

THE KEY INDICATORS OF GUEST EXPERIENCE IN IHG HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

Guest experience in IHG hotels worldwide is the main subject of this research. A large number of papers analyzing the attributes influencing guest experience are referenced in the literature review section. The research data used in this study were taken from the Medallia platform. We analyzed data from 86 IHG hotels worldwide. Five indicators of guest experience were observed: Service, F&B, Room, Likely to Recommend, and Overall Experience. All five indicators were measured on a scale from 1 to 10. The results of the study indicate that the service provided has the strongest impact on overall experience. The hotel room also has a statistically significant impact on overall experience. On the other hand, food and beverage do not have a significant impact on overall experience. It is confirmed that satisfied guests are likely to recommend the hotel to others. Therefore, this research provides practical implications for hotel management. Managers should train the staff to provide the best service possible. Additionally, they should consider room attributes that would lead to a better room experience.

Keywords: guest experience, hotel attributes, hotel room, food & beverage, service quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Guest experience is an essential part of strategic management, especially used as an inseparable part of marketing strategies. It should be the main goal of a hotel since it impacts the whole business. A hotel company should prioritize a positive guest experience as the first priority. The success of the hotel company in the hotel industry is determined by guest experience, since hotels cannot be competitive if they are not able to meet their guests' expectations and create valuable experiences for them. Positive experience leads to guest satisfaction, which is a leading indicator of business performance of hotels. Management of a hotel needs to create a successful relationship with their guests in order to be able to understand their needs and to satisfy them. Guests that are satisfied show at the same time loyalty towards the hotel company, they tend to use the hotel services again in the future, and they usually recommend the hotel to their friends and family or write positive reviews. Satisfied guests reduce the possibility of complaints. Moreover, satisfied guests have a positive impact on revenue and financial results. Guest experience can be measured by analyzing guest surveys used for gathering information about the opinions that guests have on different aspects of service.

Strategic management is the process of developing and implementing strategic plans and identifying different ways in order to achieve business goals. Hotel companies are facing a very turbulent environment that is constantly being changed. In order to achieve their goals and mission in such a complex environment, hotel companies should practice strategic management and stay firm and focused [1].

As part of a successful strategy, hotels should continuously create distinctive value for guests. They should continuously adjust in order to create unique value for guests which provides competitive advantage [2]. The strategy of differentiation is based on the achievement of a competitive advantage due to creating unique and special value for guests. It would not be possible without understanding their needs and preferences and focusing on the products and services that would meet or exceed those needs [3]. Marketing strategy and strategic approach are inevitable in hotel companies because of creating products and services that guests are interested in. This leads to sales and resales [4]. Many authors define satisfaction as the emotional reaction of guests to the difference between their expectations and the real service or product performance. Satisfaction is achieved if the guest gains the expected product or service in the right place and time [5].

Hotel managers need to know clearly which factors provide special value for guests. The goal of this study is to find out which factors determine the overall experience for hotel guests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the strategic management point of view, guest experience and different aspects of service quality and attributes that lead to a positive guest experience and satisfaction have been researched by many authors.

Many researchers analyzed big data in order to identify the attributes that affect guest experience and satisfaction. Zarezadeh et al. [6] conducted big data analyses to reveal the main factors that affect hotel guest experience. In previous studies that applied big data in investigating the attributes impacting guest experience, the physical environment was found to be the most attractive attribute. Hotel features, the convenience of transportation, hotel location, and service quality were also important factors according to prior studies. Guest experience is very complex; therefore, the combination of individual attributes of the physical environment (room, location, food, Wi-Fi, services, etc.) should be taken into consideration in order to achieve a positive guest experience. Padma & Ahn [7] also analyzed big data in online reviews to understand the attributes of luxury hotel services. They applied content analysis, namely word frequency analysis. The results showed that the main luxury hotel service quality attributes are: hotel-related attributes, room-related attributes, staff-related attributes, and travel-related attributes. Room quality and guests' interaction with hotel staff are major determinants of guests' word of mouth and their intentions to revisit a hotel.

Nguyen et al. [8], in their study, analyzed customer reviews on online platforms, where useful information is provided to help researchers explore customer experience and satisfaction in hotel services. They aimed to discover the key drivers of international guest satisfaction in the hotel industry and the ways it can be improved. According to the research results, hotel staff is the most important service factor among the seven hotel service factors investigated. They also identified aspects of staff performance that could be improved to satisfy guests more effectively. Zhou et al. [9] analyzed guest reviews of four- and five-star hotels in China that were posted on Agoda.com. Seventeen attributes influencing customer satisfaction were identified. These attributes were

divided into groups based on their influence: satisfiers (positive influence), dissatisfiers (negative influence), bidirectional forces (either positive or negative influence), and neutrals (no influence). They expanded their analyses by comparing customer satisfaction between 4- and 5-star hotels, hotels with different types of ownership, and reviews from guests of different origins. The online review data provided powerful customer feedback insight for both researchers and hotel managers. Wong et al. [10] investigated the relationships between service quality, perceived value, and guest satisfaction. They collected data from TripAdvisor. The study showed that perceived value had a mediating role in the relationship between service quality and guest satisfaction. Sann & Lai [11] analyzed online complaints that influence guests' purchasing behavior. Their study synthesized specific service failure items and categorized them into groups. They compared expressions used by Asian and non-Asian guests related to their hotel experiences. According to the results, Asian guests encountered more service failures related to engineering segments of operations, such as equipment issues, while non-Asian guests encountered more failures related to housekeeping, such as cleanliness and bedding. According to Vujičić et al. [12], customer feedback is very important for company management. This is particularly significant in the hospitality and hotel industry, where there is a high level of interaction between employees and customers.

Different aspects of room attributes have been analyzed by many authors, as a hotel room is considered the main hotel product. Kim & Han [13] defined groups of in-room amenities for the new post-pandemic era. They placed a total of twenty-eight in-room amenities into six categories: protective amenities, utilitarian amenities, sensory amenities, entertainment amenities, food & beverage amenities, and bathroom amenities. The importance of hygienically clean rooms contributed to the relevance of new protective amenities. Their study also highlighted the difference between the importance and performance of in-room amenities. Fourteen out of the twenty-eight amenities had low priority, meaning low importance and low performance. On the other hand, amenities such as bathtubs, brightness, power outlets, and coffee machines were identified as having high importance but low performance. The use of in-room amenities depends on various factors, such as the length or purpose of stay. Some groups of amenities—such as protective, sensory, or food & beverage amenities—have a positive impact on the sense of well-being, which increases intentions to revisit the hotel. Siamionova et al. [14] investigated the effect of spatial colors on guests' perception of hotel rooms. Color impacts behavior and emotions. The emotional effect is especially important in the hotel industry because emotions strongly affect guest satisfaction. The study examined the difference between two contrasts (blue and red) and adopted virtual reality techniques to present a virtual hotel room design. The results showed that guests preferred staying in blue hotel rooms rather than red ones. Lončar & Knežević [15] investigated whether the hotel room or being recognized by employees as loyal guests has a greater impact on guest experience. According to the results, both the guest room and loyalty recognition positively affect overall experience. However, the hotel room—the basic hotel product—has a stronger impact on guest satisfaction. A similar study conducted by Lončar & Cerović [16] confirmed that guestroom experience has the most significant impact on overall guest experience among all attributes considered.

Besides room attributes, other aspects of hotel services were the subject of many studies. Lockyer [17] identified in his research the factors influencing the selection of a hotel by guests. Four main factors are: location, price, facilities, and cleanliness. According to Alrawadieh & Law [18], the quality and the size of rooms, together with the service quality provided by staff, are the main determinants of guest experience. Guest experience, as a key factor for the success of a hotel, was researched in the study by Engeset & Heide [19]. According to literature on total quality management, managers should focus on all aspects of the operations in order to achieve high levels of guest satisfaction. However, the authors of this study found that overall experience in a hotel depends on two core factors in the hotel operational departments: intangible aspects of the reception and tangible aspects of the housekeeping. Vukosav et al. [20] conducted a study on perceived quality of hotels with the aim to identify the specific factors of hotels and to point out the importance of strengthening them in order to reach guest satisfaction. They identified five attributes considered as the most influential factors of perceived product quality: front office service, employees, facilities, restaurant service, and location. Dortyol et al. [21] analyzed perceived service that was provided by hotels in Antalya. Their aim was to identify service quality dimensions in these hotels and to explore the impact that these dimensions have on customer satisfaction and their intentions to recommend a hotel or revisit it. Among dimensions: "hotel employees and problem solving", "transportation", "food quality and reliability", "climate and hygiene", "level of price", "tangibles", "interaction with Turkish culture", and "friendly, courteous and helpful employees", the strongest impact on guest satisfaction was made by

“tangibles” and “food quality and reliability”. According to Perdomo-Verdecia et al. [22] and their case study, the hotel service attribute that most influences customer experience is the quality of food in specialized hotel restaurants. However, other factors such as room cleanliness and food quality at the buffet are also important and can lead to dissatisfaction if they are not at the expected level. Guest experience could be optimized by adjusting different quality attributes in accordance with the specific hotel context. Saleh & Ryan [23] analyzed factors influencing guest preferences when they choose a hotel. These factors include tangible attributes of the hotel. Guests chose a hotel driven by factors such as available restaurant, convenient parking, interior and exterior design, and aesthetics. Nunkoo et al. [24] researched customer satisfaction with service quality regarding accommodation with different star grading in South Africa. The two most important satisfaction predictors for one-star and two-star category accommodation were infrastructure and employee expertise, both of which were found to be low concerning performance level. Two important satisfaction determinants for three-star accommodation are safety and security and room quality, although they underperformed with regard to safety and security. For four-star and five-star accommodation, the most significant satisfaction predictors were waiting time and customer interaction, both of which performed above average scores. Worsfold et al. [25] compared in their study the impact of guest satisfaction with service on the one hand and the physical attributes on the other hand on their intention to return and their perceptions of value. According to the results, guest satisfaction with the physical attributes of a hotel has a significantly stronger impact on their intention to return than their satisfaction with service received. On the other hand, guest satisfaction with service impacts their perception of value, as opposed to their satisfaction with the physical attributes, which is not significant. Perceived value does not impact the intention of guests to return. Lee et al. [26] investigated the factors that affected overall guest experience and found that service, room, and value evaluations were the top three affecting factors. Ramanathan & Ramanathan [27] classified in their study the attributes that impact guest experience into two categories: satisfiers and dissatisfiers. The findings revealed that value for money is a critical attribute, while customer service, room quality, and food quality are dissatisfiers. According to Radojević et al. [28] and their study based on analyzing hotel characteristics that are significantly associated with guest satisfaction, the star rating of a hotel is the most important factor influencing guest experience. Besides that, the presence of air-conditioning devices, a bar within the hotel, free access to Wi-Fi, membership in a branded hotel chain, distance from the city center, and price also have a significantly positive influence on satisfaction.

Different authors used different methods for measuring guest satisfaction, as well as their expectations. Akbaba [29] used the SERVQUAL model to identify specific expectations of business hotel guests and service quality dimensions that could be applied in an international environment. The aim was also to measure the level of importance of specific dimensions for business hotel guests. The results confirmed the five dimensions of SERVQUAL – “tangibles,” “adequacy in service supply,” “understanding and caring,” “assurance,” and “convenience,” where for business travelers the most important was the dimension of “convenience,” followed by “assurance,” “tangibles,” “adequacy in service supply,” and “understanding and caring.” Nicolau et al. [30] conducted an empirical test to explore how different methodologies used for measuring guest satisfaction affect the results. They investigated discrepancies in their study when monetary and non-monetary components were included. According to the results, hotels using non-monetary components in measuring satisfaction, such as the arithmetic mean of non-monetary attributes, showed higher values for guest satisfaction than hotels using monetary measures, such as value for money. Guests are monetarily sensitive to some attributes, such as comfort, staff, and services. Petrović [31] used in his research modified multi-criteria methods developed to improve the measurement of service quality, with the aim of calculating the weight coefficients for each individual dimension of service quality. He obtained adequate and useful information for hotel management about the extent to which the services provided align with guest expectations. Knežević et al. [32] concluded in their research that it is necessary for hotel management to identify the needs of the guests and then adapt the hotel product accordingly. In their research, they identified the weaknesses and strengths of the hotel product by analyzing guest ratings on the importance and actual state of certain attributes using the IPA method (Importance-Performance Analysis). The results showed that guests are generally satisfied with the hotel product attributes that are important to them, which is not the case with less important attributes. Đeri et al. [33] investigated the experience of hotel guests by analyzing service attributes that should be improved. The aim was to detect existing weaknesses of hotel attributes that should be improved, as well as to maintain positive attributes. By applying Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), they sought to explore the difference between the

perception that guests have about the importance of specific hotel attributes and the hotel's performance. According to the results, there are differences between the perception of importance and the actual performance in the categories of food and recreation, rooms and reception, and employee service quality. Crick & Spencer [34] analyzed issues related to service quality in hotels. Since the hotel industry is highly dynamic and competitive, they explored aspects of hotel work related to service delivery and discussed methods used for measuring service quality and guest expectations. Satisfactory service is the minimum that is expected by guests. They applied the quality function deployment approach, where service is treated as a process in which guest expectations are measured at every stage, with the aim of creating service that meets or exceeds them.

Manhas & Tukamushaba [35] explored guests' attitudes, expectations, and important factors influencing service experience. The results indicated that there was a difference between guests' expectations and their actual experiences. They provided recommendations to hotels that would help improve the guests' memorable experience. Souki et al. [36] investigated the impact of the perception of quality that guests have on their positive and negative emotions, satisfaction, value, word of mouth, and electronic word of mouth. They also investigated the impact of price on their perception of value and satisfaction, as well as the impact of satisfaction on word of mouth and electronic word of mouth. According to the results, the perception of quality has a positive impact on perceived value, positive emotions, and satisfaction, and a negative impact on negative emotions. Price has a negative impact on perceived value but does not impact satisfaction. Perception of value has a positive impact on satisfaction. Satisfaction has a positive impact on word of mouth and electronic word of mouth. Lu et al. [37] aimed to determine whether managers of luxury hotels and their guests understand service quality and satisfaction in the same way, and whether there is a discrepancy between the services that luxury hotels offer and how guests actually experience them. According to their findings, there was no significant difference between the way managers and guests understand service quality and satisfaction. However, they used different language to describe luxury, service quality, and satisfaction. For managers, satisfaction was evaluated in terms of services provided, while for guests, satisfaction was evaluated in terms of value for money.

Torres et al. [38] investigated whether guests from different cultures are likely to be delighted by different aspects of hotel service. In their study, the researchers conducted interviews with guests of different nationalities from the United States, Brazil, Germany, and Canada. They analyzed the drivers that led to guest delight and concluded that although there are certain universal service quality elements, guests from different nationalities and cultures can also be delighted by different elements of service.

According to Barjaktarović & Knežević [39], guest satisfaction can be seen as satisfaction with the hotel service, as well as guest delight if the service quality exceeds expectations. It is necessary that all employees at all levels in the hotel direct their activities toward meeting and exceeding guest expectations. All individual products and services need to be integrated into the overall guest experience. Two key elements of service quality assessment are guest satisfaction and guest loyalty.

Total quality management (TQM) is a system of constant improvement of the quality of activities at all levels of the company. Knežević et al. [40], in their study, measured guest expectations and satisfaction, taking into consideration the quality of the hotel product. Moreover, they compared the results by separately analyzing reviews of hotels that implemented TQM and those that did not. According to the results, guests who stayed in hotels with TQM implemented are more satisfied, especially in relation to employees and value for money.

METHODOLOGY

The observed dataset contains data from 86 hotels worldwide. The total number of hotel guests who participated in the research is 39,026, and it differs and ranges from 6 (MSQMK – MINSK) to 623 (LPLCP – LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT). Data were collected by analyzing questionnaires designed by the customer experience platform *Medallia*.

The online questionnaires were sent to guests by e-mail after their departure from IHG hotels worldwide, from January until July 2024. The evaluated categories from the questionnaire, rated from 1 to 10, are presented below (Table 1):

Table 1. Evaluated categories from the questionnaire

Rated Survey Responses (1-10)

I Overall Experience & Core Metrics											
1	Overall Experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Likelihood to Recommend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
II Hotel											
3	Hotel Conditions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
III Arrival											
4	Check-in Experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Speed of Check-in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Helpfulness of staff at check-in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
IV Wi-Fi											
7	Overall Wi-Fi	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
V Service											
8	Overall Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Showing they care	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Staff Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Staff Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
VI Guest Room											
13	Overall Guest Room Experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	Room Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Bed Comfort	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	Comfortable Temperature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17	Noise Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18	Lighting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19	Condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
20	Convenience of Charging Ports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21	TV/Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
VII Guest Bathroom											
22	Overall Guest Bathroom Experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
23	Bathroom Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24	Bathroom Amenities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25	Towels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
26	Condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27	Shower/Bath	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
VIII Food and Beverage											
28	Overall Food and Beverage Experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29	Breakfast Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30	Breakfast Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Source: adapted from Medallia platform

Although the questionnaires consisted of 8 groups of questions, including 30 questions in total where guests rated different aspects of their stay on a scale from 1 to 10, only five indicators of guest experience were observed: *Overall Service*, *Overall F&B Experience*, *Overall Guest Room Experience*, *Likelihood to Recommend*, and *Overall Experience*. All five indicators were measured on a scale from 1 to 10. However, the provided data focus solely on responses rating 8 to 10. Therefore, the data represent the percentage of respondents who gave a grade equal to or greater than 8. The core of this analysis is the close observation of highly satisfied individuals.

Within this study, two research questions emerge:

Research question 1: Are highly satisfied guests open to recommending the hotel to others?

Research question 2: How do elements of quality (*Overall Service*, *Overall F&B Experience*, *Overall Guest Room Experience*) impact overall experience?

To answer the research questions, linear regression was used. Linear regression is an econometric modeling technique that allows modeling the dependence between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Multiple linear regression uses two or more independent variables to describe the variation of the dependent variable, rather than just one independent variable, as in simple linear regression. It allows estimation using more complex models with multiple explanatory variables and, if used correctly, may lead to better predictions, better portfolio construction, or better understanding of the drivers of security returns. To evaluate the model, two statistical tests and one metric were used. The first test is the T-test, which inspects the statistical significance of model coefficients. Next is the F-test, which inspects the statistical significance of the overall model. Finally, the R-squared is a metric of model quality and indicates how well the independent variable(s) explain the dependent variable.

RESULTS

Below we present the results from 86 hotels around the world. The total number of hotel guests who participated in the research is 39,026 (Table 2).

Table 2. The percentage of responses rated from 8 to 10 for researched categories

	(Calculation: % of ratings 8–10, Time Period: January–July 2024)						
	Hotel	Number of guests included in research	Overall Experience	Likely to Recommend	Overall Guest Room Experience	Overall F&B Experience	Overall Service
1	ABZAA - ABERDEEN AIRPORT	520	87.88	88.27	90.96	77.17	90.58
2	AMSPC - AMSTERDAM – SOUTH	485	87.84	87.84	85.57	70.73	90.72
3	ANKCR - ANKARA	386	94.30	93.78	94.56	93.06	96.63
4	ANRBE - ANTWERP	528	73.48	70.64	68.94	70.71	80.30
5	ATHGR - ATHENS - CITY CENTRE	308	86.36	85.06	83.12	80.15	92.21
6	AYTYA - ANTALYA	284	80.99	81.69	81.34	75.85	84.15
7	BEGCP - BELGRADE	486	91.36	91.15	90.12	87.55	92.39
8	BERCC - BERLIN CITY CENTRE KU'DAMM	578	85.99	83.39	78.55	79.02	88.24
9	BERCP - BERLIN - POTSDAMER PLATZ	523	85.09	83.17	83.75	82.33	88.15
10	BFSWN - BELFAST	569	80.67	78.38	85.59	72.21	86.82
11	BHXCT - BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE	604	74.83	74.17	68.87	81.31	86.75
12	BHXPW - BIRMINGHAM NEC	606	81.52	82.67	77.39	77.39	86.47
13	BHXSL - SOLIHULL	383	76.50	78.07	77.02	70.86	82.25
14	BJRCP - BORJOMI	215	91.16	89.77	86.51	87.94	93.49
15	BRUZM - BRUSSELS AIRPORT	505	88.71	86.73	88.71	75.40	88.71

16	BSHEG - FELBRIDGE - GATWICK	573	83.42	83.07	80.45	83.43	90.40
17	BSSBT - BURSA	386	89.38	88.34	89.12	84.62	91.97
18	BTSHA - BRATISLAVA	423	84.87	83.92	83.45	79.94	89.83
19	BUDPB - BUDAPEST	483	95.03	95.03	93.37	92.77	97.10
20	BUHRM - BUCHAREST	320	94.69	93.75	93.13	88.69	95.63
21	CHETS - CHESTER	599	78.63	78.46	73.62	76.48	85.98
22	DBLBL - DUBLIN - BLANCHARDSTOWN	576	86.81	85.24	89.93	78.94	90.10
23	DBLNP - DUBLIN AIRPORT	600	89.67	90.17	89.83	85.82	93.83
24	EMAUK - ROYAL VICTORIA SHEFFIELD	542	76.57	75.83	76.20	75.46	83.76
25	FAOVI - VILAMOURA - ALGARVE	408	88.73	87.50	89.46	86.67	87.99
26	FHLBK - MARLOW	574	78.57	77.00	84.67	72.05	81.71
27	FRACG - FRANKFURT CONGRESS HOTEL	411	47.45	45.99	46.23	62.31	57.42
28	GLWCR - GLASGOW	609	76.68	77.50	75.37	69.66	83.25
29	GVACP - GENEVA	540	89.81	87.78	82.78	81.21	93.89
30	HAMGE - HAMBURG - CITY ALSTER	592	88.85	87.67	88.03	74.12	93.42
31	HELMH - HELSINKI - HESPERIA	474	93.88	93.04	90.30	88.03	94.51
32	HFAYN - HAIFA	15	80.00	80.00	66.67	58.33	80.00
33	HRTUK - HARROGATE	594	86.53	86.36	87.21	78.23	87.54
34	HYCCP - GERRARDS CROSS	572	65.03	65.21	67.66	59.03	72.73
35	ISTBM - ISTANBUL - OLD CITY	522	80.46	78.74	79.50	75.38	85.25
36	ISTFL - ISTANBUL - FLORYA	266	98.12	96.99	95.11	92.62	95.49
37	ISTIH - ISTANBUL - HARBIYE	291	84.88	84.19	85.22	88.64	90.03
38	ISTIT - ISTANBUL - ASIA	371	89.76	89.22	85.44	87.54	92.72
39	ISTOR - ISTANBUL - ORTAKOY BOSPHORUS	182	81.87	78.02	79.67	69.40	84.62
40	ISTTV - ISTANBUL TUZLA VIAPORT MARINA	357	93.28	93.00	91.60	84.76	93.84
41	ISTUR - ISTANBUL - ORYAPARK	185	85.95	83.78	84.32	81.82	88.65
42	LEEUK - LEEDS	589	79.80	78.95	73.51	77.29	85.57
43	LGWUK - LONDON - GATWICK AIRPORT	580	80.69	78.97	76.90	77.67	91.21
44	LISPR - CAPARICA LISBON	426	86.15	86.62	86.38	80.73	89.91
45	LMSCY - LIMASSOL	270	86.30	84.44	78.15	84.31	91.48
46	LONEA - LONDON - EALING	534	71.35	68.73	69.85	64.50	77.15
47	LONKC - LONDON - KINGS CROSS	596	72.32	70.64	70.69	72.79	79.56
48	LONSR - LONDON HEATHROW T4	617	83.14	83.63	84.28	73.55	85.58
49	LONXL - LONDON DOCKLANDS	575	74.09	73.91	75.48	64.13	81.39
50	LPLCP - LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT	623	78.49	78.01	75.76	69.52	84.59
51	LPLUK - LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE	610	84.10	83.44	78.03	84.89	90.16
52	LYSCP - LYON - CITE INTERNATIONALE	512	78.91	76.76	80.51	73.09	82.81
53	MADCR - MADRID CENTRE RETIRO	571	86.69	85.29	85.99	79.56	89.67
54	MCHSS - MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE	606	85.48	84.98	82.18	81.80	90.26

55	MCHWT - MANCHESTER AIRPORT	553	75.77	75.41	75.41	72.12	84.99
56	MDDCP - MADRID AIRPORT	549	86.34	83.24	85.97	84.10	91.07
57	MILCC - MILAN CITY	429	80.65	77.16	78.09	77.54	87.18
58	MILMA - MILAN - MALPENSA AIRPORT	316	58.86	58.23	58.54	55.82	71.20
59	MILSD - MILAN - LINATE	410	69.02	66.10	63.17	75.96	77.80
60	MOPDA - MONTPELLIER - CORUM	269	71.00	71.00	72.49	63.77	81.41
61	MRSDM - MARSEILLE - LE DÔME	335	87.46	86.87	89.85	80.59	89.85
62	MSQMK - MINSK	6	50.00	50.00	66.67	50.00	66.67
63	MSTNL - MAASTRICHT	439	72.21	69.25	64.92	80.11	77.68
64	NAVNC - CAPPADOCIA - NEVSEHIR	162	85.80	85.80	82.10	80.00	88.89
65	NCEAN - NICE - GRAND ARENAS	336	85.12	82.74	88.39	72.88	86.61
66	NCLSQ - NEWCASTLE - STEPHENSON QUARTER	616	82.47	82.47	81.82	75.29	83.93
67	NOTWS - NOTTINGHAM	600	79.50	78.67	73.50	82.49	89.17
68	OPOCP - PORTO	502	92.63	90.04	91.83	88.04	94.22
69	OSTBE - BRUGGE	537	91.60	91.04	86.94	86.44	94.22
70	PARDL - PARIS - REPUBLIQUE	562	82.56	80.96	73.84	80.84	89.68
71	PLHUK - PLYMOUTH	607	78.42	77.59	74.30	75.00	85.01
72	QPAIT - PADOVA	435	87.59	85.98	83.68	80.00	89.89
73	REATR - READING EAST	585	83.76	83.42	87.35	81.05	86.50
74	REAUK - READING	577	65.51	63.43	62.74	60.90	71.23
75	RKECP - COPENHAGEN TOWERS	552	73.19	73.19	71.38	69.60	80.43
76	ROMSP - ROME - ST. PETER'S	551	79.49	77.13	76.41	78.78	83.48
77	SFDUA - STRATFORD UPON AVON	425	77.18	76.24	73.18	72.30	84.24
78	TASTM - TASHKENT	114	95.61	92.11	93.86	81.55	99.12
79	TLVCC - TEL AVIV CITY CENTER	291	85.91	86.94	88.66	71.93	89.35
80	TLVIL - TEL AVIV BEACH	170	84.71	80.00	88.24	76.03	88.24
81	UTCUR - UTRECHT - CENTRAL STATION	485	89.90	88.04	85.77	83.05	90.93
82	VCEQA - VENICE EAST - QUARTO D'ALTINO	389	73.01	71.98	69.15	74.92	80.98
83	VRNFR - VERONA - FIERA	275	79.64	78.18	82.18	54.84	80.00
84	WAWWB - WARSAW - THE HUB	513	94.74	94.74	94.74	95.38	95.13
85	ZOQNS - DUSSELDORF - NEUSS	319	66.46	64.89	66.14	63.64	72.10
86	ZRHHA - ZURICH	563	74.60	71.05	64.30	70.50	79.04

Source: Authors' analyses

In order to determine whether very satisfied guests are open to recommending the hotel to others, and which of the observed indicators has a greater impact on guest *experience*, below we present the obtained research results.

Research question 1: Are highly satisfied guests open to recommending the hotel to others?

Within this model, the dependent variable is *Likelihood to Recommend*, while the independent variable is *Overall Experience*. The estimated model is the following:

$$\text{Likely to Recommend} = -1.278 + 1.002 \text{ Overall Experience}$$

The model indicates that the more satisfied the guest is, the more likely they are to recommend the hotel. If the percentage of high ratings (8–10) increases by 1%, the likelihood to recommend that hotel

increases by 1.002%. The coefficient is positive and statistically significant ($t = 69.7, p < 0.001$), and the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 4862.551, p < 0.001$). Finally, the model is of high quality, as 98.3% of the variability in *Likelihood to Recommend* can be explained by *Overall Experience*.

Research question 2: How do elements of quality (Overall Service, Overall F&B Experience, Overall Guest Room Experience) impact overall experience?

Within this model, the dependent variable is *Overall Experience*, while the independent variables are *Overall Service*, *Overall F&B Experience*, and *Overall Guest Room Experience*. The estimated model is the following:

Overall Experience

$$\begin{aligned} &= -18.828 + 0.333 \text{ Overall Guest Room Experience} \\ &+ 0.078 \text{ Overall F\&B Experience} + 0.786 \text{ Overall Service} \end{aligned}$$

The model indicates that the more satisfied the guest is with the room, food & beverage, and service, the more satisfied they are with the overall experience. If the percentage of high ratings (8–10) for each of the three observed attributes increases by 1%, the overall experience increases accordingly. However, not all characteristics have the same strength of impact. The attribute with the strongest effect is Service (measured coefficient = 0.786), while the attribute with the weakest impact is F&B (measured coefficient = 0.078). The coefficients for Guest Room ($t = 6.514, p < 0.001$) and Service ($t = 8.801, p < 0.001$) are statistically significant, while the coefficient for F&B is not ($t = 1.613, p > 0.05$). The overall model is statistically significant ($F = 476.743, p < 0.001$). Finally, the model is of high quality, as 94.6% of the variability in Overall Experience can be explained by the included independent variables.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The major concerns of hotel management are guest experience and guest satisfaction. The success of a hotel is measured by satisfied guests who recommend the hotel to others if they had a positive overall experience. The main objective of this study was to discover whether there was any specific category among the categories of room, food & beverage, and service that influences overall guest experience more than others. According to the results, the categories of room and service have a statistically significant impact on overall experience, as opposed to food & beverage, which impacts overall experience, but not significantly. These findings are consistent with previous studies, confirming that satisfied guests recommend hotels to others [21], [36]. However, the source of satisfaction is not the same according to different studies. While food quality in Turkish hotels significantly influences guest satisfaction and positive word of mouth, in IHG hotels this category is not significant for guest satisfaction. Although the source of satisfaction varies in different studies, the perception of quality impacts guests' positive emotions and their willingness to recommend hotels to others. Besides, another confirmation can be compared to earlier studies, and that is the positive impact of a hotel room experience [7], [16], [17], [18], and service provided [8], [10] on overall experience. Although these studies confirm that room experience and room quality significantly influence overall guest experience, they differ from one another in the individual room attributes that are proven to be the most important to guests. Therefore, hotel management in IHG hotels should be concentrated mostly on improvement of hotel rooms and service quality as the main determiners of overall experience. There are many specific practical recommendations for hotel managers. They should be focused on maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness, comfort, and functionality in guest rooms. Hotel managers should follow industry trends and influence the owners to invest in room amenities, room design, or technical solutions. Future studies could explore, more specifically, the room attributes that influence guest satisfaction and overall experience the most. It is important to find out which guest preferences influence their overall experience the most—for example, comfortable bedding, cleanliness, condition, or user-friendly technology. Besides investing in room attributes, hotels should also invest in providing service excellence. Hotel staff should be trained to provide personalized, attentive, and prompt service. Also, specific elements of hotel service that have the strongest influence on overall experience could be taken into consideration in future research. It should be explored which abilities—such as communication skills, responsiveness, friendliness, cultural sensitivity, or problem-solving abilities—are the most important for providing exceptional service in IHG hotels.

This study was limited to IHG hotels, where all the elements of hotel products and services are standardized to certain levels. Hotel chains ensure consistent service levels. On the other hand, there are limitations concerning a more personal approach to guests. However, different brands of IHG hotels were included. Another limitation is the narrow scope of five questions taken into consideration, out of 30 questions from the original questionnaire. A wider range of questions could provide other significant aspects and a more comprehensive understanding of guest experiences in future research.

Guest experience analysis is extremely useful in the practice of hotel management in order to discover the most important factors that influence guest satisfaction. Managers should constantly analyze guest feedback in relation to service and room quality. Such feedback is crucial for understanding guest preferences that lead to their satisfaction, positive experience, and positive word of mouth. Satisfied guests contribute to a company's performance.

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