory delight in hotels in North East India. These are discussed below in sections 8.1.3.2(a) and 8.1.3.2(b).

8.1.3.2(a) Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight through Reenacted Delight:

The results of One-way ANOVA indicate that 5 common hospitality variables associated with skilled and well trained hotel employees (out of the above mentioned 7 repeated common hospitality variables (refer to section 7.3.1.2 in Chapter 7)) have to be focused by hotels in North East India as they are related with guests' expectations of similar value addition. These variables include helpful pre transaction information, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, courtesy of the hotel staff, and language proficiency of the hotel staff. Therefore, these 5 variables should be taken into account for management of customer delight through reenacted delight which is already discussed in section 8.1.3.1(a). Thereby, guest loyalty and customer delight can be maintained in future. This may lead to management (continuation) of customer delight for the same guests in the hotels in North East India in the form of reenacted delight. Hence, the above points can be the basis of other strategies for continuation of such delight involving skilled and well trained hotel employees through reenacted delight in hotels in this region.

8.1.3.2(b) Continuous Delivery of Customer Delight through Transitory Delight:

It is also noticed from the results of One-way ANOVA that all the above mentioned 7 common hospitality variables associated with skilled and well trained hotel employees (refer to section 7.3.1.3 in Chapter 7) are related with guests' expectations of changes in value addition. These variables are helpful pre transaction information, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, special attention, courtesy of the hotel staff, language proficiency of the hotel staff, and neat appearance of staff. However, hotels should be careful regarding these variables for management of customer delight through transitory delight. This viewpoint should be emphasized in the already mentioned activities (refer to section 8.1.3.1(b)) for management of customer delight through transitory delight. Thereby, this may result in management of customer delight for the same guests in these hotels in the form of transitory delight. This might be also taken into account while formulating strategies for continuation of such delight through transitory delight in hotels in this region.

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CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

C h a p t e r 9

CONCLUSION

The research gap and the objectives of the study have been discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Methodology, in detail, is discussed in Chapter 4. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the required analyses of the collected data have been carried out. The sequence leading to customer delight is established in Chapter 5 with empirical evidence for the hospitality industry, particularly for the hotels in North East India. Chapter 6 presents the common hospitality parameters that constitute customer delight in the hotels of this region. Chapter 7 offers broad strategies for management of customer delight through reenacted and transitory delight, and through skilled and well trained employees with evidence for this region. This chapter 9 offers a conclusion of this study along with its implications and recommendations for future research.

9.1 Conclusion:

This research study has empirically established the sequence of customer delight in the hospitality industry particularly in hotels in North East India. The results of the analysis have shown that surpassing of guests' expectations at the hotels is connected with their receipt of pleasant surprises. It is also established that pleasant surprises received by guests and their happiness are related. It is proved that there is a connection of guests' perceived excitement with their happiness (due to receipt of pleasant surprises), which is also related to their perceived positive feelings. All these observed connections form a detailed sequence that leads to customer delight in hotels (refer to Chapter 5) in this region. Thereby, this study empirically proves the presence of the sequence of customer delight as proposed by Crotts and Magnini (719-722), Crotts, Pan and Raschid (463), Finn (19), Oliver, Rust and Varki (318), and Rust and Oliver (87) in the hospitality industry in North East India.

The results of this study have also indicated the role of common hospitality parameters in constituting customer delight in the hospitality industry mainly in the hotels (refer to Chapter 6) in North East India. It is seen that the following 34 such

parameters (refer to Table 9.1) have significant contribution towards creating customer delight in hotels.

Table 9.1: Essential Common Hospitality Parameters that may lead to Customer Delight in Hotels

Sr. No.	Name of the Variables	Sr. No.	Name of the Variables
1	Availability of food and beverage variety	18	Special attention
2	Hygiene of food and beverage	19	Courtesy of the hotel staff
3	Food and beverage at reasonable price	20	Language proficiency of the hotel staff
4	Physical appearance of the hotel	21	Neat appearance of staff
5	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	22	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
6	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	23	Availability of recreation facilities
7	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	24	Availability of transportation arrangements
8	Room furnishings and appearance	25	Availability of business centre
9	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	26	Availability of meeting facilities
10	Cleanliness of the room	27	Availability of convenient parking facilities
11	Room service	28	Availability of efficient laundry service
12	Internet connection	29	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)
13	Reasonable price for the room	30	Availability of free newspaper
14	Helpful pre transaction information	31	Availability of frequent travellers' program
15	Convenient and reliable reservation system	32	Availability of swimming facilities
16	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	33	Availability of gymnasium facilities
17	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	34	Overall comfortability

Refer to Table 6.4 in Chapter 6

The results of the analyses have also revealed that 2 elements of pleasant surprises in the hotels namely, special discounts and free access to facilities, are found to be highly essential compared to others for creating customer delight in the hotels (refer to Chapter 6) in North East India.

This study has also highlighted that customer delight in hotels can be managed through staggered and continuous delivery. The study indicates that staggered delivery of customer delight is possible through reenacted and transitory delight. It is seen that staggered delivery of customer delight in hotels through reenacted delight can be obtained through similar value addition during guests' subsequent visits to these hotels. Both happiness and possibility among these guests to stay in the same hotels in their successive visits is linked to such similar value addition. This may form the basis of any projected strategy for maintenance of customer delight in hotels in North East India through reenacted delight (refer to Chapter 7). Similarly, it is also found that staggered delivery of customer delight in hotels through transitory delight can be achieved by bringing in changes in value addition during guests' subsequent visits to these hotels. Again, such changes in value addition are related to both happiness and possibility of these guests to stay in the same hotels in their next visits. This may form the base of any future strategy for

maintenance of customer delight in hotels in North East India through transitory delight (refer to Chapter 7). The results of the analyses in this study have also identified certain categories of hotels guests who may be targeted for delight through staggered delivery by means of reenacted and transitory delights (refer to sections 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.2.2 in Chapter 7).

It is also observed that skilled and well trained hotel employees can help in management of customer delight through continuous delivery of reenacted and transitory delight in hotels (refer to Chapter 7) in North East India. It is found that manipulation of 7 variables (among the above mentioned 34 variables of customer delight) are directly possible through skilled and well trained hotel employees (refer to section 7.3.1 in Chapter 7). These variables include helpful pre transaction information, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff etc. The study reveals that two broad factors (desired from the above 7 variables) are directly related to certain segments of hotel guests (refer to section 7.3.1.1 in Chapter 7). These factors are Responsiveness and Presentability (of the staff). It is also found that reenacted delight can be managed by 5 such variables, namely, helpful pre transaction information, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff etc. These findings can be the basis of strategies for maintenance of customer delight by means of skilled and well trained hotel employees. Again, the study also indicates that hotels should be careful regarding all these 7 variables in case of management of transitory delight in hotels in North East India through skilled and well trained employees.

9.2 Implication of the study:

As discussed in section 1.1 of Chapter 1, many researchers (including Crotts and Magnini (719-722), Crotts et al. (463), Finn (19), Oliver et al. (318), and Rust and Oliver (87)) had mentioned about the existence of customer delight and the sequence through which this can be achieved. However, as discussed in section 1.2 in Chapter 1 and section 3.3 in Chapter 3, this sequence has hardly been established till now with empirical evidence in hospitality industry. This study has empirically established the model of sequence leading to customer delight in the hospitality industry. In fact, providing additional unexpected benefits along with the core service in hotels can result in a delighting atmosphere for their guests. This established sequence of customer delight in the hotels can be considered as an

important contribution of this work. This study has also revealed certain common hospitality parameters that may lead to customer delight in hotels.

The study has also shown that management of customer delight in hotels is possible through its staggered delivery by means of reenacted and transitory delight. Again, results of the study also indicates that continuous delivery of customer delight in hotels is attainable through skilled and well trained hotel employees through reenacted and transitory delight. The concept of such maintenance of customer delight in the hospitality industry particularly in hotels can be applied in case of certain segments of guests. These can be the basis of any future strategy for the continuation of customer delight in such hotels. Proper focus on these aspects can actually help to retain guests in the hotels in future. Thereby, the profitability and survivality of hotels can be ensured in the near future. This is another important contribution of this work.

9.3 Recommendation for future research:

Primary data collection in this study involved hotels only in North East India. Similar studies can be carried out in other parts of India and the world. In fact, such studies can be carried out in bigger cities. The present research is done on only one 5 star deluxe hotel and few hotels falling in the 4 star, 3 star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories that are present in this region of India. In future, such studies can be conducted in case of more hotels falling in high end of the segment. Again, the current study involves few respondents who are residing and working in foreign countries. Similar studies can be conducted involving more such respondents in the future. Besides, future studies may include study of the behaviour of different classification (profiling) variables with respect to expectations regarding 9 common hospitality variables that may lead to customer delight in hotels (refer to Fig.6.3).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GUESTS

LOCATION(S): ....

RESPONSE CODE:

		·				

REQUEST FOR CO-OPERATION:

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a research scholar of Ph.D. Programme at the Department of Business Administration in Tezpur University. I am conducting my research on the topic titled **"Customer Delight: A study of the hospitality industry".** I would kindly request you to spend a few minutes to answer the question as responses will help me in attaining the objectives of the study. <u>The information will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.</u>

Thanking you,
Sinmoy Goswami,
Research Scholar in Ph.D. Programme,
Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University (Assam)

(Please put a tick mark "√" wherever applicable)

1) Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2) Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married

3) Sector of employment: ☐ Private Sector Employee ☐ Public Sector Employee
   ☐ Entrepreneur ☐ Self-employed/ Professional
   ☐ Others *(Please specify)* ....

4) Place of work: ☐ Inside North East India ☐ Outside North East India
   ☐ In foreign country

5) Place of residence: ☐ Inside North East India ☐ Outside North East India
   ☐ In foreign country

6) Purpose of visit: ☐ Official ☐ Leisure
   ☐ Both official and leisure ☐ Others

   If your purpose of visit is *official*, kindly state your designation: ....

7) "I stay in the same hotel in a particular place".

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Totally disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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8) Would you kindly give the name of the hotel(s) where you frequently stay in terms of your preference in this location?

i. .... vi. ....
ii. .... vii. ....
iii. .... viii. ....
iv. .... ix. ....
v. .... x. ....

9) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Food and beverage quality					
Availability of food and beverage variety					
Hygiene of food and beverage					
Food and beverage at reasonable price					
Quality of the restaurant					
Location of the hotel					
Physical appearance of the hotel					
View of the surrounding areas of the hotel					
Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel					
Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel					

10) Do you think you always get what you expect when you visit your preferred hotel?

☐ Always ☐ Almost always ☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ Have not thought

11) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Room furnishings and appearance					
Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows					
Quietness of the room					
Cleanliness of the room					
Quality of in-room temperature control					
Room service					
In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio					
Internet connection					
Reasonable price for the room					
Helpful pre transaction information					
Convenient and reliable reservation system					

12) What do you do when your preferred hotel does not meet your expectations?

Factors	Highest chance	Above average chance	Average chance	Below average chance	Least chance
Complain but do nothing					
Do not complain and do nothing					
Complain and leave the hotel forever					
Any other *(please specify)*..........................					

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13) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff					
Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service					
Special attention					
Courtesy of the hotel staff					
Language proficiency of the hotel staff					
Efficient check-in and check-out					
Neat appearance of staff					
Convenient payment method					
Availability of reliable wake-up call					
Security of belongings including valuables inside the room					
Responsible security personnel					

14) Have you ever been loyal to any hotel where you stayed?

Yes always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Do not know ☐   Rarely ☐   Never ☐

If *Yes always* and *Sometimes*, why

Factors	Highest chance	Above average chance	Average chance	Below average chance	Least chance
Always met my expectations					
Gives me more than my expectations					
I do not have any choice					
I love this place					
I love the people working in this hotel					
Any other *(please specify)*.............................					

15) Do you feel that your hotel provides the following?

i) Surpass your expectations:

Yes always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Do not know ☐   Rarely ☐   Never ☐

ii) Make you feel happy (through surpassing your expectations):

Yes always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Do not know ☐   Rarely ☐   Never ☐

16) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Availability of recreation facilities					
Availability of transportation arrangements					
Availability of 24 hours taxi service					
Availability of business centre					
Availability of meeting facilities					
Availability of convenient parking facilities					
Availability of efficient laundry service					
Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)					
Availability of free newspaper					
Availability of frequent travellers' program					
Availability of swimming facilities					
Availability of gymnasium facilities					
Overall comfortability					
Any other *(please specify)*					

17) When you get more than your expectations from any hotel where you stayed, what is your reaction?

☐ Feel Happy　　☐ Revisit　　☐ Refer to your friends/ relatives/ colleagues

☐ Do not do anything　　☐ Any other action *(Please specify)*.......................

18) Have you ever been pleasantly surprised by any act of a hotel where you stayed?
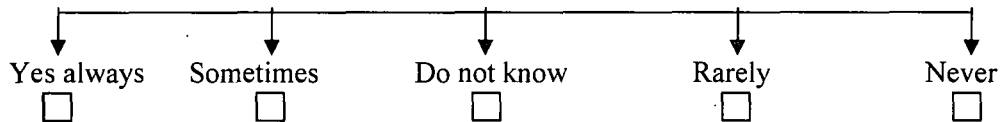
Yes always　　Sometimes　　Do not know　　Rarely　　Never
☐　　　　☐　　　　☐　　　　☐　　　　☐

If *Yes always* and *Sometimes*, how?

☐ Free gifts　　☐ Special discounts　　☐ Special foods　　☐ Special entertainment

☐ Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.

☐ Any other *(Please specify)*.....................

19) How often do you receive all or any of these from the hotel where you stayed?

Factors	Always whenever I visit	Sometimes (predictable)	Sometimes but unpredictable	Rarely	Only once till now
Free gifts					
Special discounts					
Special foods					
Special entertainment					
Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.					
Any other *(please specify)*........................					

20) Whenever you get such pleasant experiences, do you always expect to get it from the hotel where you stayed?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If *Rarely or Never*, why?

....

....

21) Whenever you get such pleasant experiences, what is the level of your excitement?

High excitement	Moderate excitement	Average excitement	Below average excitement	No excitement at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22) Whenever you get such excitement from these pleasant experiences, do you feel good?

Feel very good	Feel good	No emotion
☐	☐	☐

23) Kindly give atleast five factors that somehow made/make you feel delighted after visiting your favourite hotel?

i. .... vi. ....
ii. .... vii. ....
iii. .... viii. ....
iv. .... ix. ....
v. .... x. ....

24) Do you think they add value according to you?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If *Yes always* and *Sometimes*, answer Question nos. (a1) and (a2):

(a1) Do/ will you remember them?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(a2) How do they add value according to you?

☐ Always provide enjoyment   ☐ Provide enjoyment only for few moments

☐ Provide enjoyment only for few moments when various such values are put together

☐ Any other (please specify) ....

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25) Next time when you visit your preferred hotel, do you expect the same addition of these values?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)*	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)*	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)*	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)*

(b1)   Will you be happy with your preferred hotel?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(b2)   Will you stay in your preferred hotel in your next visit?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26) Next time when you visit your preferred hotel, do you expect any change in the addition of these values?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)*	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)*	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)*	*Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)*

If **Yes always** and **Sometimes**, how often do you expect such changes in the addition of these values?

☐ Randomly   ☐ After particular time intervals of your visits/stay

☐ After every or certain number of your visits/stay

☐ For different nature of your visits

☐ Any other *(please specify)* ....

If **Yes always** and **Sometimes**, in what manner do you expect addition of new values during your stay/visit in your preferred hotel?

☐ New values were provided along with the earlier ones

☐ New values were provided replacing the earlier ones (but similar to the earlier ones)

☐ New values were provided replacing the earlier ones (but totally different from the earlier ones)

☐ New values were provided but cannot remember earlier values

☐ Any other *(please specify)* ....

XXIV

(c1)   Will you be happy with your preferred hotel?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(c2)   Will you stay in your preferred hotel in your next visit?

Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

27) What is your educational qualification?

☐ Below 10th standard   ☐ Passed 10th standard   ☐ Passed 12th standard

☐ Graduate   ☐ Post Graduate   ☐ Any other *(please specify)*......

28) What is the age group you belong to?

☐ Below 20 years   ☐ Between 20 to 30 years   ☐ Between 31 to 40 years

☐ Between 41 to 50 years   ☐ Between 51 to 60 years   ☐ Above 60 years

29) What is your monthly income?

☐ Less than Rs.12,000   ☐ Between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000

☐ Between Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000   ☐ Between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000

☐ Between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000   ☐ Above Rs.1,50,000

Thank you very much dear respondent. I will be obliged to provide you a copy of the findings of this survey. However to facilitate communication with you, you may kindly leave your postal address or e-mail ID or both in the space given below. Please be assured that your personal information will **NOT** be used for any other purpose. Thank you once again.

Personal Address:

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E-mail ID:

....

APPENDIX-II

CODEBOOK FOR QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GUESTS

(Codes are shown in red ink)

LOCATION(S): ....

RESPONSE CODE: [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

REQUEST FOR CO-OPERATION:

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a research scholar of Ph.D. Programme at the Department of Business Administration in Tezpur University. I am conducting my research on the topic titled **"Customer Delight: A study of the hospitality industry"**. I would kindly request you to spend a few minutes to answer the question as responses will help me in attaining the objectives of the study. **The information will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.**

Thanking you,
Sinmoy Goswami,
Research Scholar in Ph.D. Programme,
Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University (Assam)

(Please put a tick mark "√" wherever applicable)

1) Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Codes	1	2

2) Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married

Codes	1	2

3) Sector of employment: ☐ Private Sector Employee ☐ Public Sector Employee

Codes	1	2

☐ Entrepreneur ☐ Self-employed/ Professional

Codes	3	4

☐ Others *(Please specify)* ....

Codes	5

4) Place of work:

☐ Inside North East India ☐ Outside North East India ☐ In foreign country

Codes	1	2	3

5) Place of residence:

☐ Inside North East India ☐ Outside North East India ☐ In foreign country

Codes	1	2	3

XXVI

6) Purpose of visit:

☐ Official ☐ Leisure ☐ Both official and leisure ☐ Others

Codes	1	2	3	4

If your purpose of visit is *official*, kindly state your designation: ....

7) "I stay in the same hotel in a particular place".

	Strongly agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neither agree nor disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Totally disagree ☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

8) Would you kindly give the name of the hotel(s) where you frequently stay in terms of your preference in this location?

i. .... vi. ....
ii. .... vii. ....
iii. .... viii. ....
iv. .... ix. ....
v. .... x. ....

9) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Food and beverage quality					
Availability of food and beverage variety					
Hygiene of food and beverage					
Food and beverage at reasonable price					
Quality of the restaurant					
Location of the hotel					
Physical appearance of the hotel					
View of the surrounding areas of the hotel					
Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel					
Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel					

10) Do you think you always get what you expect when you visit your preferred hotel?

☐ Always ☐ Almost always ☐ Sometimes

Codes	5	4	3

☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ Have not thought

Codes	2	1	0

11) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

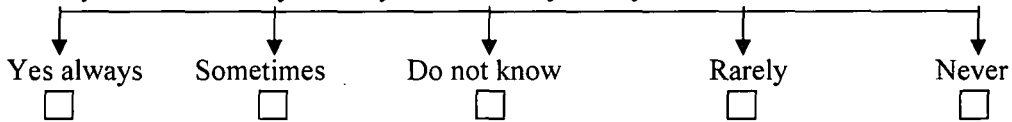| Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Room furnishings and appearance					
Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows					
Quietness of the room					
Cleanliness of the room					
Quality of in-room temperature control					
Room service					
In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio					
Internet connection					
Reasonable price for the room					
Helpful pre transaction information					
Convenient and reliable reservation system					

12) What do you do when your preferred hotel does not meet your expectations?

Factors	Highest chance	Above average chance	Average chance	Below average chance	Least chance
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Complain but do nothing					
Do not complain and do nothing					
Complain and leave the hotel forever					
Any other *(please specify)*...........................					

13) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff					
Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service					
Special attention					
Courtesy of the hotel staff					
Language proficiency of the hotel staff					
Efficient check-in and check-out					
Neat appearance of staff					
Convenient payment method					
Availability of reliable wake-up call					
Security of belongings including valuables inside the room					
Responsible security personnel					

14) Have you ever been loyal to any hotel where you stayed?

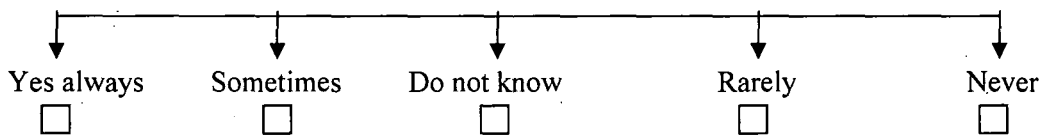|	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

If *Yes always* and *Sometimes*, why

Factors	Highest chance	Above average chance	Average chance	Below average chance	Least chance
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Always met my expectations					
Gives me more than my expectations					
I do not have any choice					
I love this place					
I love the people working in this hotel					
Any other *(please specify)*............................					

15) Do you feel that your hotel provides the following?

   i) Surpass your expectations:

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

   ii) Make you feel happy (through surpassing your expectations):

|	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

16) What do you expect (from *all or any* of the following points) when you stay in a hotel?

Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of recreation facilities					
Availability of transportation arrangements					
Availability of 24 hours taxi service					
Availability of business centre					
Availability of meeting facilities					
Availability of convenient parking facilities					
Availability of efficient laundry service					
Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)					
Availability of free newspaper					
Availability of frequent travellers' program					
Availability of swimming facilities					
Availability of gymnasium facilities					
Overall comfortability					
Any other *(please specify)*					

17) When you get more than your expectations from any hotel where you stayed, what is your reaction?

☐ Feel Happy ☐ Revisit ☐ Refer to your friends/ relatives/ colleagues

Codes	1	2	3

☐ Do not do anything ☐ Any other action *(Please specify)*........................

Codes	4	5

18) Have you ever been pleasantly surprised by any act of a hotel where you stayed?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

If *Yes always* and *Sometimes*, how?

☐ Free gifts ☐ Special discounts ☐ Special foods ☐ Special entertainment

Codes	1	2	3	4

☐ Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.

Codes	5

☐ Any other *(Please specify)*....................

Codes	6

19) How often do you receive all or any of these from the hotel where you stayed?

Factors	Always whenever I visit	Sometimes (predictable)	Sometimes but unpredictable	Rarely	Only once till now
Codes	5	4	3	2	1
Free gifts					
Special discounts					
Special foods					
Special entertainment					
Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.					
Any other *(please specify)*........................					

20) Whenever you get such pleasant experiences, do you always expect to get it from the hotel where you stayed?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

If *Rarely or Never*, why?

....

....

XXX

21) Whenever you get such pleasant experiences, what is the level of your excitement?

	High excitement ☐	Moderate excitement ☐	Average excitement ☐	Below average excitement ☐	No excitement at all ☐
Codes	5	4	3	2	1

22) Whenever you get such excitement from these pleasant experiences, do you feel good?

	Feel very good ☐	Feel good ☐	No emotion ☐
Codes	3	2	1

23) Kindly give atleast five factors that somehow made/make you feel delighted after visiting your favourite hotel?

i.	....	vi.	....
ii.	....	vii.	....
iii.	....	viii.	....
iv.	....	ix.	....
v.	....	x.	....

24) Do you think they add value according to you?

	Yes always ☐	Sometimes ☐	Do not know ☐	Rarely ☐	Never ☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

If *Yes always* and *Sometimes*, answer Question nos. (a1) and (a2):

(a1) Do/ will you remember them?

	Yes always ☐	Sometimes ☐	Do not know ☐	Rarely ☐	Never ☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

(a2) How do they add value according to you?

	☐ Always provide enjoyment	☐ Provide enjoyment only for few moments
Codes	1	2

	☐ Provide enjoyment only for few moments when various such values are put together
Codes	3

	☐ Any other (please specify) ....
Codes	4

XXXI

25) Next time when you visit your preferred hotel, do you expect the same addition of these values?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
	Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (b1) and (b2)

(b1)   Will you be happy with your preferred hotel?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

(b2)   Will you stay in your preferred hotel in your next visit?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

26) Next time when you visit your preferred hotel, do you expect any change in the addition of these values?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
	Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)	Kindly go to Question Nos. (c1) and (c2)

If **Yes always** and **Sometimes**, how often do you expect such changes in the addition of these values?

	☐ Randomly	☐ After particular time intervals of your visits/stay
Codes	1	2

	☐ After every or certain number of your visits/stay
Codes	3

	☐ For different nature of your visits
Codes	4

	☐ Any other (please specify) ....
Codes	5

XXXII

If **Yes always** and **Sometimes**, in what manner do you expect addition of new values during your stay/visit in your preferred hotel?

☐ New values were provided along with the earlier ones

Codes	1

☐ New values were provided replacing the earlier ones (but similar to the earlier ones)

Codes	2

☐ New values were provided replacing the earlier ones (but totally different from the earlier ones)

Codes	3

☐ New values were provided but cannot remember earlier values

Codes	4

☐ Any other *(please specify)* ....

Codes	5

(c1)   Will you be happy with your preferred hotel?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

(c2)   Will you stay in your preferred hotel in your next visit?

	Yes always	Sometimes	Do not know	Rarely	Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

27) What is your educational qualification?

	☐ Below 10th standard	☐ Passed 10th standard	☐ Passed 12th standard
Codes	1	2	3
	☐ Graduate	☐ Post Graduate	☐ Any other *(please specify)*......
Codes	4	5	6

28) What is the age group you belong to?

	☐ Below 20 years	☐ Between 20 to 30 years	☐ Between 31 to 40 years
Codes	1	2	3
	☐ Between 41 to 50 years	☐ Between 51 to 60 years	☐ Above 60 years
Codes	4	5	6

29) What is your monthly income?

	Less than Rs.12,000	Between Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000
Codes	1	2

	Between Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000	Between Rs.40,000 to Rs.1,00,000
Codes	3	4

	Between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.1,50,000	Above Rs.1,50,000
Codes	5	6

Thank you very much dear respondent. I will be obliged to provide you a copy of the findings of this survey. However to facilitate communication with you, you may kindly leave your postal address or e-mail ID or both in the space given below. Please be assured that your personal information will **NOT** be used for any other purpose. Thank you once again.

Personal Address:

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E-mail ID:

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APPENDIX-III

LIST OF HOTELS IN NORTH EAST INDIA COVERED DURING THIS STUDY

List of Hotels in North East India covered during this Study
(Star Category is applicable as present during the period of study (2010-2011))

Sr. No.	Name of the Hotel	Star Category	Location	Source
1	Mayfair Gangtok	5 Star Deluxe	Gangtok	FHRAI
2	Orange Village Resort	4 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
3	Hotel Tashi Delek	4 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
4	The Royal Plaza	4 Star	Gangtok	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
5	Hotel Royal Demazong	3 Star	Gangtok	Ministry of Tourism
6	Hotel Saramsa Resort	3 Star	Gangtok	Ministry of Tourism
7	Hotel Suhim Portico	3 Star	Gangtok	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
8	Sidlon Residency	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
9	Hotel Tibet Gallery	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
10	Golden Heights	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
11	The Delisso Abode	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
12	De Villa	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
13	Hotel Mayur	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
14	The Chumbi Residency	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
15	Denzong Shangrilla	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
16	Hotel Sonam Palgey	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
17	Rhenock House	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
18	Hotel Heruka	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
19	Hotel Himalayan Heights	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
20	The Retreat	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
21	Hotel Rendezvous	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
22	The Sikkim Continental	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
23	Tamarind Hotel	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
24	Hotel Gajraj	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
25	Bamboo Retreat- Rumtek	3 Star	Gangtok	On the field source
26	The Nor-Khill	Heritage Grand	Gangtok	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism, On the field source
27	Hotel Dynasty	4 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
28	Hotel Rajmahal	4 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
29	Hotel Ambarish	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
30	Hotel Ambarish Grand Regency	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
31	Hotel Millenium	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI
32	Hotel Viswaratna	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
33	Agnideep Continetal	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
34	Hotel Nakshatra	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
35	Kiranshree Portico	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
36	Hotel Atithi	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism

List of Hotels in North East India covered during this Study
(Star Category is applicable as present during the period of study (2010-2011))

Sr. No.	Name of the Hotel	Star Category	Location	Source
37	Hotel Grand Starline	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
38	Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
39	Hotel Rituraj	3 Star	Guwahati	On the field source
40	Hotel Ginger	No Classification	Guwahati	On the field source
41	Brahmaputra Jungle Resort	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
42	Iora- The Retreat	3 star	Kaziranga	Ministry of Tourism
43	Emerald Hotel and Resort	3 star	Kaziranga	Ministry of Tourism
44	City Regency	3 star	Dibrugarh	Ministry of Tourism
45	Hotel Natraj	3 star	Dibrugarh	On the field source
46	Hotel MD's Continental	3 star	Jorhat	Ministry of Tourism
47	Hotel KRC Palace	3 star	Tezpur	On the field source
48	Hotel Polo Towers	4 Star	Shillong	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
49	Hotel Pegasus Crown	3 Star	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
50	Hotel Centre Point	3 Star	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
51	Pinewood Hotel	3 Star	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
52	Hotel Borail View	3 Star	Silchar	On the field source
53	Hotel Ginger	No Classification	Agartala	On the field source
54	Hotel Radha International	3 Star	Agartala	On the field source
55	Hotel Rajarshi	No Classification	Agartala	On the field source
56	Hotel Rajdhani	3 Star	Agartala	On the field source
57	Hotel Welcome Palace	3 Star	Agartala	On the field source
58	Hotel Arini	No Classification	Aizawl	On the field source
59	Hotel Japhu	3 Star	Kohima	On the field source
60	Hotel Saramati	3 Star	Dimapur	On the field source
61	Hotel Donyi Polo Ashok	3 Star	Itanagar	On the field source
62	Arun Sunbansiri	No Classification	Itanagar	On the field source
63	The Classic hotel	No Classification	Imphal	On the field source
64	Hotel Nirmala	No Classification	Imphal	On the field source
65	Hotel Apollo	No Classification	Imphal	On the field source

Note: FHRAI stands for Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India

APPENDIX-IV

CALCULATIONS

Table A.1: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Pleasant Surprises in Hotels

(I) Surpassing of Expectations	(J) Surpassing of Expectations	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Never surpassed	Rarely surpass	-1.21*	0.11	0.00	-1.49	-0.93
	Sometimes surpass	-2.81*	0.09	0.00	-3.04	-2.59
	Always surpass	-2.86*	0.07	0.00	-3.04	-2.67
Rarely surpassed	Never surpass	1.21*	0.11	0.00	0.93	1.49
	Sometimes surpass	-1.60*	0.10	0.00	-1.86	-1.35
	Always surpass	-1.65*	0.08	0.00	-1.87	-1.43
Sometimes surpassed	Never surpass	2.81*	0.09	0.00	2.59	3.04
	Rarely surpass	1.60*	0.10	0.00	1.35	1.86
	Always surpass	-0.04	0.05	0.84	-0.18	0.09
Always surpassed	Never surpass	2.86*	0.07	0.00	2.67	3.04
	Rarely surpass	1.65*	0.08	0.00	1.43	1.87
	Sometimes surpass	0.04	0.05	0.84	-0.09	0.18

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.2: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Happiness due to Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels

(I) Pleasant surprises	(J) Pleasant surprises	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Never obtain	Rarely obtain	-0.88*	0.17	0.00	-1.32	-0.44
	Sometimes obtain	-2.88*	0.16	0.00	-3.29	-2.46
	Always obtain	-2.58*	0.45	0.00	-3.78	-1.38
Rarely obtain	Never obtain	0.88*	0.17	0.00	0.44	1.32
	Sometimes obtain	-2.00*	0.11	0.00	-2.28	-1.72
	Always obtain	-1.71*	0.44	0.00	-2.87	-0.55
Sometimes obtain	Never obtain	2.88*	0.16	0.00	2.46	3.29
	Rarely obtain	2.00*	0.11	0.00	1.72	2.28
	Always obtain	0.29	0.43	1.00	-0.86	1.45
Always obtain	Never obtain	2.58*	0.45	0.00	1.38	3.78
	Rarely obtain	1.71*	0.44	0.00	0.55	2.87
	Sometimes obtain	-0.29	0.43	1.00	-1.45	0.86

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.3: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Happiness due to Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels

(I) Perceived Excitement	(J) Perceived Excitement	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Below average excitement	Average excitement	-0.61	0.71	0.83	-4.43	3.21
	Moderate excitement	-1.51	0.68	0.34	-5.93	2.91
	High excitement	-1.86	0.67	0.25	-6.42	2.70
Average excitement	Below average excitement	0.61	0.71	0.83	-3.21	4.43
	Moderate excitement	-0.90*	0.28	0.02	-1.66	-0.13
	High excitement	-1.25*	0.26	0.00	-1.98	-0.52
Moderate excitement	Below average excitement	1.51	0.68	0.34	-2.91	5.93
	Average excitement	0.90*	0.28	0.02	0.13	1.66
	High excitement	-0.35*	0.12	0.03	-0.68	-0.03
High excitement	Below average excitement	1.86	0.67	0.25	-2.70	6.42
	Average excitement	1.25*	0.26	0.00	0.52	1.98
	Moderate excitement	0.35*	0.12	0.03	0.03	0.68

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.4: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Happiness due to Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels

(I) Perceived Positive Feelings	(J) Perceived Positive Feelings	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No emotion	Feel good	-2.30*	0.41	0.00	-3.30	-1.31
	Feel very good	-2.88*	0.41	0.00	-3.87	-1.89
Feel good	No emotion	2.30*	0.41	0.00	1.31	3.30
	Feel very good	-0.58*	0.11	0.00	-0.84	-0.31
Feel very good	No emotion	2.88*	0.41	0.00	1.89	3.87
	Feel good	0.58*	0.11	0.00	0.31	0.84

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.5: Rotated Component Matrix of Variables that may result in Customer Delight in Hotels

	Variables that may result in Customer Delight in Hotels	Component									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Convenient payment method	0.769			0.144				0.240		
2	Availability of reliable wake-up call	0.751	0.207	0.297	-0.144			0.215			
3	Quietness of the room	0.694		0.150		-0.145	0.442	0.107			
4	Convenient and reliable reservation system	0.689	0.354		0.165		0.117		0.212	-0.144	
5	Room Service	0.683	0.180	0.108	0.189	0.162	0.253	0.142	0.118	0.169	-0.141
6	Responsible security personnel	0.674	0.181		0.265			0.190	0.182	0.183	0.144
7	Efficient check-in and check-out	0.651	0.339				0.146	0.263		-0.189	
8	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	0.645	0.131		0.497	0.115		-0.130		-0.118	0.163
9	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	0.503	0.159	0.210	0.325		0.253	0.362		0.248	
10	Quality of restaurant	0.482		-0.329	0.350		0.282	0.264	0.201		0.215
11	Room furnishings and appearance	0.119	0.811							0.154	0.160
12	Special Attention	0.180	0.707	0.206		0.105		0.235	0.147	-0.388	
13	Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel staff	0.506	0.656	0.143				0.129	0.169	-0.250	
14	Cleanliness of the room	0.353	0.565		0.399	-0.118	0.110		0.197	-0.242	0.164
15	Courtesy of hotel staff	0.536	0.557		0.211			0.257	-0.113		
16	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	0.204	0.539	0.320	0.254		0.449			-0.165	-0.120
17	Food and beverage at reasonable price	0.112	0.521			-0.320	0.170		0.468	0.132	
18	Internet connection	0.344	-0.385		-0.236	0.279		0.212		0.148	0.338
19	Availability of meeting facilities	0.212		0.889				0.113			0.127
20	Availability of business centre	0.295	0.120	0.868							0.149
21	View of surrounding areas of the hotel	0.339		-0.607		0.171	0.228			0.183	0.161
22	Availability of efficient laundry service	0.281	0.419	0.533		0.328		0.182			-0.228
23	Availability of free newspaper	0.401		0.497	-0.137	0.264	0.399				
24	Hygiene of food and beverage	0.151			0.819		0.148				
25	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	0.188	0.112		0.814		0.169		0.119		-0.132
26	Food and beverage quality	0.346	0.119	-0.254	0.456			0.279	-0.106	0.163	0.158
27	Neat appearance of staff	0.420			0.447		-0.192	0.362		0.192	-0.226
28	Availability of gymnasium facilities				-0.152	0.790	0.120	-0.179			
29	Availability of frequent travellers' program			-0.115		0.752					-0.112
30	Availability of swimming facilities		-0.193		-0.142	0.600			-0.190	0.486	
31	Availability of recreation facilities				0.210	0.520	0.206	0.397	-0.208	0.172	
32	Availability of personal care amenities		0.314	0.276	0.199	0.499	0.158	0.432	0.163		
33	Availability of 24 hour taxi service		0.237	0.339		0.471	0.129	0.402	0.240	0.139	
34	Availability of convenient parking facilities	-0.194		0.402	0.173	0.439	0.257	0.195	0.384		0.224
35	Location of the hotel		0.203	0.129	0.269		0.704				
36	Availability of food and beverage variety			-0.175		0.164	0.675	0.303	0.112		0.121
37	Quality of in-room temperature control	0.492		0.132	0.194	0.172	0.525	0.161		0.198	
38	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	0.222	0.377	-0.204		0.123	0.487	0.384		-0.239	
39	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	0.386		0.150		-0.103	0.139	0.699			
40	Availability of transportation arrangements	0.208	0.329	0.270	0.209	0.146	0.204	0.504	0.216	0.212	-0.107
41	Helpful pre transaction information	0.429			0.188				0.718	-0.195	0.101
42	Reasonable price for the room	0.319	0.404	0.122		-0.117	0.228		0.623		-0.125
43	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room	0.533	0.134		0.200		-0.180		0.591	0.235	
44	Overall comfortability		-0.125		0.137	0.177				0.766	
45	Other facilities			-0.202	0.106			0.107		0.123	-0.867
46	Physical appearance of the hotel	0.149		-0.341			0.342	0.165		0.400	0.561

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table A.6: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Regular Expectations of Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels

(I) Expectations of Similar Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels	(J) Expectations of Similar Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rarely	Sometimes	-1.61*	0.23	0.00	-2.25	-0.97
	Yes always	-1.00*	0.32	0.01	-1.79	-0.22
Sometimes	Rarely	1.61*	0.23	0.00	0.97	2.25
	Yes always	0.61*	0.24	0.04	0.03	1.18
Yes always	Rarely	1.00*	0.32	0.01	0.22	1.79
	Sometimes	-0.61*	0.24	0.04	-1.18	-0.03

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.7: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Expectations of Similar Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels

(I) Age Group	(J) Age Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Below 20 years	Between 20 to 30 years	0.03	0.21	1.00	-0.82	0.88
	Between 31 to 40 years	0.32	0.21	0.61	-0.52	1.16
	Between 41 to 50 years	0.46	0.22	0.32	-0.38	1.30
	Between 51 to 60 years	0.43	0.26	0.49	-0.41	1.26
Between 20 to 30 years	Below 20 years	-0.03	0.21	1.00	-0.88	0.82
	Between 31 to 40 years	0.29*	0.10	0.03	0.02	0.56
	Between 41 to 50 years	0.43*	0.10	0.00	0.15	0.71
	Between 51 to 60 years	0.40	0.17	0.15	-0.08	0.88
Between 31 to 40 years	Below 20 years	-0.32	0.21	0.61	-1.16	0.52
	Between 20 to 30 years	-0.29*	0.10	0.03	-0.56	-0.02
	Between 41 to 50 years	0.14	0.11	0.70	-0.16	0.45
	Between 51 to 60 years	0.11	0.18	0.97	-0.39	0.60
Between 41 to 50 years	Below 20 years	-0.46	0.22	0.32	-1.30	0.38
	Between 20 to 30 years	-0.43*	0.10	0.00	-0.71	-0.15
	Between 31 to 40 years	-0.14	0.11	0.70	-0.45	0.16
	Between 51 to 60 years	-0.03	0.18	1.00	-0.53	0.47
Between 51 to 60 years	Below 20 years	-0.43	0.26	0.49	-1.26	0.41
	Between 20 to 30 years	-0.40	0.17	0.15	-0.88	0.08
	Between 31 to 40 years	-0.11	0.18	0.97	-0.60	0.39
	Between 41 to 50 years	0.03	0.18	1.00	-0.47	0.53

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.8: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Expectations of Similar Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels

(I) Happiness with the Preferred Hotels due to Similar Value Addition	(J) Happiness with the Preferred Hotels due to Similar Value Addition	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rarely	Sometimes	-1.59*	0.09	0.00	-1.80	-1.39
	Yes always	-2.10*	0.04	0.00	-2.20	-1.99
Sometimes	Rarely	1.59*	0.09	0.00	1.39	1.80
	Yes always	-0.50*	0.10	0.00	-0.73	-0.27
Yes always	Rarely	2.10*	0.04	0.00	1.99	2.20
	Sometimes	0.50*	0.10	0.00	0.27	0.73

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.9: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Expectations of Similar Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels

(I) Likelihood to Stay in the Same Preferred Hotels due to Similar Value Addition in the Next Visit	(J) Likelihood to Stay in the Same Preferred Hotels due to Similar Value Addition in the Next Visit	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rarely	Sometimes	-0.96	0.37	0.08	-2.04	0.12
	Yes always	-1.42*	0.37	0.01	-2.49	-0.34
Sometimes	Rarely	0.96	0.37	0.08	-0.12	2.04
	Yes always	-0.45*	0.09	0.00	-0.66	-0.25
Yes always	Rarely	1.42*	0.37	0.01	0.34	2.49
	Sometimes	0.45*	0.09	0.00	0.25	0.66

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.10: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Regular Expectations of Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels

(I) Expectations of Changes in Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels	(J) Expectations of Changes in Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rarely	Sometimes	-0.40	0.26	0.29	-1.03	0.24
	Yes always	0.22	0.43	0.86	-0.88	1.33
Sometimes	Rarely	0.40	0.26	0.29	-0.24	1.03
	Yes always	0.62	0.36	0.25	-0.39	1.63
Yes always	Rarely	-0.22	0.43	0.86	-1.33	0.88
	Sometimes	-0.62	0.36	0.25	-1.63	0.39

Table A.11: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Expectations of Changes in Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels

(I) Happiness with the Preferred Hotels due to Changes in Value Addition	(J) Happiness with the Preferred Hotels due to Changes in Value Addition	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Never	Rarely	-0.53*	0.12	0.00	-0.89	-0.17
	Sometimes	-2.54*	0.08	0.00	-2.75	-2.34
	Yes always	-2.94*	0.07	0.00	-3.12	-2.77
Rarely	Never	0.53*	0.12	0.00	0.17	0.89
	Sometimes	-2.01*	0.15	0.00	-2.41	-1.62
	Yes always	-2.41*	0.14	0.00	-2.80	-2.03
Sometimes	Never	2.54*	0.08	0.00	2.34	2.75
	Rarely	2.01*	0.15	0.00	1.62	2.41
	Yes always	-0.40*	0.10	0.00	-0.66	-0.13
Yes always	Never	2.94*	0.07	0.00	2.77	3.12
	Rarely	2.41*	0.14	0.00	2.03	2.80
	Sometimes	0.40*	0.10	0.00	0.13	0.66

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.12: Results of Post Hoc Tests for Dependent Variable, Expectations of Changes in Value Addition during Next Visit to the Same Preferred Hotels

(I) Likelihood to Stay in the Same Preferred Hotels due to Changes in Value Addition in the Next Visit	(J) Likelihood to Stay in the Same Preferred Hotels due to Changes in Value Addition in the Next Visit	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Never	Rarely	-1.67*	0.18	0.00	-2.16	-1.17
	Sometimes	-2.65*	0.07	0.00	-2.84	-2.47
	Yes always	-2.95*	0.09	0.00	-3.18	-2.72
Rarely	Never	1.67*	0.18	0.00	1.17	2.16
	Sometimes	-0.99*	0.20	0.00	-1.51	-0.46
	Yes always	-1.28*	0.20	0.00	-1.82	-0.75
Sometimes	Never	2.65*	0.07	0.00	2.47	2.84
	Rarely	0.99*	0.20	0.00	0.46	1.51
	Yes always	-0.30*	0.11	0.04	-0.58	-0.01
Yes always	Never	2.95*	0.09	0.00	2.72	3.18
	Rarely	1.28*	0.20	0.00	0.75	1.82
	Sometimes	0.30*	0.11	0.04	0.01	0.58

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table A.13: Rotated Component Matrix of Variables associated with Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees

Variables associated with Skilled and Well Trained Hotel Employees	Component	
	1	2
Special Attention	0.889	
Friendliness and helpfulness of hotel staff	0.878	0.245
Courtesy of hotel staff	0.746	0.439
Helpfulness of pre transaction information	0.559	0.287
Staff have neat appearance	0.115	0.781
Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	0.257	0.778
Language proficiency of the hotel staff	0.247	0.719

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

APPENDIX-V

PUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPERS BASED ON THIS STUDY

Goswami, Sinmoy, and Mrinmoy K. Sarma. "Guest Delight: It's Significance in the Hotel industry." *IUP Journal of Marketing Management* 10.2 (2011): 64-81. Print.

---. "The Road to Guest Delight: An Empirical Exploration in the Hotel Industry." *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism* 10.2 (2011): 122-145. Print.

---. "Customer Delight in the Hotel Industry: An Exploratory Study." *Tourism and Hospitality Industry: Applications and Role of Science and Technology*. Ed. S.C. Bagri, Sanjay S. Mahar and Servesh Uniyal. Dehra Dun: BSMPS, 2013. 1-16. Print.

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Guest Delight:
Its Significance in the Hotel Industry

———————● *Sinmoy Goswami* and Mrinmoy K Sarma*** ●————————

In today's competitive business scenario, every hotel emphasizes in securing loyal guests by delighting them. This study aims to establish the existence of guest delight and thereby provides a solution for maintenance of its constancy in hotels. The study involved interviews with 152 repeat guests of 29 hotels in the 4-star, 3-star and unclassified categories in Guwahati city and a few towns in northeastern India. It also involved structured observation and interviews with the employees of these hotels. The study revealed that various parameters like food and beverage quality, welcoming atmosphere, etc. are related to pleasant surprises of these guests in the hotels where they stayed. Their pleasant surprises are linked to their level of excitement which is in turn related to their positive feelings. It is connected to surpassing their expectations of happiness in them resulting in guest delight. In due course of time, these delighter features are assimilated with the satisfier features of the hotel service. With every successive purchase, guests tend to expect the earlier delighter features which ultimately affect the profitability of the hotels at some point of time. Any hotel may create transitory delight or reenacted delight to provide a solution to this unique problem.

Introduction

Delight refers to "great pleasure" or "joyful satisfaction" that a person experiences from a product, service, experience, idea and so on. In fact, delight can also be attributed to one that "affords extreme enjoyment" (*Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*, 1988; and *Webster Comprehensive Dictionary*, 2001).

Customer delight refers to any one of the following (Keiningham and Vavra, 2001):

- "Positive surprise arising from extremely good service or product performance".

- "The highest level of satisfaction".

- "Exceeding customers' expectations".

Keiningham and Vavra (2001) states, "customer delight will only be achieved by exceeding all the base expectations in the performance of a product or in the delivery of service (or in the servicing that accompanies a product or service)". Delight is the "emotional response to a successful business transaction". Zeithaml *et al.* (2008) state

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that customer delight refers to the "profoundly positive emotional state" resulting from one's expectations "exceeded to a surprising degree". Lynch (1993) describes customer delight as the "capacity to provide customers with experiences that transcend normal standards of quality services".

Delighting customers (guests) has become an important strategy for most companies and organizations, including hotels, in their quest for higher profitability and survivality (Stewart,1997; Skogland and Siguaw, 2004; and Torres and Kline, 2006). It basically involves providing an added set of unexpected benefits along with the core product and/or service which surprises the customer leaving him/her enthralled with a favorable attitude regarding the hotel. In today's globalized business scenario, every hotel has experienced tougher competition and thereby most of their decisions are made keeping in view the prevailing and changing tastes of existing and prospective guests in relation to their services. In fact, all the various activities of such hotels, viz., planning, organizing, leading, coordinating, controlling and staffing are aimed at satisfying their guests. However, keeping in view the number of their competitors, merely satisfying customers is not enough (Stewart, 1997). Thus, customer loyalty has gained importance along with guest satisfaction for hotels. However, guest loyalty cannot be obtained only by satisfying. It requires to venture beyond customer satisfaction. The most promising path towards obtaining customer loyalty is by achieving customer delight (Torres and Kline, 2006). Therefore, there is a vital need for hotels to move beyond simply satisfying guests towards delighting them in order to retain them (Burns et al., 2000).

This study seeks to establish that the concept of customer delight moves beyond customer satisfaction (Berman, 2005) by providing unexpected benefits to the guests along with the basic service in hotels. It is noticed that gradually these delighter features get assimilated with the satisfier features of the product or service. As the hotel continues to delight guests by providing delighter features along with the basic service, their expectation continues to increase. As a result, in every successive stay, they tend to expect the earlier delighter features. However, there is a limit to which a hotel can keep on delighting guests as far as its profitability is concerned. This paper, therefore, also highlights that any hotel may create transitory delight or reenacted delight so as to reduce chances of the guests remembering any of the earlier delighter experiences (assimilated delight). These can lead to maintenance of constancy of delighter features and hence delight.

Literature Review

Most scholars have treated customer satisfaction and customer delight separately. Chowdhury (2009) highlights that presently most companies aim at delighting customers "by assuring only what they can provide, then providing more than their assurance". Organizations including hotels do so in order to win a customer (guest) for life (in case he or she is continuously delighted). In fact, Chowdhury (2009) describes obtaining customer delight as a move towards providing Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS).

Leventhal (2008) has added another dimension to the concept of customer satisfaction and delight through his analysis of the disconfirmation theory of customer satisfaction. If the product or service delivery has met customer's "desired expectations", then it is said to be a state of confirmation leading to customer satisfaction. If on the other hand customer's expectations are not met, then it is said to be a state of disconfirmation. It may be positive disconfirmation when product or service delivery surpasses customer's expectations or negative disconfirmation when product or service delivery falls below customer expectations (Leventhal, 2008).

Kano et al. (1984) has conducted a detailed analysis of the concept of customer satisfaction and has forwarded a model on the said topic. His model of customer satisfaction has highlighted the importance of "excitement factors" of any product or service along with "basic factors" and "performance factors" in providing delight to customers.

Rust and Oliver (2000) have described customer delight as "profoundly positive emotional state" generally resulting from "having one's expectations exceeded to a surprising degree". This study has deeply analyzed the insights of customer delight and has accordingly classified product or service attributes into the following three types:

1. Must Attributes: Customers expect these attributes while purchasing a product or service. Their absence can render any product or service unable to perform its basic function and may end up dissatisfying the customer.

2. Satisfiers: These represent additional features with the basic product or service. Higher levels of these attributes may pull further the level of satisfaction beyond that which is provided by the basic product or service.

3. Delighters: These represent product or service attributes that are unexpected by the customers and provide them with surprising enjoyment leading to customer delight.

Torres and Kline (2006) suggest that the real way to increase customer loyalty and retention is not to satisfy customers but to delight them. Keiningham and Vavra (2001) have measured customer satisfaction along a continuum. The three major points along this continuum are as follows:

1. Zone of Pain: It is the point at which the company or hotel is not satisfying its customers' needs.

2. Zone of Mere Satisfaction: It is the point past the point of the zone of pain in which the company or hotel is fulfilling customers' needs but not doing much to distinguish itself from any other competitor within the same market.

3. Zone of Delight: It is the point at which customers demonstrate behavior consistent with the goals of the firm (like increased retention, sales, word-of-mouth recommendations, etc.).

Crotts *et al.* (2008) has further modified the above concept of the impact of customer satisfaction and delight as put forward by Keiningham and Vavra (2001) by replacing the Zone of mere satisfaction by Zone of dissatisfaction and Zone of satisfaction. Customer delight is the customer's "positive emotional reaction" on receiving a product or service that not only satisfies them but also provides unexpected value leading to sense of surprise. "Outrage and pain" results when a customer receives unexpected poor product or service. Dissatisfaction occurs when the product or service falls below customer's expectations. However, when a customer's expectations are met and exceeded, he or she feels satisfied and has a moderately high intention to repurchase the item. Delight is the combination of "surprise and happiness" when any product or service exceeds customer expectations on key criteria. These "criteria create memorable and emotional responses" that "strongly drive overall satisfaction intention to repurchase" the product or service.

Rust and Oliver (2000) have described customer delight in case of a product or service's performance from the point of view of exceeding customer expectations which may be of the following levels:

- "Level of Exceedingness" is within the normal range: This implies that the product or service's performance would lead the customers to have a notion that the product or service was better than expected but not so surprising.

- "Level of Exceedingness" is beyond the normal limits: This implies that the product or service's performance would surprise the guests.

Burns *et al.* (2000) describes customer delight as a "post-purchase emotion" that results from the consumer's evaluation of the performance of product or service and is assumed to be an "extension of satisfaction characterized by positive effect". The disconfirmation theory of customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction provides the theoretical basis for defining customer delight. Customers evaluate the performance of the products and services they have purchased by referring to their expectations before purchase. Whenever products or services cannot meet their expectations, the customers experience dissatisfaction (negative disconfirmation). However, when these products or services meet expectations, these expectations are confirmed and customers experience satisfaction. But when the products or services exceed customer's expectations, the latter feels delighted (positive disconfirmation).

Oliver *et al.* (1997) have noted that surprising positive performance of a product leads to arousal in the minds of the customers which causes positive effect on the latter. This in turn leads to customer delight. Thereby the antecedents of customer delight are surprising positive performance, arousal and positive effect. Arousal refers to "excitement" or "stimulation" (*Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*, 1988; and *Webster Comprehensive Dictionary*, 2001). This fact has also been supported by Finn (2006). In addition to the efforts of Finn (2006), it has been found that there is an "additional direct effect of disconfirmation on arousal".

Rust and Oliver (2000) have classified customer delight into the following categories on the basis of the function of human memory:

- Assimilated Delight: It involves customers recollecting "delighting facets of consumption" and thereby accepting them as normal through "raised expectations". In short, this type of delight raises customer expectations and can create customer loyalty through attraction (Rust and Oliver, 2000).

- Reenacted Delight: It involves delight that a person experiences when a "favorite movie or song" is being played. This type of "delight emotion decays but its memory is retained". "The person in this case retains memories of the delight and can also experience the delighting stimulus at will or when available through the movie or song". In case of reenacted delight, hotels can win guest loyalty through reenacting memories of the delight. It is "appreciated" once on receiving by the guest and he or she may seek it again (Rust and Oliver, 2000).

- Transitory Delight: Such a delight may be attributed to "fate, randomness or serendipity". In case of transitory delight, hotels should put together a number of such delights in such a way that the guest remembers the experience as "delighting moments" and not as "individual moments" (Rust and Oliver, 2000).

In hotels, guests usually lay high importance on food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage "variety", "hygiene" of food and beverage, quality of the restaurant, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel, "cleanliness" and tidiness of the hotel, room furnishings and appearance, cleanliness of the room, "room service", reasonable price for the room, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, "security of belongings including valuables inside the room", "responsible security personnel" and overall comfortability (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.). This fact has been supported by Lynch (1993) who has established that "cleanliness, comfort, service, value and facilities" and "ambience, food and service" are the main factors leading to guest delight in hotels. Other points of emphasis of guests in hotels have been included in the methodology of this paper. Groenenboom and Jones (2003) have highlighted the importance of security for guests in hotels. Poon and Low (n.d.) have also highlighted the importance of free gifts, special foods and free access to facilities among the guests in the hotels.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to establish the existence of guest delight beyond guest satisfaction through unexpected benefits provided to them along with the basic service in hotels. It also seeks to provide a solution aimed at maintenance of constancy of delighter features and hence delight in any hotel.

Methodology

Initially, a study was conducted to find out the factors constituting the basic requirements that may lead to satisfaction and delight in hotels through review of the works of the earlier scholars. This also included a pilot survey of 10 repeat guests of 29 hotels falling

under 4-star, 3-star and unclassified categories in Guwahati city and Silchar town (Assam), Shillong town (Meghalaya), Aizawl town (Mizoram) and Agartala town (Tripura) (refer Table A2 of Appendix). Besides, this pilot survey also included observation and open probing of some of the employees of the above hotels. Based on this effort, it was noticed that following are the main factors constituting guest delight in hotels:

- Food and beverage quality (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of food and beverage variety (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.)

- Hygiene of food and beverage (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Food and beverage at reasonable price (Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Quality of the restaurant (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Location of the hotel (Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Physical appearance of the hotel (Heung, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- View of the surrounding areas of the hotel (Heung, 2000; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010).

- Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel (Lynch, 1993; Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Room furnishings and appearance (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Comfort of beds/mattresses/pillows (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010).

- Quietness of the room (Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Cleanliness of the room (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Quality of in-room temperature control (Choi and Chu, 2000; and Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Room service (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- In-room entertainment including television/video/audio (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low n.d.).

- Internet connection (Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Reasonable price for the room (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Helpfulness of pre-transaction information (Heung, 2000; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010).

- Convenient and reliable reservation system (Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010).

- Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Lo, n.d.).

- Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Special attention (Heung, 2000; and Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Courtesy of the hotel staff (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Language proficiency of the hotel staff (Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Check-in and check-out are efficient (Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010).

- Staff have neat appearance (Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Convenient payment method (Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of reliable wake-up call (Choi and Chu, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Security of belongings including valuables inside the room (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Groenenboom and Jones, 2003; and Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Responsible security personnel (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Groenenboom and Jones, 2003; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of recreation facilities (Heung, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of transportation arrangements (Heung, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of 24 hours taxi service (Heung, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of business center (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of meeting facilities (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of convenient parking facilities (Heung, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of efficient laundry service (Heung, 2000; and Poon and Low n.d.).

- Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon, etc.) (Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; and Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Availability of free newspaper (Poon and Low, n.d.; and Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Availability of frequent travelers' program (Heung, 2000; and Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Availability of swimming facilities (Heung, 2000; and Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Availability of gymnasium facilities (Heung, 2000; and Tsang and Qu, 2000).

- Overall comfortability (Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010; Poon and Low, n.d.).

- Free gifts (Poon and Low, n.d.; and from observation and open probing of the employees in the hotels).

- Special discounts (from observation and open probing of the employees in the hotels).

- Special foods (Poon and Low, n.d.; and from observation and open probing of the employees in the hotels).

- Free access to facilities (Poon and Low, n.d.; and from observation and open probing of the employees in the hotels)

After selection of the common and significant factors constituting guest delight in the hotels, the second stage of the study involved two types of studies. The first study was conducted through a survey of 152 repeat guests of 29 hotels falling under 4-star, 3-star and unclassified categories in northeastern India (refer Table A2). It is to be noted that wherever 4-star and 3-star categories of hotels were absent, other unclassified hotels had to be included for this survey. Unclassified hotels refer to those hotels that have not applied for any type of classification on the basis of 5-star deluxe, 5-star, 4-star, 3-star, 2-star and 1-star categories. Only repeat guests were included as sampling elements in this study as guest delight is associated only with them (as established through literature

survey). They were selected through convenience and judgement sampling. A questionnaire for guests was developed to find out the effects of these factors on them. The second study was conducted through structured observation and interview with the employees of these hotels through a well-defined interview schedule. Secondary data for this study were obtained from books, journals, etc. This study is, therefore, both exploratory and descriptive in nature. The time period of the study was two months (April 1, 2010 to May 31, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to employees and 152 repeat guests of 29 hotels falling under 4-star, 3-star and unclassified categories in Guwahati city and Silchar town (Assam), Shillong town (Meghalaya), Aizawl town (Mizoram) and Agartala town (Tripura) in northeastern India, keeping in view the convenience and accessibility for data collection. The study, therefore, limits itself in making a preliminary analysis regarding the existence of guest delight beyond guest satisfaction by providing unexpected benefits along with the basic service in hotels. Besides, this study is also limited towards providing an initial solution for maintenance of constancy of guest delight in hotels.

Analysis

Data for this study has been collected accordingly and analyzed for determining the effects of factors constituting guest delight (including pleasant surprises) on the level of excitement of the respondents.

Table A1 (Appendix) shows the count of expectation scores against each of the above parameters. From Table A1, it is clear that majority of the respondent guests have given highest expectation to hygiene of food and beverage, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel, cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel, cleanliness of the room, security of belongings including valuables inside the room and responsible security personnel in the hotels where they stayed.

Table 1 shows the count of expectation scores against pleasant surprises from the above mentioned hotels (from observation and open probing of the employees in the hotels).

From Table 1, it is clear that most respondent guests have sometimes obtained (but unpredictable) and rarely obtained free gifts, special discounts, special entertainment and free access to facilities as pleasant surprises in the hotel where they stayed. At the same time, most respondent guests have sometimes obtained (but unpredictable) special foods as pleasant surprise.

Cross tabulations have been carried out between pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondent stayed with the above parameters of hotels (refer to methodology and Table A1).

Table 1: Pleasant Surprises of Respondents During Their Stay in Their Preferred Hotels						
S. No.	Factors	Always Obtained on Visit	Sometimes Obtained (Predictable)	Sometimes Obtained but Unpredictable	Rarely Obtained	Obtained Only Once
1.	Free gifts	1	2	13	15	3
2.	Special discounts	3	8	9	9	1
3.	Special foods	1	3	14	8	5
4.	Special entertainment	1	1	7	5	0
5.	Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool, etc.	0	3	5	6	0
6.	Any other	0	1	0	0	2

In Table 2, the results of one such cross tabulation between pleasant surprise of the respondents from any act of hotel(s) where they stayed and food and beverage quality is shown. Most respondents who had average expectations from food and beverage quality (75%), rarely obtained pleasant surprise from any act of the hotels where they stayed. Again, most of these respondents who had above average expectations from food and beverage quality (56%), had sometimes obtained pleasant surprise from any act of these

Table 2: Cross Tabulation Between Pleasant Surprise of the Respondents from Any Act of the Hotels Where they Stayed and Food and Beverage Quality					
Pleasant Surprise from Any Act of Hotel(s) Where the Respondents Stayed		Food and Beverage Quality			
		Average Expectation	Above Average Expectation	Highest Expectation	Total
Never Obtained	Count	1	5	7	13
	% within food and beverage quality	25.00	10.00	12.28	11.71
Rarely Obtained	Count	3	12	25	40
	% within food and beverage quality	75.00	24.00	43.86	36.04
No Knowledge	Count	0	4	1	5
	% within food and beverage quality	0.00	8.00	1.75	4.50
Sometimes Obtained	Count	0	28	23	51
	% within food and beverage quality	0.00	56.00	40.35	45.95
Always Obtained	Count	0	1	1	2
	% within food and beverage quality	0.00	2.00	1.75	1.80
Total	Count	4	50	57	111
	% within food and beverage quality	100	100	100	100.00

hotels where they stayed. Besides, most respondents, who had highest expectations from food and beverage quality (43.86%), rarely obtained pleasant surprise. Further, many respondents, who had highest expectations from food and beverage quality (40.35%), sometimes obtained pleasant surprise. Still, it can be stated that there is a relationship between pleasant surprise from any act of hotels where the respondents stayed and food and beverage quality. Similar relationships have also been found between pleasant surprise from any act of hotels where the respondents stayed and the above parameters of the hotels (refer methodology and Table A1). The same relationship can also be seen between pleasant surprise from any act of hotels where the respondents stayed with free gifts, special discounts, special foods, special entertainment, free access to facilities as pleasant surprises, etc. obtained there (refer Table 1).

Table 3 shows the results of cross tabulation between the level of excitement and pleasant surprise from any act of hotels where the respondents stayed.

From Table 3, it is clear that most of the respondents who sometimes obtained pleasant surprises (40%) had moderate excitement. Besides, most respondents who sometimes obtained pleasant surprises (40%) had high excitement. Further, it is also noticed that most of the respondents who always obtained pleasant surprise from

Table 3: Cross Tabulation Between Level of Excitement and Pleasant Surprise from Any Act of the Hotel Where the Respondents Stayed

Level of Excitement of the Respondents from the Pleasant Surprises from the Hotel Where They Stayed		Pleasant Surprise from Any Act of Hotel Where the Respondents Stayed		Total
		Sometimes Obtained	Always Obtained	
No Excitement at All	Count	0	1	1
	% within pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondents stayed	0.00	50.00	1.92
Below Average Excitement	Count	2	0	2
	% within pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondents stayed	4.00	0.00	3.85
Average Excitement	Count	8	0	8
	% within pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondents stayed	16.00	0.00	15.38
Moderate Excitement	Count	20	0	20
	% within pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondents stayed	40.00	0.00	38.46
High Excitement	Count	20	1	21
	% within pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondents stayed	40.00	50.00	40.38
Total	Count	50	2	52
	% within pleasant surprise from any act of hotel where the respondents stayed	100.00	100.00	100.00

any act of hotels where they stayed (50%) had no excitement at all. It is also seen that most of the respondents who always obtained pleasant surprise from any act of hotels where they stayed (50%) had high excitement. Still, it can be stated that there is a relationship between pleasant surprise from any act of hotels and excitement (arousal).

Table 4 shows the results of cross tabulation between positive feelings from the pleasant surprises from any act of hotels where the respondents stayed and their level of excitement.

From Table 4, it is clear that most of the respondents who had moderate excitement (80%), average excitement (77.78%), below average excitement (100%) and no excitement at all (100%) from pleasant surprises felt good during their stay. Again, most respondents who had high excitement (76.19%) from pleasant surprises from any act of hotels where they stayed felt very good during their stay. This indicates a relationship between excitement (arousal) from pleasant surprise from any act of hotels where the respondents stayed and their positive feelings.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation Between Positive Feelings from the Pleasant Surprises and Level of Excitement of the Respondents in the Hotels Where they Stayed

Positive Feelings from the Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels Where the Respondents Stayed		Level of Excitement of the Respondents from the Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels Where they Stayed					
		No Excitement at All	Below Average Excitement	Average Excite-ment	Moderate Excite-ment	High Excite-ment	Total
No Emotion	Count	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
	% within level of excitement of the respondents from pleasant surprises	0.00	0.00	22.22	0.00	0.00	3.77
Feel Good	Count	1.00	2.00	7.00	16.00	5.00	31.00
	% within level of excitement of the respondents from pleasant surprises	100.00	100.00	77.78	80.00	23.81	58.49
Feel Very Good	Count	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	16.00	20.00
	% within level of excitement of the respondents from pleasant surprises	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	76.19	37.74
Total	Count	1.00	2.00	9.00	20.00	21.00	53.00
	% within level of excitement of the respondents from pleasant surprises	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 5 shows the results of cross tabulation between surpassing respondents' expectations and their positive feelings from the pleasant surprises in the hotels where they stayed.

Surpassing Respondents' Expectations at the Hotels		Positive Feelings from the Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels Where the Respondents Stayed			
		No Emotion	Feel Good	Feel Very Good	Total
Never Surpassed	Count	1	0	0	1
	% within positive feelings from the pleasant surprises	50.00	0.00	0.00	1.89
Rarely Surpassed	Count	1	8	5	14
	% within positive feelings from the pleasant surprises	50.00	25.81	25.00	26.42
No Knowledge About Surpassing	Count	0	1	0	1
	% within positive feelings from the pleasant surprises	0.00	3.23	0.00	1.89
Sometimes Surpassed	Count	0	21	15	36
	% within positive feelings from the pleasant surprises	0.00	67.74	75.00	67.92
Always Surpassed	Count	0	1	0	1
	% within positive feelings from the pleasant surprises	0.00	3.23	0.00	1.89
Total	Count	2	31	20	53
	% within positive feelings from the pleasant surprises	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 5: Cross Tabulation Between Surpassing Respondents' Expectations and Their Positive Feelings from the Pleasant Surprises in the Hotels Where they Stayed

From Table 5, it is clear that majority respondents who had no emotion from pleasant surprises from any act of hotel(s) where they stayed (50%), never had their expectations surpassed during their stay. Again, most respondents who had no emotion from pleasant surprises from any act of hotel(s) where they stayed (50%) rarely had their expectations surpassed during their stay. Besides, respondents who had good feelings from pleasant surprises from any act of hotel(s) where they stayed (67.74%) 'sometimes had their expectations surpassed during their stay. Further, respondents who had very good feelings from pleasant surprises from any act of hotel(s) where they stayed (75%) sometimes had their expectations surpassed during their stay. This indicates a relationship between positive feelings and surpassing of expectations of the respondents at the hotel(s) where they stayed.

Table 6 presents the results of cross tabulation between happiness and surpassing of respondents' expectations at the hotel where they stayed.

Table 6: Cross Tabulation Between Happiness and Surpassing of Respondents' Expectations at the Hotel Where They Stayed							
Providing Happiness to the Respondents Through Surpassing Their Expectations at the Hotel		Surpassing Respondents' Expectations at the Hotel					
		Never Surpassed	Rarely Surpassed	No Knowledge About Surpassing	Sometimes Surpassed	Always Sur-passed	Total
Never Happy	Count	41	3	0	0	0	44
	% within surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel	100.00	5.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.95
Rarely Happy	Count	0	42	2	0	0	44
	% within surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel	0.00	75.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	28.95
No Knowledge About Happiness	Count	0	1	2	2	0	5
	% within surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel	0.00	1.79	50.00	4.00	0.00	3.29
Sometimes Happy	Count	0	6	0	35	0	41
	% within surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel	0.00	10.71	0.00	70.00	0.00	26.97
Always Happy	Count	0	4	0	13	1	18
	% within surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel	0.00	7.14	0.00	26.00	100.00	11.84
Total	Count	41	56	4	50	1	152
	% within surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

From Table 6, it is clear that all respondents who never had their expectations surpassed at the hotels they stayed (100%) were never happy during their stay. Again, respondents who rarely had their expectations surpassed at the hotels where they stayed (75%) were rarely happy. Besides, respondents who had no knowledge about their expectations being surpassed at the hotels where they stayed (50%) were rarely happy. It is also noticed that most respondents who had no knowledge about their expectations being surpassed at the hotels where they stayed (50%), had no knowledge about happiness. Further, respondents who sometimes had their expectations surpassed at the hotels where they stayed (70%), were sometimes happy. It is also seen that all respondents who always had their expectations surpassed at the hotels where they stayed (100%), were always happy. This indicates a relationship between surpassing of expectations

and happiness of the respondents at the hotel(s) where they stayed. This ultimately led to guest delight.

It was also observed through interviewing some of the employees of the stated hotels that there is an increase in the expectation level of the guests resulting from surprising unexpected additional benefits along with the basic service in every stay in a hotel causing delight. Therefore, in every successive stay the same guest expects the earlier delighter features for his/her satisfaction (Rust and Oliver, 2000). This forces the hotel to provide fresh unexpected additional benefits along with the basic service in every successive stay of the guests. In this way, guest's expectation keeps on increasing. This peculiar phenomenon is depicted like a balloon in Figure 1. The must attributes (features) of any service in a hotel are located at the center while the satisfier features have been depicted in the satisfier level surrounding it. The surprising unexpected features of the service that provide delight are indicated by the delighter levels surrounding the satisfier level. As soon as the guest experiences the delighter feature while buying or consuming the service, such feature gets assimilated to the satisfier level. Next time when the hotel wants to delight the same guest, he/she will not be amused with the same delighter features. Therefore, the hotel management will have to innovate another delighter level, which can be termed delighter level 2. The same loop will keep on repeating as the same guest (presumably loyal) comes back delighted each time. Thus, to keep the guest in good humor, the hotel will have to keep on innovating newer features as delighters. Presumably, at one point of time, this innovation loop will stop producing desired profitability, and thus survivality, and this point is depicted as the bursting point in Figure 1. The direction of the arrows indicates the increase of the delighter level of guests (indicated as increase in size of the balloon through blowing of air). In Figure 1, the maximum size of the balloon indicates the Optimum Delighter Level (ODL). Obviously, if the balloon is blown beyond this level, it may burst. In short, if the hotel keeps on

Figure 1: Balloon Model of Optimum Delighter Level
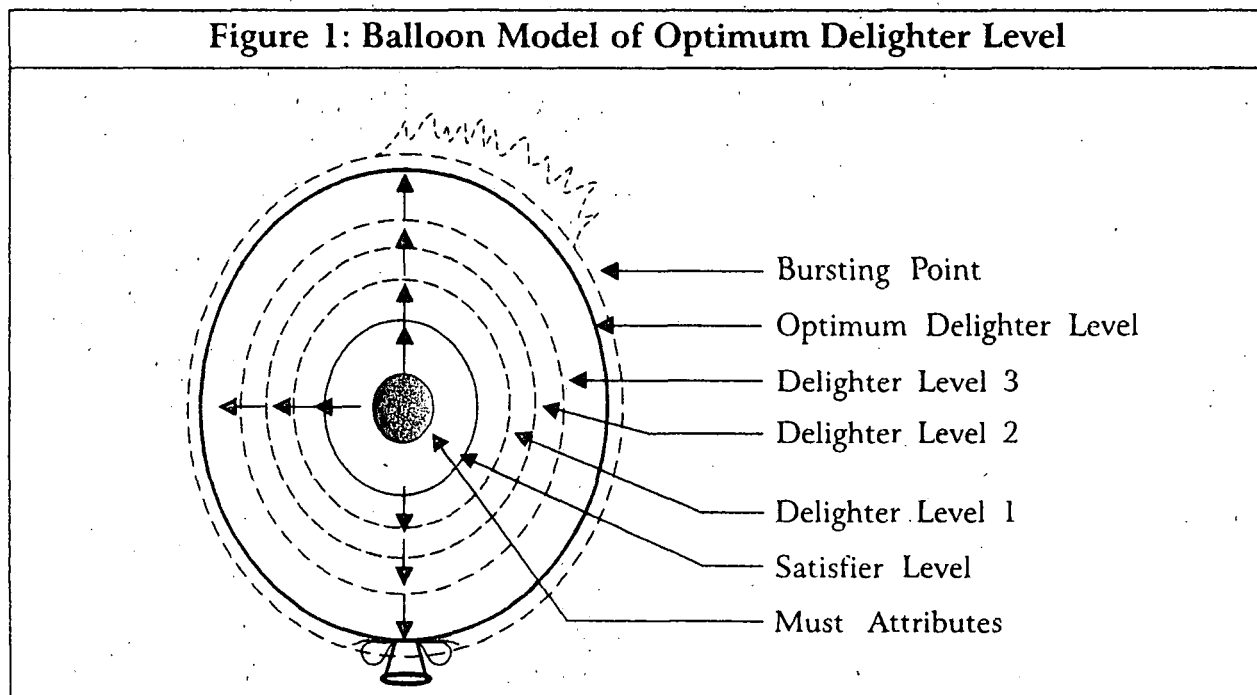
delighting the same guest beyond this level, it may seriously affect its profitability due to higher costs incurred in delighter features.

As a solution, however, the hotel may create transitory delight or reenacted delight (Rust and Oliver, 2000) so as to reduce chances of the guests remembering any of the earlier delighter experiences. These can ultimately lead to maintenance of the constancy of delighter features and hence delight.

Conclusion

The above discussion highlights that guest delight is an important tool towards building loyal guests in hotels. This involves providing guests with additional unexpected benefits along with the basic service. For obtaining guest delight, their expectations must be exceeded as per the disconfirmation theory of customer satisfaction. This implies that hotels should venture beyond merely satisfying guests.

This study throws light on the requirements to be added in a hotel to provide guest delight. Accordingly it is noticed that attractive requirements should be provided along with must attributes of any hotel service. Attractive requirements provide unexpected surprise to any guest along with the basic service thereby leaving him/her delighted. In fact, these attractive requirements coincide with the delighter features accompanying the basic service of the hotel. In due course of time, these delighter features are assimilated with the satisfier features (coinciding with the one-dimensional requirements) of any hotel service. It was found that hygiene of food and beverage, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel, cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel, cleanliness of the room, security of belongings including valuables inside the room and responsible security personnel were of high importance for the guests in the hotels. It was also noticed that parameters of hotels (Refer to methodology and Table A1) affect the level of pleasant surprises of the guests (in the hotels where they stayed). Again it is found that there is a relationship between pleasant surprises of the guests and their level of excitement (arousal). Excitement of these guests is associated with positive feelings in them. This is linked to surpassing of the guests' expectations in these hotels. This caused happiness in them resulting in guest delight. This finding ascertains the sequence between the above-mentioned factors and guest delight in the 4-star, 3-star and unclassified hotels in northeastern India. If any such study is conducted among such hotels or other categories of hotels in other parts of India and the world, this established sequence would be noticed there also.

As any hotel continues delighting guests by providing surprising additional benefits along with the basic services, guests' expectations continue to increase. In every successive stay, they tend to expect the earlier delighter feature. However, there is a limit to which a hotel can keep on delighting guests keeping in view its profitability. Any hotel may create transitory delight or reenacted delight so as to reduce chances of the guests remembering any of the earlier delighter experiences. These can ultimately lead to maintenance of the constancy of delighter features and hence delight.

Now it remains to be seen how a hotel can keep on delighting a guest through continuously providing reenacted and transitory delight. It is, no doubt, a challenge for a hotel to differentiate between factors that create assimilation, reenact and transition. ❂

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Appendix

Table A1: Expectations of Guests During Their Stay in Their Preferred Hotels

S. No.	Factors	Highest Expectation	Above Average Expectation	Average Expectation	Below Average Expectation	Least Expectation
1.	Food and beverage quality	75	71	6	0	0
2.	Availability of food and beverage variety	24	106	22	0	0
3.	Hygiene of food and beverage	117	28	7	0	0
4.	Food and beverage at reasonable price	19	94	37	2	0
5.	Quality of the restaurant	91	52	9	0	0
6.	Location of the hotel	45	93	14	0	0
7.	Physical appearance of the hotel	30	91	27	4	0
8.	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	45	74	29	3	0
9.	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	112	32	8	0	0
10.	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	120	31	1	0	0
11.	Room furnishings and appearance	8	128	16	0	0
12.	Comfort of beds/mattresses/pillows	64	79	9	0	0
13.	Quietness of the room	62	83	7	0	0
14.	Cleanliness of the room	125	24	3	0	0
15.	Quality of in-room temperature control	37	89	25	1	0
16.	Room service	101	43	5	1	0
17.	In-room entertainment including television/video/audio	22	88	41	1	0
18.	Internet connection	10	45	37	40	19
19.	Reasonable price for the room	26	75	46	3	2
20.	Helpfulness of pre-transaction information	85	52	10	2	2
21.	Convenient and reliable reservation system	94	46	10	2	0
22.	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	87	54	10	0	0
23.	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	75	65	11	1	0
24.	Special attention	66	59	22	3	2
25.	Courtesy of the hotel staff	96	49	7	0	0
26.	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	28	71	48	5	0
27.	Check-in and check-out are efficient	74	67	11	0	0
28.	Staff have neat appearance	80	56	15	0	0
29.	Convenient payment method	88	57	6	1	0
30.	Availability of reliable wake-up call	39	89	16	6	1

Appendix (Cont.)

S. No.	Factors	Highest Expectation	Above Average Expectation	Average Expectation	Below Average Expectation	Least Expectation
31.	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room	125	20	4	1	1
32.	Responsible security personnel	118	29	3	1	0
33.	Availability of recreation facilities	6	98	45	3	0
34.	Availability of transportation arrangements	63	60	29	0	0
35.	Availability of 24 hours taxi service	49	29	63	11	0
36.	Availability of business center	10	65	68	8	1
37.	Availability of meeting facilities	13	63	69	6	1
38.	Availability of convenient parking facilities	44	74	27	5	2
39.	Availability of efficient laundry service	54	84	11	3	0
40.	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon, etc.)	39	62	39	10	1
41.	Availability of free newspaper	18	98	30	6	0
42.	Availability of frequent travelers' program	8	48	52	37	7
43.	Availability of swimming facilities	3	13	23	36	76
44.	Availability of gymnasium facilities	1	15	31	52	52
45.	Overall comfortability	19	108	24	1	0
46.	Any other	7	5	2	0	43

Table A2: List of Hotels in Northeastern India Covered During the Study

S. No.	Name of the Hotel	Star Category	Location	Source
1.	Hotel Dynasty	4	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
2.	Hotel Rajmahal	4	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
3.	Hotel Ambarish	3	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
4.	Hotel Ambarish Grand Regency	3	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
5.	Hotel Millennium	3	Guwahati	FHRAI
6.	Hotel Viswaratna	3	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
7.	Agnideep Continetal	3	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
8.	Hotel Nakshatra	3	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
9.	Kiranshree Portico	3	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
10.	Hotel Atithi	3	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
11.	Hotel Grand Starline	3	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
12.	Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok	3	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
13.	Hotel Ginger	No Classification	Guwahati	Obtained from survey
14.	Hotel Polo Towers	4	Shillong	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
15.	Hotel Pegasus Crown	3	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
16.	Hotel Centre Point	3	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
17.	Pinewood Hotel	3	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
18.	Hotel Borail View	3	Silchar	Obtained from survey
19.	Hotel JC International	No Classification	Silchar	Obtained from survey
20.	Hotel Kalpataru	No Classification	Silchar	Obtained from survey
21.	Rose Valley	No Classification	Silchar	Obtained from survey
22.	Hotel Ginger	No Classification	Agartala	Obtained from survey
23.	Hotel Radha International	3	Agartala	Obtained from survey
24.	Hotel Rajarshi	No Classification	Agartala	Obtained from survey
25.	Hotel Rajdhani	3	Agartala	Obtained from survey
26.	Hotel Welcome Palace	3	Agartala	Obtained from survey
27.	Hotel Arini	No Classification	Aizawl	Obtained from survey
28.	Hotel Chief	No Classification	Aizawl	Obtained from survey
29.	Hotel Ritz	No Classification	Aizawl	Obtained from survey

Note: FHRAI stands for Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India.

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THE ROAD TO GUEST DELIGHT: AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Obtaining guest delight has been highly emphasized by every hotel in the present era of intense competition for securing guest loyalty. This study, therefore, aims to show how guest delight is formed in the hotels. It involved interviews of 500 repeat guests of 62 hotels in the 5 star deluxe, 4 star, 3 star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in India. Only guests on repeat visit to these hotels were included as sampling elements in this study as guest delight is applicable only to them. It was noticed that 46 variables including food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage etc. influence surpassing of guests' expectations in these hotels. It is established in this study that surpassing of expectations of the guests affect their perception on pleasant surprises which, in turn affect their consequent happiness. Such happiness along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings create a delighting experience for them.

Guest Delight, Pleasant surprises, Excitement, Positive feelings, Surpassing Expectations

INTRODUCTION

Delight means "great pleasure" or "joyful satisfaction" or "extreme enjoyment" experienced by a person from a product, service, experience, idea and so on (Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary, 1988; Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, 2001).

Keiningham and Vavra (2001) states that customer delight refers to "positive surprise arising from extremely good service or product performance" or "the highest level of satisfaction" or "exceeding customers' expectations". "Customer delight will only be achieved by going beyond all the base expectations in the performance of a product or in the delivery of service (or in the servicing that accompanies a product or service)" (Keiningham & Vavra, 2001). Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler and Pandit (2008) have stated that customer delight refers to the "profoundly positive emotional state" resulting from one's expectations "exceeded to a surprising degree". Lynch (1993) has explained customer delight as the ability to "provide customers with experiences" that goes beyond usual "standards of quality services".

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At present, delighting customers (guests in case of hotels) has become a vital policy for most companies and organisations including hotels in their pursuit for higher prosperity and sustenance (Stewart, 1997; Skogland & Siguaw, 2004; Torres & Kline, 2006). Guest delight is believed to be obtained by providing additional unexpected benefits along with the basic service which positively surprises the guest. This is essential in the present hotel industry for attainment of guest loyalty which is very important for hotels (Burns, Barrett, Evans & Johansson, 1999; Burns, Evans, Johansson & Barrett, 2000; Torres & Kline, 2006).

This study is an attempt to show how guest delight can be achieved in hotels. Thereby, this study intends to empirically establish the presence of guest delight by providing unexpected benefits to the guests along with the basic service in hotels (Berman, 2005). Normally these delighter features gets incorporated with the satisfier features of the hotel services. As the hotel continues to delight guests by providing delighter features along with the basic service, their expectations continues to swell. As such in every consecutive stay, they tend to expect the earlier delighter features. However, there is a limit to which a hotel can keep on delighting guests keeping in view its profitability. Therefore, this paper also underlines the necessity of creating transitory delight or reenacted delight (which has been discussed later in Review of literature). Such an endeavour decreases the possibility of the guests memorizing any of the previous delighting experiences (assimilated delight (which has also been explained later in Review of literature)). These can lead towards maintenance of the constancy of delighter features and hence delight in the hotels.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Presently most organizations including hotels assure guests not only "what they can provide" but also provide "more than their assurance" to achieve guest loyalty (Chowdhury, 2009). Chowdhury (2009) has also described attaining guest delight as a move towards providing Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS).

Leventhal (2008) has stated that if any product or service delivery has met customer's "desired expectations", then it is said to be a state of confirmation of meeting customer's expectations leading to customer satisfaction. If customer's expectations are not met, then it is said to be a state of disconfirmation for not meeting customer's expectations. It may be Positive Disconfirmation when product or service delivery provides value that exceeds customer's expectations or Negative Disconfirmation when product or service delivery falls below customer's expectations (Leventhal, 2008).

Kano (1984) through his model of customer satisfaction has emphasized on delighting customers through "excitement factors" of any product or service along with "basic factors" and "performance factors" (Berger, Blauth, Boger, et. al., 1993; Sauerwein, Bailom, Matzler & Hinterhuber, 1996).

Rust and Oliver (2000) have described customer delight as a "profoundly positive emotional state" generally resulting from "having one's expectations exceeded to a surprising degree". They have classified product or service attributes into the following three types:

1. Must Attributes: Customers expect these attributes as essential requirements while purchasing a product or service.
2. Satisfiers: Higher levels of these attributes (additional features) may "pull further the

level of satisfaction beyond" that which is provided by the basic product or service.
3. Delighters: These represent product or service attributes that are unexpected by the customers and provide them surprising enjoyment leading to delight.

Torres and Kline (2006) have focused on customer delight as the "real way" to attain loyal customers. Keiningham and Vavra (2001) have measured customer satisfaction along a continuum. The three major points along this continuum are as follows:

1. Zone of pain: It is the zone (point) at which the company is not satisfying the needs of its customers.
2. Zone of Mere Satisfaction: It is the zone (point) past the zone of pain in which the company is fulfilling customers' needs but not doing much to differentiate itself from other competitors in the same industry.
3. Zone of Delight: It is the zone (point) at which "customers demonstrate behaviour consistent with the goals of the firm (like increased retention, sales, word-of-mouth recommendations etc.)".

Crotts, Pan and Raschid (2008) have further modified the above concept of customer satisfaction and delight by replacing the Zone of mere satisfaction by Zone of dissatisfaction and Zone of satisfaction. Customer delight is the customer's "positive emotional reaction" on receiving a product or service that not only satisfies them but also provides unexpected value leading to a sense of surprise (Crotts et al., 2008). When a customer receives unexpected poor product or service, he/she experiences "outrage and pain" and thus dissatisfaction. Again when a customer's expectations are met and exceeded, he or she feels satisfied with a high intention to repurchase the item. Delight is the amalgamation of "surprise and happiness" when any product or service exceeds customer expectations on key parameters. These "criteria create memorable and emotional responses" that "strongly drive overall satisfaction intention to repurchase" the product or service (Crotts et al., 2008).

Rust and Oliver (2000) have highlighted customer delight in case of a product or service's performance from the point of view of providing more than customer expectations which may be of the following levels:

1. "Level of exceedingness" is within the normal range: This means that the product or service's performance would lead the customers to have a view that it was better than expected but not so amazing.
2. "Level of exceedingness" is beyond the normal limits: This means that the product or service's performance would astonish the customers.

Burns et al. (2000) portrayed customer delight as a "post-purchase emotion" resulting from the consumer's evaluation of product or service's performance and is an "extension of satisfaction characterised by positive effect". The Disconfirmation Theory of customer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction provides the theoretical basis for defining customer delight. Customers evaluate the performance of the products and services they have purchased by referring to their expectations before purchase. Whenever products or services cannot meet their expectations, the customers experience dissatisfaction (negative disconfirmation). However, when these products or services meets expectations, these expectations are confirmed and customers experience satisfaction. But when the products or services exceed customer's expectations, the latter feels delighted (positive disconfirmation).

Oliver, Rust, and Varki (1997) has noted that surprising positive performance of a product leads to arousal in the mind of the customers (guests) which causes positive effect on the latter. This in turn leads to happiness, i.e., customer (guest) delight. Thereby the antecedents of customer (guest) delight are surprising positive performance, arousal and positive effect. Arousal refers to "excitement" or "stimulation" (Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary, 1988; Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, 2001). This fact has also been supported by Finn (2006). In addition through the efforts of Finn (2006), it has been found that there is an "additional direct effect of disconfirmation on arousal".

Rust and Oliver (2000) have classified customer (guest) delight into the following categories on the basis of the function of human memory:

1. Assimilated Delight: It involves customers (guests) recollecting "delighting facets of consumption" and thereby accepting them as normal through "raised expectations". In short, this type of delight raises customer (guest) expectations. This type of delight can create customer (guest) loyalty through attraction (Rust & Oliver, 2000).
2. Reenacted Delight: It involves delight that a person experiences when a "favorite movie or song" is being played. This type of "delight emotion decays but its memory is retained". "The person in this case retains memories of the delight and can also experience the delighting stimulus at will or when available through the movie or song". In case of reenacted delight, hotels can win guest loyalty through reenacting memories of the delight. It is "appreciated" once on receiving by the guest and he or she may seek it again (Rust & Oliver, 2000).
3. Transitory Delight: Such a delight may be attributed to "fate, randomness or serendipity". In case of transitory delight, hotels should put together a number of such delights in such a way that the guest remembers the experience as "delighting moments" and not as "individual moments" (Rust & Oliver, 2000).

In hotels, guests usually lay high importance on food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage "variety", "hygiene" of food and beverage, quality of the restaurant, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel, "cleanliness" and tidiness of the hotel, room furnishings and appearance, cleanliness of the room, "room service", reasonable price for the room, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, "security of belongings including valuables inside the room", "responsible security personnel" and overall comfortability (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Goswami & Sarma, 2010; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). This fact has been supported by Lynch (1993) who has established that "cleanliness, comfort, service, value and facilities" and "ambience, food and service" are the main factors leading to guest delight in hotels. Other points of emphasis of guests in hotels have been included in the Methodology of this paper. Groenenboom and Jones (2003) have highlighted the importance of security for guests in hotels. Poon and Low (2005) have also highlighted the importance of free gifts, special foods and free access to facilities among the guests in the hotels.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY

This study aims to show how guest delight is formed in the hotels.

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, a survey was carried out in a sample of

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guests on repeat visit (repeat guests) to hotels in India belonging to a cross section of categories (5 star deluxe, 4 star, 3 star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories) from 1st June, 2010 to 31st May, 2011. The sample size consisted of 500 such repeat guests in 62 such hotels in India (Refer to Table-A-3 in the Annexure). It is to be noted that unclassified hotels refers to those hotels that have not applied for any type of classification to the competent Government of India authority, i.e., Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC). Only repeat guests (guests on repeat visit to hotels) were taken as sampling elements as guest delight is associated only with those who visit the same hotel(s) repeatedly (as established through literature survey). Therefore, researchers' judgement had to be used while selecting the respondents. Responses from the selected repeat guests were elicited through a well defined questionnaire written in English.

It was tried to measure the responses on 52 variables (measured in 5 point scale) responsible for guest delight, which are discussed later. The respondents were also asked about their experiences regarding any incidence leading to surpassing of their expectations. Thereafter, the preferences of the guests towards these 52 variables were tested with their responses on surpassing expectations. This was done by equal number of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests at a significance level of 5% (α=0.05) with an intention to check if preferences towards 46 variables (Refer to Table-A-1 in the Annexure), among these 52 variables, differ with respect to their perception on surpassing expectations.

Next, responses on surpassing expectations were tested with their scores on perception of pleasant surprises in the hotels (Refer to Table-A-2 in the Annexure) in order to check if the mean score of the former differs with respect to the latter. It may be noted that the score on pleasant surprise was measured through a scaled question. For this too One-way ANOVA was used at α=0.05.

This was followed by analysis of responses offered by the respondent-guests regarding pleasant surprises towards the score on their perception about happiness in the hotels.

Thereafter, the relationship of happiness was tested with the respondents' perceived positive feelings (from pleasant surprises and happiness) on one hand and with their perceived excitement (from pleasant surprises and happiness) on the other. Both the tests were done using ANOVA as above. This sequence is an indicator of guests delight in hotels as established by Oliver et al. (1997).

This study also involved determination of the degree of relationship between above mentioned different factors leading to guest delight with the help of correlation.

Variables measured: To start with, a study was conducted to find out the variables or factors constituting the basic requirements that may lead to satisfaction and delight in hotels through a review of the works of earlier scholars. This also included a pilot survey of 66 repeat guests (guests on repeat visit in 15 hotels) with the help of a draft questionnaire. Besides, any other required supporting data were obtained through observation and open probing of some of the employees of the above hotels. This was done to incorporate any additions or modifications in the study and thereby modify the draft questionnaire in order to form the final questionnaire. This effort revealed that there are 52 important factors that might play a role in guest delight. These include quality and hygiene of food and beverage, availability of food and beverage variety, and quality of

the restaurant (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). Others factors leading to guest delight in hotels include cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel and the rooms, room furnishings and appearance, room service, and reasonable price for the room (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). In case of hotel staff, some of the main factors resulting in guest delight in hotels are their friendliness and helpfulness, and their availability to provide prompt service (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). Poon and Low (2005) has established that food and beverage at reasonable price, convenient payment method, and availability of business centre and meeting facilities can play an important role in creating guest delight in hotels. This has been supported by Choi and Chu (2000), Heung (2000), Tsang and Qu (2000), Mohsin and Lockyer (2010), and Goswami and Sarma (2011). Location, physical appearance, view of surrounding areas, and welcoming atmosphere of the hotel can also lead to guest delight (Heung, 2000; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). For the hotel rooms, factors like comfort of beds/ pillows/ mattresses, quietness, quality of in-room temperature control, in-room entertainment, internet connection, helpfulness of pre transaction information, and convenient and reliable reservation system can result in guest delight (Heung, 2000; Tsang & Qu, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). Choi and Chu (2000), Heung (2000), Tsang and Qu (2000), Poon and Low (2005), Mohsin and Lockyer (2010), and Goswami and Sarma (2011) have focused on factors like special attention, courtesy, language proficiency, and neat appearance as facilitators of guest delight in relation to the hotel staff. Again, availability of reliable wake-up call, security, convenient parking facilities, efficient laundry service, personal care amenities, and free newspaper can be a delighting experience for the hotel guests (Poon & Low, 2005; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). Choi and Chu (2000), Heung (2000), Tsang and Qu (2000), Groenenboom and Jones (2003), Poon and Low (2005), Mohsin and Lockyer (2010), and Goswami and Sarma (2011) have emphasized on security of belongings, and responsible security personnel as delighting factors for the hotel guests. Heung (2000) has stated that factors like availability of recreation facilities, transportation arrangement arrangements (including 24 hour taxi service), frequent travellers' program, swimming facilities, gymnasium facilities, and overall comfortability can also result in guest delight. This has been also emphasized by Choi and Chu (2000), Tsang and Qu (2000), Poon and Low (2005), Mohsin and Lockyer (2010), and Goswami and Sarma (2011). Tsang and Qu (2000), Mohsin and Lockyer (2010), and Goswami and Sarma (2011) have highlighted that efficient check-in and check-out in the hotels can also cause guest delight. Other facilitators of guest delight in hotels include free gifts, special discounts, special foods, special entertainment, and free access to facilities (Poon & Low, 2005; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). All these variables are measured in 5-point scales, which will eventually give ideas about the respondent-guests' level of preference against each of the above 52 items. These variables can be arranged in the following five dimensions of service quality (SERQUAL) as follows (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Choi and Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Tsang and Qu, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Zeithaml et. al., 2008; Mohsin and Lockyer, 2010):

A. **Reliability:** The following variables indicate the ability of the hotels to provide their "promised services dependably and accurately" to their guests (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Zeithaml et. al., 2008):
    1. Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel
    2. Quietness of the room
    3. Cleanliness of the room
    4. Quality of in-room temperature control

5. Room service
6. Convenient and reliable reservation system
7. Efficient check-in and check-out
8. Convenient payment method
9. Availability of reliable wake-up call
10. Availability of 24 hours taxi service
11. Availability of efficient laundry service
12. Overall comfortability
13. Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.

B. **Assurance:** The following variables indicate the wisdom, courtesy, and the capability to convey "trust" and "confidence" by the hotel staff among guests (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Zeithaml et. al., 2008):
1. Food and beverage quality
2. Hygiene of food and beverage
3. Food and beverage at reasonable price
4. Quality of the restaurant
5. Reasonable price for the room
6. Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff
7. Courtesy of the hotel staff
8. Language proficiency of the hotel staff

C. **Tangibles:** The following variables indicate the "appearance" of the hotels and their "staff and equipment" (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Zeithaml et. al., 2008):
1. Availability of food and beverage variety
2. Location of the hotel
3. Physical appearance of the hotel
4. View of the surrounding areas of the hotel
5. Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel
6. Room furnishings and appearance
7. Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows
8. In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio
9. Internet connection
10. Neat appearance of staff
11. Availability of recreation facilities
12. Availability of transportation arrangements
13. Availability of business centre
14. Availability of meeting facilities
15. Availability of convenient parking facilities
16. Availability of frequent travellers' program
17. Availability of swimming facilities
18. Availability of gymnasium facilities
19. Free gifts
20. Special discounts
21. Special foods
22. Special entertainment

D. **Empathy:** The following variables indicate "caring" and individualized attention" provided to the guests in the hotels (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Zeithaml et. al., 2008):
1. Helpfulness of pre transaction information
2. Special attention

3. Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
4. Responsible security personnel
5. Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)
6. Availability of free newspaper

E. **Responsiveness:** The following variables indicate "willingness" to help and provide "prompt service" to guests in the hotels (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Zeithaml et. al., 2008):
   1. Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service

Hypothesis Testing: This study involved testing of the following hypotheses involving responses of the respondent guests at the hotel(s) where they stayed:

1. **Hypothesis-1:** There is significant difference between the means of guests' preferences for the above mentioned factors (refer to Table-A-1 in the Annexure) across their responses if the hotel(s) in question has ever surpassed the expectations of the respondents.

   Symbolically,

   $$\mu_{ALWAYS} \neq \mu_{SOMETIMES} \neq \mu_{NO\ IDEA} \neq \mu_{RARELY\ S.E.} \neq \mu_{NEVER\ S.E.}$$

   SURPASS   S.E.   REGARDING S.E.
   EXPECTATIONS
   (S.E.)

   Where,

   $\mu_{ALWAYS\ SURPASS\ EXPECTATIONS\ (S.E.)}$ *represents the mean score against factors that might provide delight to the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) always surpass their expectations.*

   $\mu_{SOMETIMES\ S.E.}$ *represents the mean score against factors that might provide delight to the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) sometimes surpass their expectations.*

   $\mu_{NO\ IDEA\ REGARDING\ S.E.}$ *represents the mean score against factors that might provide delight to the guests who perceive that they have no idea of the hotel(s) ever surpassing their expectations.*

   $\mu_{RARELY\ S.E.}$ *represents the mean score against factors that might provide delight to the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) rarely surpass their expectations.*

   $\mu_{NEVER\ S.E.}$ *represents the mean score against factors that might provide delight to the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) never surpass their expectations.*

2. **Hypothesis-2:** There is significant difference between the means of guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations across their responses to if they are ever pleasantly surprised.

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Symbolically,

$$\mu_{\text{ALWAYS}} \neq \mu_{\text{SOMETIMES}} \neq \mu_{\text{NO IDEA}} \neq \mu_{\text{RARELY P.S.}} \neq \mu_{\text{NEVER P.S.}}$$

PLEASANTLY   P.S.   REGARDING P.S.

SURPRISED (P.S.)

Where,

$\mu_{\text{ALWAYS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED}}$ *represents the mean score against surpassing expectations for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) always pleasantly surprise them.*

$\mu_{\text{SOMETIMES P.S.}}$ *represents the mean score against surpassing expectations for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) sometimes pleasantly surprise them.*

$\mu_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING P.S.}}$ *represents the mean score against surpassing expectations for the guests who perceive that they have no idea of the hotel(s) ever pleasantly surprising them.*

$\mu_{\text{RARELY P.S.}}$ *represents the mean score against surpassing expectations for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) rarely pleasantly surprise them.*

$\mu_{\text{NEVER P.S.}}$ *represents the mean score against surpassing expectations for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) never pleasantly surprise them.*

3. **Hypothesis-3:** There is significant difference between the means of guests' perception on pleasant surprises across their responses whether the hotel(s) in question has ever provided happiness to the respondents.

Symbolically,

$$\mu^{\alpha}_{\text{ALWAYS HAPPY (H.)}} \neq \mu^{\alpha}_{\text{SOMETIMES H.}} \neq \mu^{\alpha}_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING H.}} \neq \mu^{\alpha}_{\text{RARELY H.}} \neq \mu^{\alpha}_{\text{NEVER H.}}$$

Where,

$\mu^{\alpha}_{\text{ALWAYS HAPPY (H.)}}$ *represents the mean score against pleasant surprises for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) always provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^{\alpha}_{\text{SOMETIMES H.}}$ *represents the mean score against pleasant surprises for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) sometimes provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^{\alpha}_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING H.}}$ *represents the mean score against pleasant surprises for the guests who perceive that they have no idea of the hotel(s) ever providing happiness to them.*

$\mu^{\alpha}_{\text{RARELY H.}}$ *represents the mean score against pleasant surprises for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) rarely provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^{\alpha}_{\text{NEVER H.}}$ *represents the mean score against pleasant surprises for the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) never provide happiness to them.*

4. **Hypothesis-4:** There is significant difference between the means of guests' perception on their perceived excitement (arousal) across their responses to if they are ever happy in the hotel(s).

Symbolically,

$$\mu^\beta_{\text{ALWAYS HAPPY (H.)}} \neq \mu^\beta_{\text{SOMETIMES H.}} \neq \mu^\beta_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING H.}} \neq \mu^\beta_{\text{RARELY H.}} \neq \mu^\beta_{\text{NEVER H.}}$$

Where,

$\mu^\beta_{\text{ALWAYS HAPPY (H.)}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived excitement (arousal) of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) always provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^\beta_{\text{SOMETIMES H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived excitement (arousal) of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) sometimes provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^\beta_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived excitement (arousal) of the guests who perceive that they have no idea of the hotel(s) ever providing happiness to them.*

$\mu^\beta_{\text{RARELY H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived excitement (arousal) of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) rarely provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^\beta_{\text{NEVER H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived excitement (arousal) of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) never provide happiness to them.*

5. **Hypothesis-5:** There is significant difference between the means of guests' perception on their perceived positive feelings across their responses to if they are ever happy in the hotel(s).

Symbolically,

$$\mu^\gamma_{\text{ALWAYS HAPPY (H.)}} \neq \mu^\gamma_{\text{SOMETIMES H.}} \neq \mu^\gamma_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING H.}} \neq \mu^\gamma_{\text{RARELY H.}} \neq \mu^\gamma_{\text{NEVER H.}}$$

Where,

$\mu^\gamma_{\text{ALWAYS HAPPY (H.)}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived positive feelings of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) always provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^\gamma_{\text{SOMETIMES H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived positive feelings of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) sometimes provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^\gamma_{\text{NO IDEA REGARDING H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived positive feelings of the guests who perceive that they have no idea of the hotel(s) ever providing happiness to them.*

$\mu^\gamma_{\text{RARELY H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived positive feelings of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) rarely provide happiness to them.*

$\mu^\gamma_{\text{NEVER H.}}$ *represents the mean score against perceived positive feelings of the guests who perceive that the hotel(s) never provide happiness to them.*

These hypotheses were tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to 500 repeat guests of 62 hotels falling in the 5 star deluxe, 4 star, 3 star, Heritage Grand and unclassified categories in northeastern India (Refer to Table-A-3 in the Annexure) keeping in view convenience and accessibility of data collection. The study, therefore, limits itself in making an exploratory study regarding the means of obtaining guest delight in the hotels.

ANALYSIS

The data collected by following the above methods have been analyzed for determining the effects of factors constituting guest delight (including pleasant surprises) and thus trying to empirically establish the sequence towards guest delight.

Table-A-1 in the Annexure shows the basic descriptive statistics on expectation scores against each of the above parameters. From Table-A-1, it is clear that most respondent guests have highest expectations for food and beverage quality, hygiene of food and beverage, quality of the restaurant, welcoming atmosphere in the hotel, cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel, comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows, quietness of the room, cleanliness of the room, room service, helpfulness of pre transaction information, convenient and reliable reservation system, friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, courtesy of the hotel staff, efficient check-in and check-out, neat appearance of staff, convenient payment method, security of belongings including valuables inside the room, and responsible security personnel in the hotel(s) where they stayed.

Pleasant surprises in hotels in form of free gifts, special discounts, special foods, special entertainment, and free access to facilities for the guests at these hotels may also result in guest delight (Poon & Low, 2005; Goswami & Sarma, 2011). This study involved analysis of the frequency of providing such pleasant surprises by the stated hotels to the respondents. Table-A-2 in the Annexure shows the count of scores against receiving such pleasant surprises in the above mentioned hotels by the respondents. From this table, it is clear that most respondent guests have obtained free gifts and other facilities only once as pleasant surprises in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Again, most respondent guests have sometimes unpredictably obtained special discounts and rarely obtained special foods and special entertainment as pleasant surprises in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Besides, most respondents have rarely obtained and obtained only once free access to facilities as pleasant surprises in the hotel(s) where they stayed.

To test the hypotheses if the guest reaction to all these above mentioned variables (factors) varies significantly based on surpassing respondent guests' expectations, a series of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted. In Table-1, the results of these tests are reproduced.

Table-1: Results of One-Way Analysis of Variance (at significance level (α)= 0.05)

Sr. No.	Factors that may lead to Guest Delight (with their p values)	Effect of factors on Surpassing Expectations
1	Food and beverage quality (p value=0.048), Availability of food and beverage variety (p value=0.000), Hygiene of food and beverage (p value=0.000), Food and beverage at reasonable price (p value=0.020), Quality of the restaurant (p value=0.004), Location of the hotel (p value=0.000), Physical appearance of the hotel (p value=0.000), View of the surrounding areas of the hotel (p value=0.012), Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel (p value=0.000), Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel (p value=0.000), Room furnishings and appearance (p value=0.000), Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows (p value=0.000), Quietness of the room (p value=0.000), Cleanliness of the room (p value=0.000), Quality of in-room temperature control (p value=0.000), Room service (p value=0.000), Internet connection (p value=0.000), Reasonable price for the room (p value=0.000), Helpfulness of pre transaction information (p value=0.000), Convenient and reliable reservation system (p value=0.000), Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff (p value=0.000), Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service (p value=0.000), Special attention (p value=0.000), Courtesy of the hotel staff (p value=0.000), Language proficiency of the hotel staff (p value=0.000), Efficient check-in and check-out (p value=0.000), Neat appearance of staff (p value=0.000), Convenient payment method (p value=0.000), Availability of reliable wake-up call (p value=0.000), Security of belongings including valuables inside the room (p value=0.000), Responsible security personnel (p value=0.000), Availability of recreation facilities (p value=0.000), Availability of transportation arrangements (p value=0.000), Availability of 24 hours taxi service (p value=0.000), Availability of business centre (p value = 0.000), Availability of meeting facilities (p value=0.000), Availability of efficient laundry service (p value=0.000), Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.) (p value=0.000), Availability of free newspaper (p value=0.000), Availability of frequent travellers' program (p value=0.002), Availability of swimming facilities (p value=0.000), Availability of gymnasium facilities (p value=0.000), Overall comfortability (p value=0.000), Free gifts (p value=0.020), Special discounts (p value=0.000) and Special foods (p value=0.041). [Total **46** variables]	Effect present
2	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio (p value=0.153), Availability of convenient parking facilities (p value=0.931), Other factors (p value=0.945), Special entertainment (p value=0.271), Free access to facilities (p value=0.144) and Other pleasant surprises (p value=0.598). [Total **6** variables]	No effect

In case of factors in Sr. No.1 in the above Table-1, the p-value is less than the level of significance (α=0.05) with respect to surpassing respondent guests' expectations in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Thus at α=0.05, the null hypotheses that there is equality of means of guests' preferences across these factors can be rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between the means of guests' preferences for these factors across their responses if the hotel(s) in question has ever surpassed the expectations of the

respondents. Therefore, it can be stated that these factors have effect on surpassing of respondent guests' expectations. For example, the p-value for food and beverage quality (p value=0.048) is less than the level of significance (α=0.05) with respect to surpassing guests' expectations in the hotel(s). So at α=0.05, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' preferences across food and beverage quality can be rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between the means of guests' preferences for food and beverage quality across their responses if the hotel(s) has ever surpassed their expectations. It is to be noted that the mean of guests' preferences for food and beverage quality is highest across their responses if the hotel(s) has rarely surpassed their expectations and lowest if the hotel(s) has always surpassed their expectations. This shows that food and beverage quality has effect (not so positive) on surpassing of guests' expectations. Similar findings have been noticed in case of 27 factors listed below in Table-2.

Again, the p-value for availability of recreation facilities (p value=0.000) is less than the level of significance (α=0.05) with respect to surpassing guests' expectations in the hotel(s). So at α=0.05, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' preferences across availability of recreation facilities can be rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between the means of guests' preferences for availability of recreation facilities across their responses if the hotel(s) has ever surpassed their expectations. The mean of guests' preferences for availability of recreation facilities is highest across their responses if the hotel(s) has always surpassed their expectations and lowest if the hotel(s) has never surpassed their expectations. This indicates that availability of recreation facilities has effect (positive effect) on surpassing of guests' expectations. Similar findings have been noticed in case of 19 factors listed below in Table-2.

Table-2: Factors having effect on surpassing guests' expectations in the hotels

Factors having positive effect on surpassing guests' expectations		Factors having not so positive effect on surpassing guests' expectations	
1	Availability of food and beverage variety	1	Food and beverage quality
2	Hygiene of food and beverage	2	Quality of the restaurant
3	Food and beverage at reasonable price	3	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel
4	Location of the hotel	4	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel
5	Physical appearance of the hotel	5	Room furnishings and appearance
6	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	6	Quietness of the room
7	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	7	Cleanliness of the room
8	Quality of in-room temperature control	8	Room service
9	Internet connection	9	Reasonable price for the room
10	Availability of recreation facilities	10	Helpfulness of pre transaction information
11	Availability of business centre	11	Convenient and reliable reservation system
12	Availability of efficient laundry service	12	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff
13	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)	13	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service
14	Availability of free newspaper	14	Special attention
15	Availability of frequent travellers' program	15	Courtesy of the hotel staff
16	Availability of swimming facilities	16	Language proficiency of the hotel staff
17	Availability of gymnasium facilities	17	Efficient check-in and check-out

18	Special discounts	18	Neat appearance of staff
19	Special foods	19	Convenient payment method
		20	Availability of reliable wake-up call
		21	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
		22	Responsible security personnel
		23	Availability of transportation arrangements
		24	Availability of 24 hours taxi service
		25	Availability of meeting facilities
		26	Overall comfortability
		27	Free gifts

In case of factors in Sr. No.2 in the above Table-1, the p-value is more than the level of significance ($\alpha=0.05$) with respect to surpassing respondent guests' expectations in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Thus at $\alpha=0.05$, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' preferences across these factors cannot be rejected. As such, that there is no significant difference between the means of guests' preferences for these factors across their responses if the hotel(s) in question has ever surpassed their expectations. Therefore, it can be stated that these factors do not have any notable effect on surpassing of respondent guests' expectations. For example, the p-value for in-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio (p value=0.153) is more than the level of significance ($\alpha=0.05$) with respect to surpassing respondent guests' expectations in the hotel(s). So at $\alpha=0.05$, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' preferences across in-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio cannot be rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the means of guests' preferences for in-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio across their responses if the hotel(s) in question has ever surpassed their expectations. Thus, it can be concluded that in-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio does not have any notable effect on surpassing of respondent guests' expectations.

To determine the degree of relationship between different factors leading to guest delight, a series of correlation were conducted between the following pairs of variables (it is to be noted that surpassing of respondent guests' expectations is related to their pleasant surprises which in turn is related with their resultant happiness resulting in guest delight):

Table-3: Results of Correlation between factors leading to Guest Delight in hotels

Variable 1	Variable 2	Coefficient of correlation (r)
Surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel(s)	Pleasant surprises of the respondents at the hotel(s)	0.752
Pleasant surprises of the respondents at the hotel(s)	Happiness of the respondents due to pleasant surprises at the hotel(s)	0.696
Perceived excitement of the respondents in the hotel(s)	Happiness of the respondents due to pleasant surprises at the hotel(s)	0.598
Perceived positive feelings of the respondents in the hotel(s)	Happiness of the respondents due to pleasant surprises at the hotel(s)	0.561

All in all, it is seen from the table (Table 3) that the pairs register moderate to high r among themselves, which signifies that the pairs of variables are related to each other. If we check the pairs one by one, it is evident that the relationship forms a chain of short.

This is depicted in Figure-1.

Another set of ANOVA was conducted to confirm the effect of surpassing of expectations with perceived pleasant surprises at the hotel(s), and then the effect of the latter on the guests' happiness. The results of the tests are shown in Table-4.

Table-4: Results of One-Way Analysis of Variance (at significance level (α)= 0.05)

Variable 1	Variable 2	df	F	p-value	Effect of Variable 1 on Variable 2
Surpassing respondents' expectations at the hotel(s)	Pleasant surprises of the respondents at the hotel(s)	4	113.680	0.000	Effect present
Pleasant surprises of the respondents at the hotel(s)	Happiness of the respondents due to pleasant surprises at the hotel(s)	4	164.518	0.000	Effect present
External effects on providing happiness to respondents through surpassing their expectations by the hotel					
Perceived excitement of the respondents in the hotel(s)	Happiness of the respondents due to pleasant surprises at the hotel(s)	4	69.979	0.000	Effect present
Perceived positive feelings of the respondents in the hotel(s)	Happiness of the respondents due to pleasant surprises at the hotel(s)	4	25.769	0.000	Effect present

With respect to pleasant surprises of the respondents at the hotel(s) in the above Table-4, at α=0.05, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of scores on surpassing guests' expectations across their responses whether they are ever pleasantly surprised at the hotel(s) can be rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between the means of guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations across their responses to if they are ever pleasantly surprised. It is noticed that the mean of guests' perception on surpassing of their expectations is highest across their responses if they have always obtained pleasant surprises and lowest if they have never obtained pleasant surprises in the hotel(s). Therefore, it can be stated that surpassing guest's expectations has effect (positive effect) on their receiving pleasant surprises at the hotel(s).

Likewise, it was also found that the mean of guests' perception on obtaining pleasant surprises from surpassing of their expectations is highest across their responses if they have always experienced happiness and lowest if they have never experienced happiness in the hotel(s). This indicates that pleasant surprises of the guests due to surpassing of their expectations have effect (positive effect) on their happiness. In the same manner, it was also noticed that the mean of guests' perception on perceived excitement is highest across their responses if they have always experienced happiness and lowest if they have never experienced happiness in the hotel(s). This shows that perceived excitement has effect (positive effect) on their happiness. Similarly, it was also seen that the mean of guests' perception on perceived positive feelings is highest across their responses if they have always experienced happiness and lowest if they have never experienced happiness in the hotel(s). This also reveals that perceived positive feelings have effect (positive effect) on their happiness. This ultimately led to guest delight as established by Oliver et

al. (1997).

It can be seen from the above findings that surpassing guests' expectations at the hotel(s) led to their pleasant surprises. Such pleasant surprises led to their happiness. Again, happiness along with their perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings forms the basis of guest delight in hotels. This sequence of guest delight can be shown in the following Figure-1 (Refer to Table-1, 2, 3 and 4).

FACTORS THAT MAY LEAD TO GUEST (CUSTOMER) DELIGHT IN HOTELS

1. Food and beverage quality
2. Availability of food and beverage variety
3. Hygiene of food and beverage
4. Food and beverage at reasonable price
5. Quality of the restaurant
6. Location of the hotel
7. Physical appearance of the hotel
8. View of the surrounding areas of the hotel
9. Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel
10. Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel
11. Room furnishings and appearance
12. Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows
13. Quietness of the room
14. Cleanliness of the room
15. Quality of in-room temperature control
16. Room service
17. Internet connection
18. Reasonable price for the room
19. Helpfulness of pre transaction information
20. Convenient and reliable reservation system
21. Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff
22. Availability of the hotel staff to provide

24. Courtesy of the hotel staff
25. Language proficiency of the hotel staff
26. Efficient check-in and check-out
27. Neat appearance of staff
28. Convenient payment method
29. Availability of reliable wake-up call
30. Security of belongings including valuables inside the room
31. Responsible security personnel
32. Availability of recreation facilities
33. Availability of transportation arrangements
34. Availability of 24 hours taxi service
35. Availability of business centre
36. Availability of meeting facilities
37. Availability of efficient laundry service
38. Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)
39. Availability of free newspaper
40. Availability of frequent travellers' program
41. Availability of swimming facilities
42. Availability of gymnasium facilities
43. Overall comfortability
44. Free gifts

EP → SURPASSING RESPONDENTS' EXPECTATIONS AT THE HOTEL(S)

PERCEIVED EXCITEMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THE HOTEL(S) — r= 0.598

EP — r= 0.752

PLEASANT SURPRISES OF THE RESPONDENTS AT THE HOTEL(S)

r= 0.561 — PERCEIVED POSITIVE FEELINGS OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THE HOTEL(S)

EP — r= 0.696

HAPPINESS OF THE RESPONDENTS DUE TO PLEASANT SURPRISES AT THE HOTEL(S)

EP

GUEST (CUSTOMER) DELIGHT

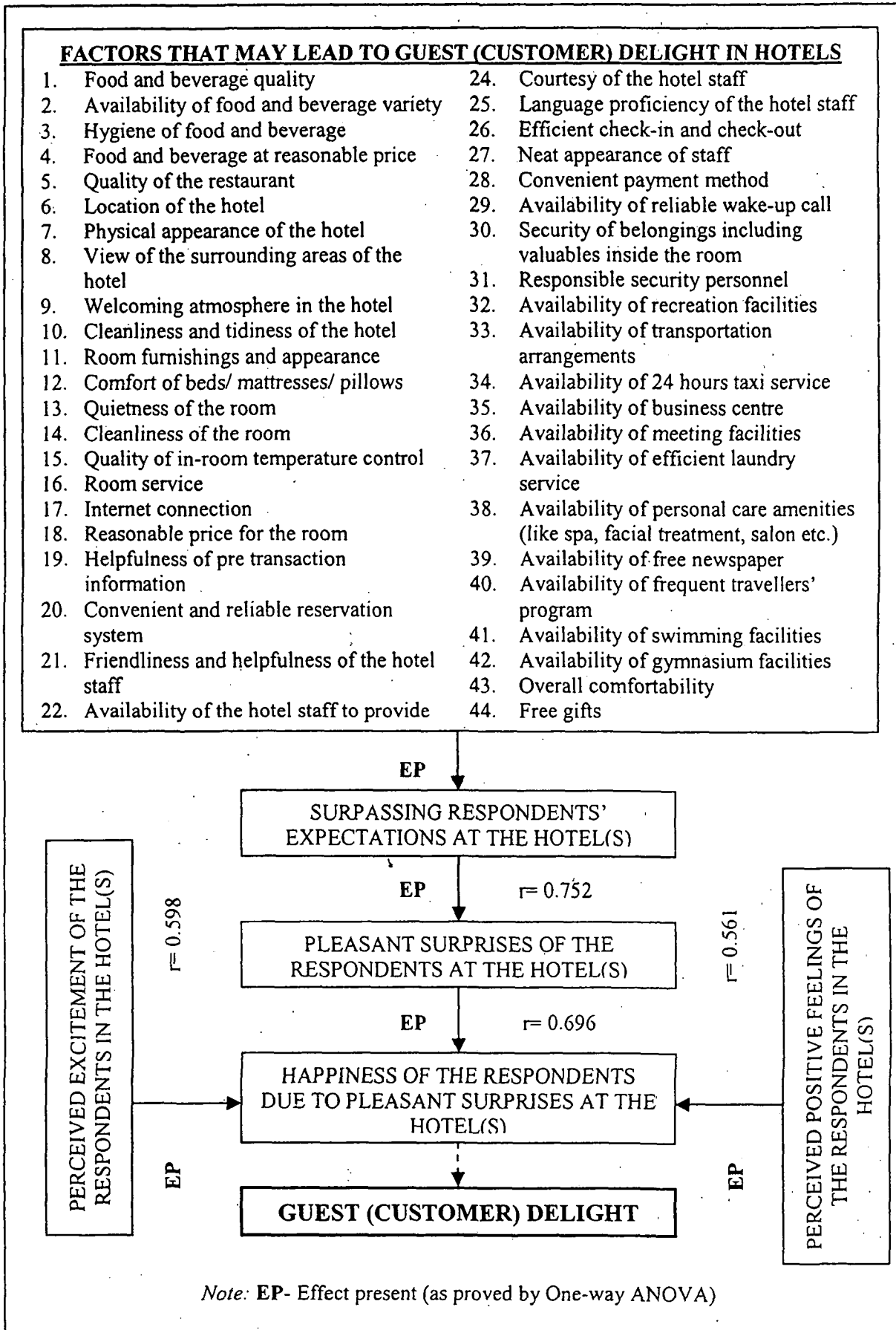*Note:* EP- Effect present (as proved by One-way ANOVA)

Figure-1: Sequence of guest delight in hotels

DISCUSSION

It was found from the study that various factors like food and beverage quality, availability of food and beverage variety, hygiene of food and beverage, food and beverage at reasonable price, and quality of the restaurant may have a bearing on surpassing of expectations of guests in the hotel(s), which forms an essential component of guest delight in hotels. Also, factors like location, physical appearance, and view of the surrounding areas of the hotel(s) have effect on surpassing of expectations of these guests. Moreover, factors like welcoming atmosphere, cleanliness and tidiness, and room furnishings and appearance in the hotel(s) have impact on surpassing of expectations of these guests. In addition, factors like comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows, quietness of the room, cleanliness of the room, quality of in-room temperature control, room service, internet connection, reasonable price for the room, helpfulness of pre transaction information, and convenient and reliable reservation system have effect on surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotel(s). It was also noticed that factors like friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff, availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service, special attention, courtesy of the hotel staff, language proficiency of the hotel staff, efficient check-in and check-out, neat appearance of staff, convenient payment method, availability of reliable wake-up call, security of belongings including valuables inside the room, and responsible security personnel affects surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotel(s). Besides, availability of recreation facilities, transportation arrangements, 24 hours taxi service, business centre, meeting facilities, efficient laundry service, personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.), free newspaper, frequent travellers' program, swimming facilities, and gymnasium facilities, as well as overall comfortability have effect on surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotel(s). Further, pleasant surprises like free gifts, special discounts, and special foods also have impact on surpassing of guests' expectations in the hotel(s). This study has also revealed that surpassing of guests' expectations led to their pleasant surprises in these hotel(s). Pleasant surprises of these guests in these hotel(s) in turn create happiness in them. Such happiness of these guests affected by their perceived excitement (arousal) and their perceived positive feelings results in guest delight. This finding ascertains the sequence between the above mentioned factors and guest delight in the 5 star deluxe, 4 star, 3 star, Heritage Grand and unclassified hotels in India. If any such study is conducted among such hotels or other categories of hotels in other parts of the world, this established sequence would be noticed there also.

CONCLUSION

Attainment of customer delight is indeed important for any organisation to survive and excel in the existing competitive business scenario. Therefore, every hotel should emphasize on exceeding guests' expectations through various factors. There should also be focus on creating pleasant surprises of the guests from surpassing of their expectations leading to their happiness. Such happiness along with perceived excitement and perceived positive feelings of the guests would end in a delighting experience for the guest (customer), a fact that has been illustrated through this study.

THE ROAD TO GUEST DELIGHT: AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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ANNEXURE

Table-A-1: Expectations of guests during their stay in their preferred hotels

Sr. No.	Factors	Highest expectation	Above average expectation	Average expectation	Below average expectation	Least expectation
1	Food and beverage quality	272	216	12	0	0
2	Availability of food and beverage variety	87	353	60	0	0
3	Hygiene of food and beverage	385	101	14	0	0
4	Food and beverage at reasonable price	54	336	105	5	0
5	Quality of the restaurant	340	142	18	0	0
6	Location of the hotel	142	332	26	0	0
7	Physical appearance of the hotel	144	274	75	7	0
8	View of the surrounding areas of the hotel	179	218	94	5	0
9	Welcoming atmosphere in the hotel	395	86	19	0	0
10	Cleanliness and tidiness of the hotel	388	111	1	0	0
11	Room furnishings and appearance	25	411	64	0	0
12	Comfort of beds/ mattresses/ pillows	232	227	41	0	0
13	Quietness of the room	287	190	23	0	0
14	Cleanliness of the room	415	78	7	0	0
15	Quality of in-room temperature control	135	304	57	4	0
16	Room service	373	99	17	4	0
17	In-room entertainment including television/ video/ audio	68	309	122	1	0
18	Internet connection	51	145	102	128	71
19	Reasonable price for the room	78	289	117	8	8
20	Helpfulness of pre transaction information	305	155	24	5	8
21	Convenient and reliable reservation system	341	127	24	8	0
22	Friendliness and helpfulness of the hotel staff	333	113	48	0	0
23	Availability of the hotel staff to provide prompt service	289	185	22	4	0
24	Special attention	198	217	54	6	25
25	Courtesy of the hotel staff	347	133	20	0	0
26	Language proficiency of the hotel staff	89	282	121	8	0
27	Efficient check-in and check-out	285	183	32	0	0
28	Neat appearance of staff	248	218	30	0	0
29	Convenient payment method	335	140	21	4	0
30	Availability of reliable wake-up call	152	301	20	16	7
31	Security of belongings including valuables inside the room	440	40	11	4	4
32	Responsible security personnel	409	80	6	4	0
33	Availability of recreation facilities	13	321	162	4	0
34	Availability of transportation arrangements	210	234	56	0	0
35	Availability of 24 hours taxi service	121	106	243	30	0
36	Availability of business centre	50	194	207	42	7
37	Availability of meeting facilities	56	186	219	32	7
38	Availability of convenient parking	113	238	128	14	7

	facilities					
39	Availability of efficient laundry service	144	285	59	12	0
40	Availability of personal care amenities (like spa, facial treatment, salon etc.)	82	211	177	25	4
41	Availability of free newspaper	58	345	81	16	0
42	Availability of frequent travellers' program	19	124	183	152	22
43	Availability of swimming facilities	6	53	44	125	269
44	Availability of gymnasium facilities	1	40	77	193	186
45	Overall comfortability	78	335	86	1	0
46	Any other	24	17	7	0	196

Table-A-2: Pleasant surprises of respondents during their stay in their preferred hotels

Sr. No.	Factors	Always obtained on visit	Sometimes obtained (predictable)	Sometimes obtained (unpredictable)	Rarely obtained	Obtained only once
1	Free gifts	1	3	37	33	53
2	Special discounts	3	13	52	25	1
3	Special foods	2	5	39	56	29
4	Special entertainment	2	1	19	34	9
5	Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.	0	5	21	23	24
6	Any other	0	2	0	0	14

Table-A-3: List of hotels in north eastern India covered during this study

Sr. No.	Name of the Hotel	Star Category	Location	Source
1	Mayfair Gangtok	5 star Deluxe	Gangtok	FHRAI
2	Orange Village Resort	4 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
3	Hotel Tashi Delek	4 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
4	The Royal Plaza	4 star	Gangtok	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
5	Hotel Royal Demazong	3 star	Gangtok	Ministry of Tourism
6	Hotel Saramsa Resort	3 star	Gangtok	Ministry of Tourism
7	Hotel Suhim Portico	3 star	Gangtok	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
8	Sidlon Residency	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
9	Hotel Tibet Gallery	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
10	Golden Heights	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
11	The Delisso Abode	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
12	De Villa	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
13	Hotel Mayur	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
14	The Chumbi Residency	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
15	Denzong Shangrilla	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
16	Hotel Sonam Palgey	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
17	Rhenock House	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
18	Hotel Heruka	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
19	Hotel Himalayan Heights	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
20	The Retreat	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
21	Hotel Rendezvous	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
22	The Sikkim Continental	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
23	Tamarind Hotel	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey

24	Hotel Gajraj	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
25	Bamboo Retreat- Rumtek	3 star	Gangtok	Obtained from survey
26	The Nor-Khill	Heritage Grand	Gangtok	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
27	Hotel Dynasty	4 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
28	Hotel Rajmahal	4 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
29	Hotel Ambarish	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
30	Hotel Ambarish Grand Regency	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
31	Hotel Millenium	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI
32	Hotel Viswaratna	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
33	Agnideep Continetal	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
34	Hotel Nakshatra	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
35	Kiranshree Portico	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
36	Hotel Atithi	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
37	Hotel Grand Starline	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
38	Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok	3 Star	Guwahati	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
39	Hotel Rituraj	3 Star	Guwahati	Obtained from survey
40	Hotel Ginger	No Classification	Guwahati	Obtained from survey
41	Brahmaputra Jungle Resort	3 Star	Guwahati	Ministry of Tourism
42	Iora- The Retreat	3 star	Kaziranga	Ministry of Tourism
43	Emerald Hotel and Resort	3 star	Kaziranga	Ministry of Tourism
44	City Regency	3 star	Dibrugarh	Ministry of Tourism
45	Hotel Natraj	3 star	Dibrugarh	Obtained from survey
46	Hotel MD	3 star	Jorhat	Ministry of Tourism
47	Hotel KRC Palace	3 star	Tezpur	Obtained from survey
48	Hotel Polo Towers	4 Star	Shillong	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
49	Hotel Pegasus Crown	3 Star	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
50	Hotel Centre Point	3 Star	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
51	Pinewood Hotel	3 Star	Shillong	Ministry of Tourism
52	Hotel Borail View	3 Star	Silchar	Obtained from survey
53	Hotel Ginger	No Classification	Agartala	Obtained from survey
54	Hotel Radha International	3 Star	Agartala	Obtained from survey
55	Hotel Rajarshi	No Classification	Agartala	Obtained from survey
56	Hotel Rajdhani	3 Star	Agartala	Obtained from survey
57	Hotel Welcome Palace	3 Star	Agartala	Obtained from survey
58	Hotel Arini	No Classification	Aizawl	Obtained from survey
59	Hotel Japhu	3 Star	Kohima	Obtained from survey
60	Hotel Saramati	3 star	Dimapur	Obtained from survey
61	Hotel Donyi Polo Ashok	3 star	Itanagar	Obtained from survey
62	Arun Sunbansiri	No Classification	Itanagar	Obtained from survey

Note: FHRAI stands for Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India

Tourism and Hospitality Industry

APPLICATIONS AND ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Customer Delight in the Hotel Industry- An Exploratory Study

Sinmoy Goswami[1] and Mrinmoy K Sarma[2]

Abstract

Delighting the customer is an important strategy for all organizations including hotels for creation of customer loyalty and thereby to assure a secured bottom line for survivability. This exploratory study aims at analyzing the effect of various factors constituting customer delight in the hotel industry. It also seeks to establish them as essential factors leading to delight in the 4 star and 3 star category hotels in Guwahati city of the state of Assam in northeastern India. It is found that responses towards welcoming atmosphere, quality food, food at reasonable price and overall comfort in the hotel are significantly different across age groups. Added to this, food at reasonable price, and cleanliness and hygiene are also affected by the sectors of employment of the guests. Again, reaction to pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts and special food also found to be dependent on the age the guests. The level of excitement, on the other hand, are affected by quality food and facilities provided to them in these hotels. It was also found that the level of excitement of the guests affected their positive feelings in these hotels. It has been proved through literature survey that such excitement of the guests leads to the surpassing of guest's level of expectations in these hotels finally resulting in their happiness (enjoyment). This ultimately led to customer delight. This clearly establishes that the above mentioned factors if surpassed would lead to customer delight in the hotel industry.

Key Words: Customer delight, pleasant surprise, excitement, positive affect and enjoyment

Introduction

Delight is obtained from "high degree of gratification of mind" leading to "extreme satisfaction" (Brainyquote, n.d.; "Delight," 1988; "Delight," 2001). The concept of customer delight has been studied by numerous thinkers in management. Keiningham and Vavra (2001) refer to customer delight as "positive surprise arising from extremely good service or product performance". Other researchers have primarily described it as a "positive emotional state" obtained by exceeding basic expectations from any product or service (Lynch, 1993; Keiningham & Vavra, 2001; Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler, & Pandit, 2008).

Delighting customers is an important strategy for all companies and organizations at present for obtaining higher profitability and survivality (Burns, Evans, Johansson, & Barrett, 2000). It is obtained by providing additional "unexpected benefits" with the basic product and/or service. These surprises and excites the customer.

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Statement of the Problem

As discussed earlier, customer delight is an important tool for most companies or organisations in the present competitive economic scenario to venture beyond customer satisfaction to increase customer loyalty and retention. This leads to greater profits thereby creating higher chances for sustenance of the company or organisation including a hotel. This study is an attempt to analyze the effect of various factors constituting customer delight in the hotel industry and thereby establish them as essential factors leading to delight. The hotel industry is an important and indispensable part of the service sector which has been contributing considerably towards economic development of all nations in the world. It is to be noted that the service sector contributes 49.2% of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India as per estimates of 1999-2000 (Bosworth, Collins, & Virmani, 2007; Central Statistical Office, 2006; Saha, Kar, & Baskaran, 2004).

Aims and Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of the constituent factors of customer delight in the 4 star and 3 star hotels in Guwahati city of the state of Assam (India). The study also aims to explore the relationship of these factors with the classification variables like age, sector of employment and purpose of visit.

Review of Literature

Torres and Kline (2006) have stated that customer delight influences "a firm's financial statements" by providing "a steady stream of cash flows associated" with loyal customers. Such customer loyalty can be best achieved through customer delight which "is a stronger state of customer engagement" (Skogland & Siguaw, 2004; Torres & Kline, 2006). The same authors have stated that customer delight (and not customer satisfaction) is the actual means to increase customer loyalty and retention. Patterson (1997) describes customer delight as the most "effective" means to augment customer "retention ratio". In the long run, this would provide "Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS)" (as cited by Chowdhury, 2009). Companies can obtain positive differential advantage with the help of delighter features of any product or service in relation to its competitors (Burns et al., 2000; Kano, 1984; Keiningham & Vavra, 2001; Rust & Oliver, 2000; Sauerwein, Bailom, Matzler, & Hinterhuber, 1996).

Leventhal (2008) through the Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction states that customer delight occurs when product or service delivery surpass customer's expectations. Keiningham and Vavra (2001) have stated that customer delight occurs when customers exhibit behaviour that is consistent with the firm's goals which includes increased retention, sales, word-of-mouth recommendations etc.

Oliver, Rust and Varki (1997) and Finn (2005) have established that surprising positive performance, arousal and positive effect are the antecedents of customer delight. Arousing refers to exciting or stimulating ("Arouse," 1998; "Arouse," 2001).

Skogland and Siguaw (2004) and Stewart (1997) have emphasized that hotels should strive beyond merely satisfying guests (customers) like other companies. In case of hotels, guests normally emphasize on proper quality of food, cleanliness and hygiene,

employee courtesy, special attention, prompt service, room service, facilities, security and overall comfortability (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000). This fact has been supported by Lynch (1993) who has established that "cleanliness, comfort, service, value and facilities" are the main factors for creating customer delight in case of hotels. The same author has also suggested that "ambience, food and service" when provided properly can lead to customer delight for restaurants. Torres and Kline (2006) and Keiningham and Vavra (2001) have stated that customer delight can only be obtained through "exceptional service" which is only possible through "exceptional employees" of any organization. Ball, Coelho, and Vilares (2006) have established that service personalization affects customer loyalty. Groenenboom and Jones (2003) have highlighted the importance of security for guests in hotels.

It has also been established that various factors constituting customer loyalty and customer delight greatly affects gender, age, sector of employment and purpose of visit of guests in hotels (Heung, 2000; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000).

Research Design

An initial study was conducted to find out the factors constituting delight in the hotel industry through review of the works of the earlier scholars. This also included a pilot survey of 10 repeat guests of 12 hotels falling in the 4 star and 3 star categories in the Guwahati city of Assam (Refer to Annexure-III). In addition, this pilot survey also included observation and open probing of some of the employees of the above hotels. Based on this effort, it was noticed that following are the main factors constituting customer delight in hotels:

(i)   Welcoming atmosphere (Lynch, 1993);

(ii) Quality food (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(iii) Food at reasonable price (Lynch, 1993);

(iv) Cleanliness and hygiene (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Lynch, 1993; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(v)   Special attention (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Torres & Kline, 2006; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(vi) Courtesy of the employees (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Torres & Kline, 2006; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(vii) Promptness of service (Ball et. al., 2006; Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Torres & Kline, 2006; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(viii) Room service (Ball et. al., 2006; Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Lynch, 1993; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Torres & Kline, 2006; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(ix) Facilities provided (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Lynch, 1993; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(x)   Security (Choi & Chu, 2000; Groenenboom & Jones, 2003; Heung, 2000; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000);

(xi)   Overall comfortability (Choi & Chu, 2000; Heung, 2000; Lynch, 1993; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Poon & Low, 2005; Tsang & Qu, 2000)

The pilot survey conducted among the guests revealed that customer delight can also be obtained through pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts, special discounts, special food, free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc. Once the common and significant factors constituting customer delight in the hotel industry were selected, the second stage involved two types of studies. The first study was conducted through survey of 66 repeat guests of 12 hotels falling in the 4 star and 3 star categories in Guwahati city of Assam. Since customer delight is associated in case of loyal and repeat customers only (as established through literature survey), only repeat guests were included as sampling elements in this study. They were selected through convenience and judgement sampling. A questionnaire for guests was developed to find out the effects of these factors on them (Refer to Annexure-I). The second study was conducted through structured observation and open probing of the employees of these hotels through a well defined interview schedule (Refer to Annexure-II). Secondary data for this study were obtained from books, journals etc. This study is, therefore, both exploratory and descriptive in nature. The time period of the study was two months (from 1st April, 2010 to 31st May, 2010) and it covered Guwahati city only.

Limitations of the Study

The sample for this study is limited to 66 only as finding repeat guests in hotels is difficult. This might throw a hazard towards representation. However, considering the fact that is an exploratory study, this problem might not jeopardize the research findings too much.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected thus are analyzed for checking the effects of factors constituting customer delight (including pleasant surprises) on the level of excitement of the respondents.

The following table shows the count of expectation scores against each of the above parameters.

Table-1: Expectations of guests during their stay in their preferred hotel(s)

Parameters	Least expectation	Below average expectation	Average expectation	Above average expectation	Highest expectation
Welcoming Atmosphere	1	1	2	28	34
Quality Food	0	0	0	42	24
Food at reasonable price	1	1	6	52	6
Cleanliness and Hygiene	0	0	6	22	38
Special Attention	1	1	8	36	20
Courtesy of employees	0	0	0	19	47
Promptness of service	0	0	1	29	36
Room Service	0	0	3	32	31

Facilities provided	0	0	16	42	8
Security	1	0	4	13	48
Overall comfort	0	0	15	41	10
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	2

From Table 1, it is clear that most respondent guests have given the highest expectations for employee courtesy and security during their stay in their preferred hotel(s). Again, most of the respondent guests have stated above average expectations for food at reasonable price, facilities provided and overall comfort during stay in their preferred hotel(s). Added to these, most respondents have indicated highest expectations and above average expectations for welcoming atmosphere, quality food, cleanliness and hygiene, special attention, promptness of service and room service during their stay in their preferred hotel(s). Only two respondents selected highest expectations for facilities other than mentioned so far in the hotel(s) where they stayed.

To test the hypotheses if the guest reaction to these variables varies significantly based on their classification category, a series of one way ANOVA test is conducted. In Table 2 the results of three of such tests are reproduced.

Table-2: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Welcoming Atmosphere at the Hotel(s) and Classification Variables

i. Different age groups					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	5.973	4	1.493	2.848	0.031
Within Groups	31.982	61	0.524		
Total	37.955	65			
ii. Sectors of employment					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	3.553	4	0.888	1.575	0.192
Within Groups	34.402	61	0.564		
Total	37.955	65			
iii. Purpose of visit					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Between Groups	1.484	2	0.742	1.282	0.285
Within Groups	36.470	63	0.579		
Total	37.955	65			

According to the last column in the above Table-2, the p-value (0.031) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for age groups. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$, the null hypothesis that there is equality of means of guests' preferences across age group can be rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between different age groups from welcoming atmosphere at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that welcoming atmosphere has a high impact on the age groups of these respondents. It is to be noted that welcoming atmosphere has highest significance for respondents in the age group above 60 years and least significance for respondents in the age group between 20 to 30 years.

In a similar manner, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of different age groups, sectors of employment and purpose of visit of the respondents from other delighter factors other than welcoming atmosphere at the hotel(s) where they stayed was conducted with the following findings:

(i)   With respect to quality food, the p-value (0.002) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for age groups. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for age groups. This implies that there is significant difference between different age groups from quality food at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that quality food has a high impact on the age groups of these respondents. It is to be noted that quality food has highest significance for respondents in the age group above 60 years and least significance for respondents in the age group between 31 to 40 years.

(ii)   With respect to food at reasonable price, the p-value (0.005) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for age groups. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for age groups. This implies that there is significant difference between different age groups from food at reasonable price at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that food at reasonable price has a high impact on the age groups of these respondents. It is to be noted that food at reasonable price has highest significance for respondents in the age group between 20 to 30 years and least significance for respondents in the age group above 60 years.

(iii)   With respect to food at reasonable price, the p-value (0.002) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for sectors of employment. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for sectors of employment. This implies that there is significant difference between different sectors of employment from food at reasonable price at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that food at reasonable price has a high impact on the sectors of employment of these respondents. It is to be noted that food at reasonable price has highest significance for respondents employed in the public sector and least significance for respondents in other sectors of employment.

(iv)   With respect to cleanliness and hygiene, the p-value (0.009) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for sectors of employment. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for sectors of employment. This implies that there is significant difference between different sectors of employment from cleanliness and hygiene at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that cleanliness and hygiene has a high impact on the sectors of employment of these respondents. It is to be noted that cleanliness and hygiene has highest significance for respondents who are businessman and self employed/ professional and least significance for respondents in other sectors of employment.

(v)   With respect to overall comfort, the p-value (0.009) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for age groups. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for age groups. This implies that there is significant difference between

different age groups from overall comfort at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that overall comfort has a high impact on the age groups of these respondents. It is to be noted that overall comfort has highest significance for respondents in the age group between 20 to 30 years and least significance for respondents in the age group between 31 to 40 years.

(vi)   With respect to pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts, the p-value (0.073) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for age groups. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for age groups. This implies that there is significant difference between different age groups from pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts has a high impact on the age groups of these respondents. It is to be noted that pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts has highest significance for respondents in the age group between 31 to 40 years and 51 to 60 years and least significance for respondents in the age group between 20 to 30 years.

(vii)   With respect to pleasant surprises in the form of special food, the p-value (0.091) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for age groups. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for age groups. This implies that there is significant difference between different age groups from pleasant surprises in the form of special food at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that pleasant surprises in the form of special food has a high impact on the age groups of these respondents. It is to be noted that pleasant surprises in the form of special food has highest significance for respondents in the age group between 41 to 50 years and least significance for respondents in the age group between 20 to 30 years.

(viii)   However, it was noticed that there is no impact of other factors of customer delight like, special attention, courtesy of employees, promptness of service, room service, facilities provided, security and other facilities on age groups, sectors of employment and purpose of visit of the respondents in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Additionally, there is no impact of welcoming atmosphere, quality food and overall comfort on sectors of employment and purpose of visit of the respondents. Again, food at reasonable price has no effect on the purpose of visit of the respondents. Further, cleanliness and hygiene had no impact on the age group and purpose of visit of the respondents.

It was also noticed that pleasant surprises in the form of special discount, free access to facilities and other special surprises has no effect on the age group, sectors of employment and purpose of visit of the respondents in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Besides, pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts and special food have no effect on the sectors of employment and purpose of visit of the respondents.

It is noticed that all the respondents selected either "high excitement" or "moderate excitement" in case of excitement from the factors constituting customer delight in hotel(s) where they stayed. Therefore, independent sample t-test was conducted to find out the effect of delighter features on their level of excitement. The findings are as follows:

(i) With respect to quality food, the p-value (0.074) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for the level of excitement. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for the levels of excitement. This implies that there is significant difference between different levels of excitement from quality food at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Therefore, it can be stated that quality food has a high impact on the levels of excitement of these respondents. It is to be noted that quality food has highest significance for respondents having high excitement and least significance for respondents having moderate excitement.

(ii) With respect to facilities provided, the p-value (0.102) is marginally greater than the level of significance (0.1) for the level of excitement. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypotheses cannot be rejected for the level of excitement. This implies that there is significant difference between different levels of excitement from facilities provided at the hotel(s) where the respondent stayed. Still, it can be stated that facilities provided has a high impact on the levels of excitement of these respondents.

(iii) It was, however, noticed that welcoming atmosphere, food at reasonable price, cleanliness and hygiene, special attention, courtesy of employees, promptness of service, room service, security, overall comfort and other facilities has no effect on the level of excitement (arousal) of the respondents at the hotel(s) where they stayed. Further, pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts, special discount, special food, free access to facilities and other special surprises has no effect on the level of excitement of these respondents.

It is noticed that all the respondents selected either "feel good" or "feel very good" in case of positive feelings from their excitement (arousal) from the factors constituting customer delight in hotel(s) where they stayed. Therefore, independent sample t-test was conducted to find out the effect of excitement (arousal) on the positive feelings of the respondents. It was noticed that the p-value (0.046) is less than the level of significance (0.1) for the levels of positive feelings. Thus at $\alpha=0.1$ the null hypothesis can be rejected for the levels of positive feelings. This implies that there is significant difference between different levels of positive feelings from excitement at the hotel(s). Therefore, it can be stated that excitement has a high impact on the levels of positive feelings of these respondents.

It has been already established from literature survey as discussed earlier, that surprising beneficial experience, excitement (arousal) and positive affect lead to surpassing of respondent's (guest's) expectations at the hotel(s) where they stayed (Keiningham & Vavra, 2001; Oliver et. al., 1997; Finn, 2005). From the same available literature, it can be stated that such surpassing of respondent's expectations caused enjoyment in them leading to customer delight (Crotts & Raschid, 2008; Keiningham & Vavra, 2001; Oliver et. al., 1997; Finn, 2005).

Discussion

It was found that welcoming atmosphere, quality food, food at reasonable price, cleanliness and hygiene, special attention, courtesy of the employees, promptness of service, room service, facilities provided, security and overall comfort are the main

factors that can shape customer delight in hotels. It is determined through this study that welcoming atmosphere, quality food, food at reasonable price and overall comfort are affected by the age of the guests in the hotel(s) where they stayed. Again food at reasonable price and cleanliness and hygiene are also impacted by the sectors of employment of the guests. Besides, pleasant surprises in the form of free gifts and special food also are affected by the age group of these guests. The level of excitement (arousal) of these guests were affected by quality food and facilities provided to them in these hotels. The excitement (arousal) of these guests led to positive feelings in them regarding these hotels. It has been proved from literature survey such positive feelings leads to surpassing of the guest's expectations and consequent happiness (enjoyment) resulting in customer delight. Therefore, it can be clearly established that the above mentioned factors if surpassed would lead to customer delight in the 4 star and 3 star category hotels in Guwahati city.

Conclusion

Attainment of customer delight is indeed important for any company or organisation including any hotel to survive and excel in the existing competitive business scenario. Therefore, every hotel should emphasize on providing pleasant surprise to customers through various factors. There should be focus on creating pleasant surprises that leads to excitement (arousal) causing positive feelings which would result in surpassing of expectations leading to happiness of the customers. This would end in a delighting experience for the customer, a fact that has been illustrated through this study. If a similar study is conducted among such hotels falling in the 4 star and 3 star or other categories in other parts of India and the world, this established relationship between the above mentioned factors and customer delight would be noticed there also.

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ANNEXURE-I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GUESTS

LOCATION(S):

....

RESPONSE ☐☐☐☐☐☐

CODE:

REQUEST FOR CO-OPERATION:

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a research scholar of Ph.D. Programme at the Department of Business Administration in Tezpur University. I am conducting a study on the topic titled **"Customer Delight: An insight into its constituent factors"**. I would kindly request you to spend a few minutes to answer the question as responses will help me in attaining the objectives of the study. The information will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.

Thanking you,

Sinmoy Goswami,

Research Scholar in Ph.D. Programme,

Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University (Assam)

(Please put a tick mark "√" wherever applicable)

1) Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2) Age group: ☐ Below 20 years Between 20 to 30 years ☐ Between 31 to 40 years
☐ Between 41 to 50 years ☐ Between 51 to 60 years ☐ Above 60 years

3) Sector of employment: ☐ Private Sector ☐ Public Sector ☐ Business
☐ Self-employed/ Professional ☐ Others

4) Purpose of visit: ☐ Official ☐ Leisure ☐ Both official and leisure
☐ Others

5) "I stay in the same hotel in a particular place".

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree Totally disagree

6) What do you expect when you stay in a hotel?

(Kindly put your rating as 5 for the maximum and 1 for the least expectation)

Parameters	Rating	Parameters	Rating
Welcoming atmosphere		Promptness of service	
Quality food		Room service	
Food at reasonable price		Facilities provided	
Cleanliness and hygiene		Security	
Special attention		Overall comfortability	
Courtesy of the employees		Any other *(please specify)*............	

7) Have you ever been loyal to any hotel where you stayed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If *Yes*, why

Particulars	Highest chance	Above average chance	Average chance	Below average chance	Least chance
Expectations always met					
Always got more than expectations					
I do not have any choice					
I love this place					
I love the people working in this hotel					
Any other *(please specify)*............					

8) When you get more than your expectations from any hotel where you stayed, what is your reaction? ....
....
....

9) Have you ever been pleasantly surprised by any act of a hotel where you stayed?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If *Yes*, how?

Parameters	Always whenever I visit	Sometimes (predictable)	Sometimes but unpredictable	Rarely	Only once till now
☐ Free gifts					
☐ Special discounts					
☐ Special foods					
☐ Free access to facilities like upgradation of room, gym, swimming pool etc.					
☐ Any other *(Please specify)*...					

10) Whenever you get such pleasant experiences, what is the level of your excitement?

☐ High excitement ☐ Moderate excitement ☐ Average excitement

☐ Below average excitement ☐ No excitement at all

11) Whenever you get such excitement from these pleasant experiences, do you feel good?

☐ Feel very good   ☐ Feel good   ☐ No emotion

12) Kindly give atleast five factors that somehow made/make you feel delighted after visiting your favourite hotel.

(i). ....   (vi). ....

(ii). ....   (vii). ....

(iii). ....   (viii). ....

(iv). ....   (ix). ....

(v). ....   (x). ....

13) Do you think they add value according to you?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

   If *Yes*, kindly go to Question Nos. (a) and (b)

   (a) Will you be happy with your preferred hotel?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

   (b) Will you stay in your preferred hotel in your next visit?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

ANNEXURE-II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HOTELS

LOCATION(S):

....

RESPONSE ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚

CODE:

NAME OF THE HOTEL: ....

ADDRESS: ....

CONTACT NO.: ....

1) Do you have loyal customers in your hotel?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    If *Yes*, why do you get loyal customers?   *(5 for the maximum and 1 for the least)*

    (i) Welcoming atmosphere   ....   (vii) Promptness of service   ....

    (ii) Quality food   ....   (viii) Room service   ....

    (iii). Food at reasonable price   ....   (ix) Facilities provided   ....

    (iv). Cleanliness and hygiene   ....   (x) Security   ....

    (v) Special attention   ....   (xi) Overall comfortability   ....

    (vi) Courtesy of the employees ....   (xii). Any other *(please specify)* ....

2) Why do you get repeat customers? ....

....

3) What differentiates your hotel from others? ....

....

4) What is your viewpoint regarding customer satisfaction in your hotel? ....

....

5) What do you normally do to provide customer satisfaction in your hotel? ....

....

6) Do you believe in customer delight?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    a) If *No*, why?..

    b) If *Yes*, answer the following questions:

        i. What is your viewpoint regarding customer delight?

☐ Surpassing of your customers' level of expectations

☐ Providing enjoyment to your customers

☐ Both

☐ Any other *(please specify)* ....

     ii. How do you manage customer delight in your hotel?

☐ Continue to obtain the above mentioned points

☐ Any other *(please specify)* ....

ANNEXURE-III

LIST OF HOTELS IN GUWAHATI CITY COVERED DURING THIS STUDY

Sr. No.	Name of the Hotel	Star Category	Source
1	Hotel Dynasty	4 Star	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
2	Hotel Rajmahal	4 Star	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
3	Hotel Ambarish	3 Star	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
4	Hotel Ambarish Grand Regency	3 Star	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
5	Hotel Millenium	3 Star	FHRAI
6	Hotel Viswaratna	3 Star	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
7	Agnideep Continetal	3 Star	Ministry of Tourism
8	Hotel Nakshatra	3 Star	Ministry of Tourism
9	Kiranshree Portico	3 Star	Ministry of Tourism
10	Hotel Atithi	3 Star	Ministry of Tourism
11	Hotel Grand Starline	3 Star	Ministry of Tourism
12	Hotel Brahmaputra Ashok	3 Star	FHRAI, Ministry of Tourism
Note: FHRAI stands for Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India			