ASQ
Excellence Through Quality™

Check for updates

# Quality aspects vs consumption values: What affects intention to book hotels in the post-Covid era?

Arghya Ray[a], Siddharth Gupta[b] and Nripendra P. Rana[c]

[a]Management Information Systems and Analytics, International Management Institute Kolkata, Kolkata, India; [b]FORE School of Management, Adhitam Kendra, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi, India; [c]College of Business and Economics, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

## ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic had affected the hospitality sector the most due to lockdowns and other government restrictions. As hotels are trying to recover from the losses suffered during the pandemic, hotels can prepare better strategies if they are able to understand the factors affecting customers' intention to book hotels in the post-Covid era from the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) and Consumption Value Theory lens. Based on a multi-method study containing 33 qualitative interviews, 18274 online reviews and 311 survey responses, it was found that customers prefer 'less-crowded clean hotels' which follow Covid-related guidelines properly. The customer reviews about hotels revealed consumption values like, epistemic ("view", "spacious"), functional ("food", "location"), conditional (offers/discounts), and service qualities like, customer service (food quality, staff behavior, room cleanliness), and empathy (comfort, peacefulness). The quantitative analysis found that reliability, brand credibility, and brand loyalty affect customer's hotel booking intentions. This multi-method study contributes to the existing literature on the values and quality aspects that affect customer behavior in the hospitality and tourism segment. Findings of this study will thus help managers to make better strategies by providing a better view of the consumption values and service quality aspects that affect customer's hotel booking intention in post-pandemic era.

## 1. Introduction

The Coivd-19 lockdowns and government restrictions (Swain 2020) to curb the spread of the Corona-virus (Ciotti et al. 2020) had a major impact on several industries and organizations like, food and beverage, retail and clothing, hospitality, automotive, education, travel, etc. (Tilak 2021). Since social interactions play a vital role in the tourism and hospitality segment (Reichenberger 2017; Wang and Xie 2021), the hospitality industry was severely affected by the pandemic (Khan 2021). Lockdowns, social distancing measures, stay-at-home orders, travel restrictions, and other COVID-19-flattening strategies had led to the temporary closure of many hospitality companies, a notable drop in demand for those that were allowed to continue functioning (Gursoy and Chi 2020; Kaushal and Srivastava 2021), and a significant reduction in hotel occupancy and revenue (Gursoy and Chi 2020). Global travel advisories, visa bans, and the implementation of

Section 144 (prohibition against mass gatherings) had put India, like most other countries, under lockdown, with far-reaching implications. Even when the restrictions were lifted, there was reluctance among consumers to book hotels because of the fear of getting affected by the virus. India's hotel industry had a 38.7% decline in Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the same period the previous year (Press Trust of India 2021). Even after all these issues, the tourism and hospitality sector are still struggling to stay head above water, through tougher negotiations with suppliers for mutual survival, strict cost-cutting techniques, or a minimum mandatory duration for hotel bookings while visiting holiday destinations (Kaushal and Srivastava 2021). In order to survive, the Indian hotel industry will need certain strategic changes and careful preparation. It is important for hotel industries to explore the factors that affect customers' hotel

CONTACT Arghya Ray ✉ mailarghyaray@gmail.com 🖳 Assistant Professor, Management Information Systems and Analytics, International Management Institute Kolkata, 2/4C Judges Court Road, Alipore. Kolkata 700027, India.

booking intentions in the post-pandemic era to pre-pare and strategize better for such problems in the future.

The value that a customer derives from a hotel will affect their intention to visit the hotel (Suman, Srivastava, and Vadera 2019; Choe and Kim 2018; Wang et al. 2018). The widely used framework for capturing the value-oriented elements that affect customers' behavior is the consumption value theory (CVT) (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). Although researchers have considered quality to be a dimension of the perceived values (Sweeney and Soutar 2001), the service quality is captured based on the service's characteristics (Gajewska et al. 2019) and can have several dimensions of its own (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988), like, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Understanding service qualities is important because the level of customer service plays an important role in reducing customers' perceived risk (Lysenko-Ryba et al. 2022). This study thus attempts at understanding the impact of consumption values and service qualities that affect customers' intention to book hotels.

The main business problem that drives this research is to understand the factors affecting customers' intentions to book hotels in the post-pandemic era. Although researchers have tried to explore customer's behavior and the issues faced based on the analysis of user generated content (Ray and Ma 2021), there is a need to explore the service-related factors that affect customer's hotel booking intentions (Ray and Ma 2021; Al-Gasawneh et al. 2022). It is important for hotels to focus on service quality (SERVQUAL) for attracting new customers and retaining existing customers (Al-Gasawneh et al. 2022). Additionally, the providers of hospitality services need to understand how different consumption values impact customer's intention (Park and Ahn 2021). Due to the growing concerns and fear of staying in hotels in the post-Covid era, understanding the impact of brand credibility and brand loyalty on hotel booking intentions is also crucial. It is also important to explore what values and what service qualities people mostly prefer and which ones do not play a significant role. Hence the main research questions that drive this study, in the post-Covid era are as follows:

RQ1: What service qualities affect customers' hotel booking intention?

RQ2: What consumption values affect customers' hotel booking intention?

RQ3: Does brand credibility and brand loyalty affect customers' hotel booking intention?

To address the research questions, we have used a multi-method study from the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) and Consumption Value Theory (CVT) lens. The qualitative interviews of 33 participants found that customers want to book hotels that maintain hygiene, sanitization, cleanliness, safety precautions and Covid related guidelines. Customers also prefer less crowded hotels that maintain social-distancing norms, and follow Covid-19 guidelines. The textual analysis of online customer reviews about the hotels reveal that customers' have mostly talked about consumption values like, epistemic ("Great view", "spacious"), functional ("food", "location", ambience"), conditional (offers/discounts), emotional (great/nice experience, loved/enjoyed/awesome), and quality aspects like, customer service (food quality, hotel services, staff behavior, room cleanliness), and empathy (comfort, warmth and peacefulness). The empirical study based on quantitative surveys of 311 respondents found that reliability, brand credibility, and brand loyalty affect customer's hotel booking intentions. This study has several implications like, paving a path for academicians and practitioners to understand and work on the factors (mostly, related to consumption values and service quality aspects) that affect the post-pandemic behavior in the service segment. The unique contributions of this study are as follows: (a) examining the factors affecting customer's behavior from SERVQUAL and CVT lens in this post-pandemic era; (b) the use of the multi-method study comprising of qualitative interviews, online user generated content and quantitative survey based data provides a better view of the consumption values and service quality aspects that affect customer's intention to book hotels during the pandemic; (c) the study findings will contribute to the existing literature on the values and quality aspects that affect customer behavior in the hospitality and tourism segment.

The section following this presents the theoretical background. Section 3 presents the literature review and the context of this study. Section 4 contains the hypotheses formulation. Section 5 and Section 6 discusses the research methodology and the study findings. Section 7 contains the discussion, implications, limitations and future scope. Section 8 concludes this study.

## 2. Theoretical background

Service quality becomes an important aspect while analyzing the hospitality sector. The widely used

model SERVQUAL (proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988) helps to understand how the different quality factors, namely, tangibles, assurance, empathy, reliability and responsiveness affect customer's viewpoints. Tangibles refer to various physical cues (Leisen 2009), empathy refers to understanding the other individual emotionally (Bischof-Kohler 2012), assurance deals with the ability to ensure trust in others (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988), responsiveness deals with how quickly a provider responds to customer issues (Al-Husain and Khorramshahgol 2020; Mujinga 2019), and reliability deals with how to keep up with whatever the service-provider had promised (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988). Brand credibility also helps to understand the worthiness and assurance that brands provide and leaves a permanent impression in the minds of people (Dong and Yu 2020). Quality is important in the context of hotels because this helps to understand customer's perspectives toward different hotels (Wilkins, Merrilees, and Herington 2007; Brunner-Sperdin and Peters 2009; Rauch et al. 2015). In the post-pandemic, hotels need to maintain various standards to ensure customer safety, like, proper sanitization, use of face masks in the premise (Ray and Ma 2021), maintaining social distancing (Badiu 2020), employees maintaining neatness and wearing proper uniform (Chan and Gao 2021), etc. This shows that hotels are quickly adapting to the changes due to Covid-19 to sustain and grow in the post-Covid era (Ploder et al. 2021). Quality in hotels affects how hotels can maintain their agility and reduce the perception of fear from the minds of customers in the post-Covid era. In addition to the quality aspects it is also crucial to understand if values affect customer perception in the hospitality segment. The consumption value theory (CVT) developed by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) helps to capture different value-oriented elements that affect customers' behavioral intentions. CVT mainly uses five different values to capture customer's behavioral intentions namely: functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991, 160–163). Functional values deal with various functional aspects related to the service like, guest's perceived price, luxury value, etc. (Chen and Peng 2014; Chiang 2018), emotional values mainly deal with the different emotional aspects that helps to build a long lasting emotional bond with the customers (Lim, Teh, and Ahmed 2018; Chang, Hsu, and Lan 2019), conditional values deal with the various offers, and discounts, etc. (Suman, Srivastava, and Vadera 2019; Choe & Kim, 2018) that might affect an individual's intention to book hotels, epistemic values mainly deal with different novel innovations brought in by the hotels to attract customers (Choe and Kim 2018), and social values deal with how the hotels can help in connecting people socially (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). In this post-Covid era there is a need to understand values and service related aspects that affect customer's intention to book hotels. In India there is not much technological innovations in hotels (functional values) and not much novelty involved (epistemic values), it is not possible to socialize much due to rules and regulations (social values). Hence, we have mainly focussed on emotional and conditional values. Additionally, customer service can be linked to responsiveness (Daugherty, Ellinger, and Rogers 1995; Asree, Zain, and Razalli 2010). Hence in this study we have used customer service to capture responsiveness.

## 3. Review of existing literature

### 3.1. Covid-19 impact on the hospitality segment

Travel restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19 had a significant influence on the hospitality, travel, and tourism industries in India and throughout the world (Krishnan et al. 2020). Managing fixed costs or expenses, less footfalls, lesser demand, maintaining hygiene and sanitization standards, managing morale, health, well-being and payroll of employees, ensuring guest safety and well-being were among the key challenges faced by the hotel industry (Kaushal and Srivastava 2021). In the context of Indian hotels, Majumdar (2021) found that for surviving and increasing business in the post-Covid era, hotels have adopted several measures (Gyódi 2022) like, reduction of prices, cost-cutting, energy consumption, restructuring of workforce, product diversity, etc. One of the most serious issues in the Indian hospitality industry is that about 30–40% of hotel staff work on a contract or casual basis. As a result, the industry had to pay them so that the employees can take care of themselves in such tough periods (Kapoor 2021). Even when the hotels reopened, the occupancy rate remained low. The income per available room, as well as the industry's overall revenue, plummeted (Ray and Ma 2021). Half of the workforce was laid off (Majumdar 2021). The problem was that hotels were less prepared while dealing with the uncertainty of this pandemic (Yacoub and ElHajjar 2021). Another problem was that hotels were more dependent on foreign tourists rather than attracting local tourists. As foreign travel became more restricted (Kaur, Goyal, et al. 2021), hotels could not generate any revenues from foreign travelers. The

hotel sector also had to deal with a large number of cancelations and bookings (Rana and Raina 2021). In order to attract tourists during the pandemic, hotels were trying to bring in new changes, like, adopting flexible bookings and cancelations, adopting several operational changes which are technologically aligned, etc. (Yacoub and ElHajjar 2021). However, the pandemic had brought in several other challenges as well. The problem was even more due to the fact that the presence of the virus (SARS-CoV-2) was also found in human waste water (Elsamadony et al. 2021). Hence in the hospitality sector, the importance of proper waste management standards and good sanitation procedures was necessary (Kaushal and Srivastava 2021). Hotels thus needed to focus on cleanliness for ensuring safety of their guests. Sharma et al. (2021) in their study found that various Covid-19 innovations are introduced by hotels to ensure customer safety. Hotels are also looking for artificial intelligence and robotics to improve operations and reduce human contact (Nan 2020; Kim et al. 2021; Romero and Lado 2021). Awasthi and Nain (2021) stated that the employment of robots or robot-based devices, as well as cleanliness and well-being management, are essential for the future. Additionally, the authors also feel that hotel advertising and management methods should be improved in order to stimulate information expansion in the hospitality business. Jiang and Wen (2020) found that marketing strategies including hotel hygiene and cleanliness seem to attract customers more. Dynamic marketing capabilities and good marketing communications can help in the post-Covid period (Hariandja 2021) and also help in improving hotel's room occupancy (Rochmaniah et al. 2021). However, Chalupa, Chadt, and Jenckova (2021) felt that in hotels the financial problems still remain.

It is important for hotel operators and researchers to first deal with current COVID-19 consequences, and then to develop a framework for dealing with such pandemics in the future. It is also possible that the consumer behavior can change continuously. Hence, it is critical to track and learn about changing consumer behavior in a timely manner (Denizci and Chu 2021). It has been argued that because of the current virulent sickness caused by COVID −19 (Awan, Shamim, and Ahn 2021), businesses are now expected to cater to consumers who are highly concerned about their health and hygiene, among other things. The hotel industry is one of those industries where physical encounters are required to produce memorable customer experiences. Hence, it becomes important to provide superior services, like, maintaining cleanliness (Awan, Shamim, and Ahn 2021; Jiang

and Wen 2020), proper sanitizations and safety standards (Ray and Ma 2021), etc. in hotels to attract customers (Chan, Gao, and McGinley 2021). COVID-19 had forced several people to alter their lifestyles, and the main focus is now on mental and physical health (Nanath et al. 2022). Due to these changing lifestyles and guest obligations, serving customers empathically which will become a post-COVID-19 trend for the Indian hotel sector. In light of these circumstances, it is appealing to investigate how the hotel business may attract guests' and improve consumer understanding (Kapoor 2021). Because services are unique, using technological innovations alone will not suffice to create a lasting impression between service providers and customers. Thus it is important for hotel operators to understand the factors that affect customer's intention to use hotels from the services and consumption value viewpoint.

### 3.2. Consumption values vs quality aspects in the hospitality segment

Albrecht (1992) had argued that "in the new world of quality" the most critical aspect will be "delivering customer value." Limited studies in the hospitality segment have attempted at studying the impact of values and quality aspects at the same time. In the organic food segment, Cao et al. (2022) found that the different consumption values (functional, emotional, social and epistemic) had a notable impact on customer's purchasing behavior. Additionally, Cao et al. (2022) found that anxiety affects both functional values, namely, quality and price. In another study in the hospitality segment (local food consumption), Badu-Baiden et al. (2022) found that while the quality of the food and restaurant affect epistemic value, restaurant quality affects consumption value as well. In another similar study on local food consumption in Hong Kong, Kim and Choe (2019) found that "food quality", and "restaurant quality" affect both emotional and epistemic values. Talwar et al. (2020) found that the quality-of-benefits, monetary, information, and preference values affect customers' intention to use online travel agency services. Based on a study about the five-star hotels in Jordan, Al-Gharaibah (2020) found that consumption values and service quality affects consumer retention intention. In the food tourism context, Rousta and Jamshidi (2020) found that the different values (quality, health, price, emotional, prestige) had a positive impact on the tourist's local food behavior. Zaidi et al. (2019) found that in the context of organic food consumption, the functional values (quality and price), and social values affect

green trust. Wang et al. (2018) noted that quality (functional value) affects green hotel visit intention. Wang et al. (2018) also found that the values (functional, social and emotional) influences green hotel visit intention. In the context of organic food consumption behavior, Rahnama (2017) found that the different values functional (quality, taste, price), conditional, epistemic and health affects Iranian women's organic food choices. Although studies have utilized quality as a dimension of functional values (Rahnama 2017; Zaidi et al. 2019), in the services segment examining the quality aspects and the consumption values will help to understand the varying impact on customer behavior. Researchers have also examined the service quality aspects, like, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance that affect customer's intention to visit hotels (Fan, Gao, and Han 2022; Chang and Cheng 2022). It will be interesting to examine the consumption values and service qualities that affect customers' hotel visit intention in the post-Covid era.

## 4. Proposed research model and hypotheses development

In the path analysis, we have examined the impact of variables, like, assurance, empathy, reliability, brand credibility, emotional values, conditional values, brand loyalty, and customer service on hotel booking intentions (refer Figure 1) in the post-Covid situation.

Assurance relates to a customer's confidence and trust, which indicates that any firm or market must have a great capacity to inspire customers with good confidence and trust (Sri, Wahyu, and Uichol 2012). Furthermore, consumer's trust and confidence leads to increased profitability, and hence every market or business should work on improving assurance to obtain a competitive edge and customer loyalty (Ali et al. 2021). Assurance in the service industry deals with the sense of security and credibility that a customer service provider communicates (Prasetia and Syah 2020). With politeness, tenderness, and good manners, the hotel must exhibit knowledge, and capacity to deliver services and satisfy the demands of the customers (Boontumma and Mohprasit 2021). Repurchase intention is influenced by perceived value and consumer satisfaction in terms of service quality, assurance, visibility, and reliability (Anh et al. 2020). Customers need assurance that the services are safe at the hotel or hotel chains during this Covid era. Thus we propose:

**H1.** Assurance is positively associated with hotel booking intentions.

Empathy refers to a person's ability to affectively experience feelings or sympathy and to intellectually accept another person's viewpoint (Wenchao and Xinchun 2020). Scholars have discovered a favorable relationship between empathy and intention in a variety of contexts, including philanthropy, social
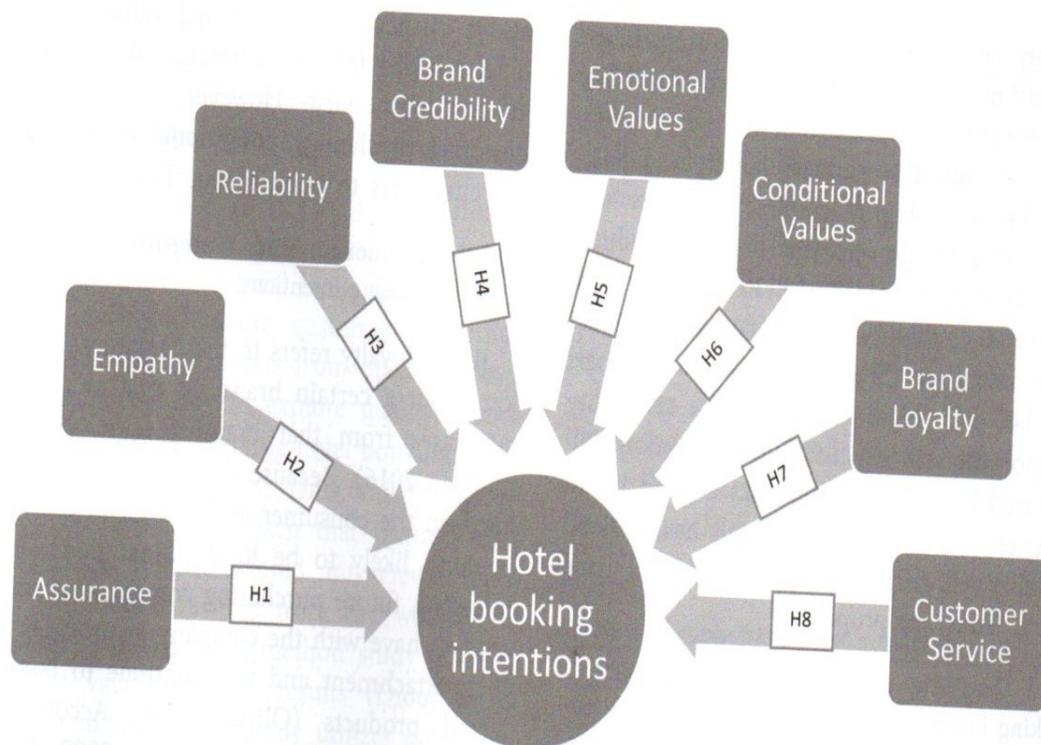


**Figure 1.** Proposed conceptual model (Adapted from: Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988; Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991; Young and Corsun 2021; Shams, Brown, and Alpert 2017).

entrepreneurship, and product marketing (Basil, Ridgway, and Basil 2008; Yang and Yen 2018; Younis et al. 2021). Empathy entails giving each client individual care and attention (Anh et al. 2020). Empathy leads to an emotional connection where the hotels should build connection with customers and try to present them in the way the customer perceives them to be (Sangpikul 2022). This is essential in the post-Covid era to make the customers feel safe and at home. Thus we hypothesize:

**H2.** Empathy is positively associated with hotel booking intentions.

The capacity to repeat a consistent result throughout time and place, or from multiple observers, is referred to as reliability, and it includes features such as coherence, stability, equivalence, and homogeneity (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988). The term "reliability" relates to a measure's stability, internal consistency, and equivalency (Souza, Alexandre, and Guirardello 2017). It is the capacity to provide a reliable and accurate service (Anh et al. 2020). Scholars have discovered that there 'is a positive relationship between reliability or dependability and intention (Cha and Shin 2019; Lo and Lin 2020). Reliability leads to brand building in long term and people tend to trust that brand. In the Covid era, people will mostly prefer hotels that they feel are reliable and will follow Covid-related safety precautions. Thus we suppose:

**H3.** Reliability is positively associated with hotel booking intentions.

The integrity and dependability of the transmitted brand information is referred to as brand credibility (Tirole 1988; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988). Brand credibility indicates product's quality and positioning; and hence, a highly credible company will increase consumers' trust in the brand's products (Alam, Arshad, and Shabbir 2012). Researchers have noted that brand credibility have a favorable impact on purchase intention (Shams, Brown, and Alpert 2017; Chin, Isa, and Alodin 2020). Brand credibility plays an important role as customer perception will always be biased for a hotel which has a good brand value and hence they will feel that hotels having good brand credibility will focus on customer safety during the Covid-era. Thus, we propose:

**H4.** Brand Credibility is positively associated with hotel booking intentions.

Emotional value refers to the value related to emotional aspects that the consumer derives from the product in addition to the function stated in the catalogue's specifications (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991; Lim, Teh, and Ahmed 2018; Ray, Bala, and Dwivedi 2021). Researchers have found that emotional values have a favorable and substantial influence on customer purchasing, adoption, and usefulness behavior in relation to purchase intention and adoption of electronic vehicles (Hsiao and Chen 2018; Han et al. 2017), eLearning Services (Ray, Bala, and Dwivedi 2021), etc. Even in context of hotels, researchers have found that emotional values have a positive impact of staying in hotels (Uen et al. 2012; Teng, Lu, and Huang 2018). Emotional values, which are built over years by hotels, help to attract customers. When hotels understand customer's issues during the pandemic and are accommodative to sudden cancelations due to pandemic, customers will try to emotionally connect with the hotels and it will affect their intentions to book hotels. Thus we feel that:

**H5.** Emotional Values is positively associated hotel booking intentions.

Conditional values refer to various offers, discounts, cashbacks, etc. that affect customers' value perceptions (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991; Ray, Bala, and Dwivedi 2021). Scholars have found that conditional values have positive influence on intention (Ray, Bala, and Dwivedi 2021), as well as satisfaction (Hassan 2017). In post-Covid times when customers are worrying about booking hotels, hotel managers can provide different attractive offers which might affect customer's hotel booking intentions. However, there is also a chance that conditional values will not affect hotel booking intentions because of the fear of getting affected by the virus. However, we feel that because of customer psychology, conditional values will motivate the customers to book hotels. Thus we propose:

**H6.** Conditional Values is negatively associated with hotel booking intentions.

Brand loyalty refers to the customer's positive opinion about a certain brand, as well as their recurrent purchases from that brand (Leckie, Nyadzayo, and Johnson 2016). Because there is connection marketing between the consumer and the business, the customer is more likely to be loyal (Omar and Ali 2010). It reflects a future purchasing commitment that customers will have with the company or provider because of their attachment and will continue to buy their preferred products (Oliver 1999). According to the researchers (Chi, Yeh, and Yang 2009; Ibrahim and Aljarah 2018), brand loyalty has a substantial impact

on intention. During these Covid-times, we feel that a customer, who have once visited a hotel earlier and are happy with their services, will try to book that hotel because it will reduce their fear of getting a bad service at that hotel. Brand loyalty in context of hotels thus plays an important role in affecting intention (Young and Corsun 2021). Hence we suppose:

H7. Brand loyalty is positively associated with hotel booking intentions.

Customer service generally refers to the various processes and actions taken by company/provider to cater to various customer queries/issues (Spencer-Matthews and Lawley 2006). Customer service is one of the most important parts of a company's service offering to customers, since it allows it to stand out from the competitors (Melović et al. 2015). Researchers have found out that customer service has a positive association with intention in different context such as shop online (Raman 2019), usage of artificial intelligence (Xu et al. 2020), etc. Customer service in context of hotels is also important (Nikou and Khiabani 2020). In this pandemic it is important for staff and employees in the hotel to provide good services to the customers and ensure their safety. As the virus is highly infectious, the customer service team in hotels needs to put in extra efforts to sanitize hotel rooms and dining spaces, maintain social distancing, cater to customer needs anytime and overall ensure that customers are happy with the safety measures taken by the hotels. Thus we hypothesize:

H8. Customer Service is positively associated with hotel booking intentions.

## 5. Research methodology

The study is divided into three parts: (a) qualitative study to capture customers' perspectives about their recent stay at hotels; (b) Natural Language Processing (NLP)-based study to capture customer viewpoints about values and quality aspects from online reviews; and (c) quantitative study to explore quality aspects and consumption values affecting hotel booking intentions during post-Covid times. Thus, this study has utilized a multi-method approach that includes data collected through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and online reviews from the websites of India's leading hotels. A multi-method study helps in increasing the validity of the results (Diouf et al. 2023). Since a multi-method study utilizes data from different sources, multi-method studies can help in effectively understanding customers behavior (Ray,

Bala, and Jain 2022). The multi-method thus can help to triangulate and conclude the results better (Ray, Bala, and Jain 2022; Toke and Kalpande 2022).

### 5.1. Qualitative data

Qualitative data was collected mostly through in-depth semi-structured telephonic interviews, and some through emails. Table 1 provides the sample statistics of the qualitative data (45.5% female). The 33 participants, mostly between 17 and 52 years, included graduates, post-graduates, and working professionals who have stayed at a hotel in post-Covid period. The questions mainly focused on gender, age, place of visit, frequency of stay in post-Covid period (August 2020), perspectives about Covid-19 impact on the factors that they check before booking hotels (comparison between pre and post-Covid), issues (if any) faced while staying in hotels in post-COVID period, and opinions about how hotels can improve.

A thematic based analysis was performed on the qualitative data. The steps followed for thematic analysis is based on Ravi (2013)'s article: identify codes/sub-codes for each meaningful statement, identify the focused and axial codes, re-check to see if the identified codes leads to saturation.

### 5.2. Online user-generated-content (online reviews)

In recent years, there is an increase in the number of studies utilizing online reviews because online reviews: (a) lack commercial biasness (East, Hammond, and Lomax 2008); (b) are easily available in large amount (Berger, Sorensen, and Rasmussen 2010; Chatterjee 2020); (c) can influence the views of prospective customers (Chatterjee 2020); (d) help service providers to understand the views of customers (Gensler et al. 2015); and (e) help in the longitudinal analysis of changes in customer opinions over time (Gensler et al. 2015).

In the data extraction phase, online reviews about few randomly selected hotels from India were collected from TripAdvisor using a freely available platform ParseHub. A total of 18274 reviews (written

**Table 1.** Sample statistics of qualitative data.

|  | Criteria | Frequency ($n=33$) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 18 | 54.5% |
|  | Female | 15 | 45.5% |
| Age (in years) | 17–23 | 15 | 45.45% |
|  | 24–29 | 8 | 24.24% |
|  | >=30 | 10 | 30.31% |

between 2020 and 2021) were collected. The average length of the reviews is 70.71 words.

In the data pre-processing phase (data cleansing phase), the steps followed are:

Step 1: Reviews written in English were only considered for the analysis.

Step 2: Non-ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) characters were removed.

Step 3: Contractions (like, "don't") were expanded (like, "do not").

Step 4: Stopwords (like, "the", "and") were removed because they occur often and hence do not provide much insights in the analysis.

Step 5: Repeated characters from words (like, "finallly") were removed to make the words in the correct form (like, "finally").

Step 6: Unwanted characters (like, "@", "#") were removed from the textual data.

Step 7: Proper nouns were removed from the textual data.

Step 8: Stemming was done to reduce the words to their root form (like, "going" to "go").

In the data analysis phase, reviews which portray benefits or values (based on keywords like, 'benefit', 'benefits', 'value', 'values', 'will recommend', 'would recommend', etc.) and the reviews which portray quality aspects (using keywords like, 'quality', 'qualities', etc.) were separated and important themes from these two groups of reviews (containing 482 and 1051 reviews respectively) were extracted using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) based topic-modeling. The text-analytics was performed using Python and R.

### 5.3. Quantitative data

The quantitative data was collected through a Likert-scale based questionnaire survey distributed through social-media channels (like, WhatsApp, Facebook, and LinkedIn) and online survey collecting platforms (like, SurveyTandem, SurveyCircle, and SurveySwap). 311 responses were received from all over India (refer Table 2). The respondents consist of 48.55% female, and the majority of the respondents belonged to the age group 21–25 years (68.49%). Frequency of staying in hotels before Covid-19 is somewhat moderate for the majority of respondents (68.48%) and the frequency of staying in hotels post Covid-19 is almost rare (79.80%). The quantitative data was analyzed using

Table 2. Sample statistics of quantitative data.

| Criteria ($n=311$) | | Frequency | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age (in year) | 16–20 | 14 | 4.50% |
| | 21–25 | 213 | 68.49% |
| | 26–30 | 23 | 7.40% |
| | >30 | 61 | 19.61% |
| Gender | Male | 156 | 50.16% |
| | Female | 151 | 48.55% |
| | Prefer not to say | 4 | 1.29% |
| Frequency of staying in hotels before Covid-19 | Quite Often (Almost every week) | 12 | 3.86% |
| | Often (Almost 1–2 times every month) | 23 | 7.40% |
| | Moderate (Around 1–2 times every 6 months) | 100 | 32.15% |
| | Somewhat moderate (1–2 times every year) | 113 | 36.33% |
| | Very rare (1–2 times in 5 years) | 63 | 20.26% |
| Frequency of staying in hotels post Covid-19 | Often (Almost 1–2 times every month) | 12 | 3.86% |
| | Moderate (Around 1–2 times every 6 months) | 53 | 17.04% |
| | Rare (1–2 times every year) | 246 | 79.80% |

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique through Smart PLS v.3.3.3 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2015) to find out the structural relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Qualitative analysis

The thematic-based analysis revealed 12 themes and sub-themes (refer Table 3). The main themes extracted show that customers worry about hygiene and safety while booking hotels. Additionally, customers are concerned about crowded hotels, the guidelines hotels follow, and the cleanliness including sanitization in hotels. Customers have also expressed concerns about the shortage of staff which led to service delays.

The reliability of the qualitative analysis was ensured by checking Cohen's Kappa (Warrens 2015) which measures if the observations made by the different researchers (in this case two coders) remain similar on different occasions (Story, Smith, and Saker 2001). The Cohen's Kappa value of 81.2% ensures good interrater reliability.

### 6.2. Analysis of textual online reviews

Results of the textual analysis revealed important themes regarding the two groups of interest (values/benefits and quality aspects). The major themes derived from the values or benefits that people usually look for are summarized in Table 4. It is found that customers usually look

**Table 3.** Themes generated from qualitative study.

| S. No. | Themes | Exemplar |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Hygiene | "During Covid time, customer's first priority is safety and hygiene when they look for a hotel." |
| 2. | Sanitization | "During Covid times, hotels should frequently do the santization process on the surfaces which are being frequently touched by many people." |
| 3. | Safety | "Hotels should keep the customers safety as the first priority during these unprecedented times." |
| 4. | Mask | "Mask should be mandatory for every customer who visits the hotel." |
| 5. | Location | "People are avoiding to go to a location where there are many covid patients." |
| 6. | Guidelines | "Covid guidelines should be followed by every hotel/ hotel chains." |
| 7. | Cleanliness | "Customers are nowadays attracted towards those hotels which follow cleanliness and safety as first preference for customer service." |
| 8. | Uncrowded | "Customers prefer to stay in hotels which are uncrowded during this unprecedented situation." |
| 9. | Precaution | "Precaution should be taken while staying in hotel as many people from different places visit the property regularly." |
| 10. | Temperature | "Temperature checking in hotel is a mandatory practice which should be followed by every hotel." |
| 11. | Shortage of Staff | "Hotels are operating with shortage of staff as they have to cover the loss caused by complete lockdowns." |
| 12. | Social Distancing | Social Distancing is highly effective in weakening the transmission of Covid from one person to another." |

**Table 4.** Themes related to values or benefits the customers mostly discuss.

| Sr.No. | Theme | Selected exemplars |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Great view | "The rooms are decent, spacious, and provide excellent value. Rooms have a great view and have large windows..." "Fabulous location. Great view. Value for money. Great services..." |
| 2 | Excellent/ Amazing staff/service | "Fabulous location. Great view. Value for money. Great services..." "...the staff are courteous and warm..." "...lovely humble supportive staff..." |
| 3 | Location benefits (related to views, peacefulness, surroundings) | "The location's ambience is awesome..." "...hotel is having the best location...having a great view..." "This resort is located in a pristine calm location perfect for people who want to feel true nature..." |
| 4 | Monetary/Price benefits or Offers | "...excellent value for money. Surely recommend..." "...huge greenery. Worth staying. Provide money value. Reasonably price property. Well maintained... Definitely recommend friends..." |
| 5 | Emotional Values (great/nice experience, loved/ enjoyed/ awesome) | "Awesome food... Clean rooms... definitely recommend..." "A total value for money resort... Had wonderful experience..." |
| 6 | Other benefits (food, cleanliness, space) | "Awesome food... Clean rooms... definitely recommend..." "The rooms are spacious and comfortable. The service staff are friendly and helpful. The cleanliness is reasonably good..." |

for values/benefits like, the view from the hotel, the location of the hotel, the behavior of the staff, the cleanliness of the room, the food in the hotel, and the offers or monetary benefits. If the users are satisfied with the values offered by the hotels, they get emotionally connected and express views like, "great experience", "awesome food", "loved the stay", etc. In the context of hotels, these consumption values can be grouped under epistemic ("Great view", "spacious"), conditional ("offers", "discounts", "monetary benefits"), emotional (great/nice experience, loved/enjoyed/awesome), and functional ("food", "location", ambience") values.

The major themes derived from the service qualities that people usually look for are summarized in Table 5. Customers have mostly talked about customer service (food quality, hotel services, staff behavior, room cleanliness), responsiveness, empathy (comfort, warmth and peacefulness) and assurance.

### 6.3. Quantitative analysis

Table 6 demonstrates the analysis of the measurement items. The acceptable threshold values are as follows:

factor loadings (FL), average variance extracted (AVE) values > 0.5 (Hair et al. 2006), and Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) values > 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker 1981), and variation inflation factor (VIF) scores < 3 (Hair et al. 2010, Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2013). In this study, the factor loadings are above 0.6 and the variation inflation factor (VIF) value is below 3 (refer Table 6). The CR and CA scores are above 0.7 and the AVE scores are above 0.5 which ensures model's reliability (refer Table 7). Based on the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria it was found that the values of the diagonal elements are more than those of the off-diagonal elements and discriminant validity is satisfied (refer Table 8). Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) scores less than 0.80 and Normed Fit Index (NFI) scores above 0.9 are considered really good (Hair et al. 2010, Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2013). The model fit indices returned satisfactory scores: SRMR score (0.063) and NFI score (0.752).

The path-coefficients and hypotheses results are summarized in Table 9 and Figure 2. Results show that there is a significant impact of empathy ($\beta$-value = −0.129, $p = 0.043$), reliability ($\beta$-value = 0.251, $p = 0.019$),

**Table 5.** Themes related to service qualities that customers mostly discuss.

| Sr.No. | Theme | Selected exemplars |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Food Quality | "The food is delicious... offer variety..."<br>"food quality... definitely recommend..."<br>"The food service excellent...great ambience... clean..." |
| 2 | Empathy | "From service, warmth, staff quality, food quality... definitely recommend..."<br>"...We totally enjoyed... refreshing stay... had a feeling of comfort, warmth, wellness... extremely supportive, responsive..." |
| 3 | Hygiene/ Cleanliness | "...outstanding hospitality... staff ensured hygiene, quality, cleanliness... outstanding service... rooms service unbelievable... quick responsive..."<br>"...quality checked... delicately maintained cleanliness..."<br>"...The rooms are excellent... The property is well maintained..." |
| 4 | Responsive | "...outstanding hospitality... staff ensured hygiene, quality, cleanliness... outstanding service... rooms service unbelievable... quick responsive..."<br>"...We totally enjoyed... refreshing stay... had a feeling of comfort, warmth, wellness... extremely supportive, responsive..."<br>"...resort has friendly responsive team..." |
| 5 | Staff Behavior | "The staff operating entire restaurant are highly motivated... The welcome is excellent..."<br>"...housekeeping staff are cordial... They are expert in customer relationship..." |
| 6 | Assurance | "We stayed in the resort for two days... trust guys... the kind of service offered, the comfort, ... the experience... The staff are so amazing and cooperative... The quality of the food is excellent..." |

**Table 6.** Factor loadings and variance inflation factor (VIF) scores of the measurement items.

| Study measures (References) | Measurement items (The hotel....) | Loadings | VIF |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assurance | Assures customer safety. | 0.754 | 1.751 |
| | Offers flexible payment options and easy cancelation options. | 0.632 | 1.455 |
| | Website assures the customers that it is safe to stay in the hotel and safety measures are taken. | 0.746 | 1.658 |
| | Maintains Covid-19 guidelines and checks that all the customers are safe. | 0.795 | 1.899 |
| | Employees can make customers feel comfortable and at ease. | 0.796 | 1.736 |
| | Employees are equipped with adequate professional information. | 0.782 | 1.852 |
| Empathy | Understands customer problems and provide customized services if required. | 0.809 | 1.752 |
| | Staff pays proper attention to the needs of each and every customer. | 0.832 | 1.913 |
| | Considers the situation of the customer and makes full refund if a customer is unable to stay at the hotel. | 0.713 | 1.494 |
| | Staff checks regularly if the customers are feeling safe in the hotel premise and they feel something can be improved. | 0.831 | 1.686 |
| Reliability | Employees adhere to the promises made in their website and looks after the safety of customers. | 0.841 | 1.986 |
| | Employees try to solve concerns raised at the earliest possible | 0.851 | 2.065 |
| | Insists on safety and hygiene of their guests and employees | 0.833 | 1.994 |
| | Maintains proper Covid-19 rules and sanitizes public places and rooms regularly. | 0.811 | 1.876 |
| Customer Service | Service can make customers feel comfortable and at ease. | 0.762 | 1.657 |
| | Listens to the customer issues properly and solves them as soon as possible | 0.841 | 2.135 |
| | Has enough staff to perform different activities and hence the hotel can cater to individual customer needs. | 0.738 | 1.71 |
| | Employees checks the hygiene of rooms and other public places regularly | 0.818 | 2.024 |
| | Employees makes the customers feel safe during the stay in the hotel | 0.840 | 2.043 |
| Conditional Values | Provides various benefits for staying in this period. | 0.858 | 1.95 |
| | Provides attractive deals and offers for staying in the hotel during this period | 0.863 | 1.848 |
| | Provides various additional services if a person stays in the hotel during this period | 0.880 | 2.052 |
| | **Measurement Items (I....)** | | |
| Emotional Values | Have stayed in this hotel before and so I feel this hotel will maintain safety standards | 0.799 | 1.212 |
| | Love staying in the particular hotel. | 0.821 | 2.336 |
| | Enjoy staying in this particular hotel. | 0.824 | 2.331 |
| Brand Credibility | Trust whatever well reputed hotels provide even if it is during COVID times | 0.849 | 1.803 |
| | Feel that reputed hotels take good safety measures during COVID times | 0.850 | 1.775 |
| | Feel that well-reputed hotels do not allow any negligence | 0.867 | 1.853 |
| Brand Loyalty | Have stayed in this hotel before and in this period I will feel safe staying at another hotel of this hotel chain | 0.731 | 1.43 |
| | Have enjoyed the hotel stay and will also visit this hotel if I need to stay during Covid period. | 0.857 | 1.687 |
| | Feel that the hotel chain I usually use for my stay maintains proper safety standards and so I will again stay in one of their hotels. | 0.876 | 1.67 |
| Intention | Intend to book this hotel (provided the hotel maintains proper standards) during this period | 0.875 | 1.952 |
| | Will recommend others to book this hotel (provided the hotel maintains proper standards) during this period | 0.870 | 1.91 |
| | Will spread good word-of-mouth about the hotel (provided the hotel maintains proper standards) | 0.835 | 1.756 |

**Table 7.** Cronbach's Alpha, Composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted of the measurement items.

| | Cronbach's Alpha (CA) | Composite Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assurance | 0.841 | 0.879 | 0.552 |
| Brand credibility | 0.816 | 0.891 | 0.731 |
| Brand loyalty | 0.764 | 0.862 | 0.677 |
| Conditional values | 0.831 | 0.898 | 0.745 |
| Customer service | 0.857 | 0.897 | 0.635 |
| Emotional values | 0.729 | 0.835 | 0.629 |
| Empathy | 0.817 | 0.873 | 0.635 |
| Intention | 0.815 | 0.890 | 0.729 |
| Reliability | 0.851 | 0.899 | 0.690 |

**Table 8.** Discriminant validity of the model.

| | Assurance | Brand Credibility | Brand Loyalty | Conditional Values | Customer Service | Emotional Values | Empathy | Intention | Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assurance | **0.753** | | | | | | | | |
| Brand Credibility | 0.395 | **0.855** | | | | | | | |
| Brand Loyalty | 0.458 | 0.643 | **0.824** | | | | | | |
| Conditional Values | 0.534 | 0.437 | 0.413 | **0.867** | | | | | |
| Customer Service | 0.733 | 0.428 | 0.486 | 0.56 | **0.801** | | | | |
| Emotional Values | 0.495 | 0.514 | 0.568 | 0.435 | 0.581 | **0.815** | | | |
| Empathy | 0.724 | 0.367 | 0.458 | 0.617 | 0.705 | 0.474 | **0.798** | | |
| Intention | 0.469 | 0.527 | 0.647 | 0.395 | 0.463 | 0.486 | 0.398 | **0.86** | |
| Reliability | 0.754 | 0.381 | 0.483 | 0.574 | 0.829 | 0.51 | 0.749 | 0.502 | **0.834** |

Note: The values represent the square root of AVE Scores.

**Table 9.** Hypotheses results.

| Hypotheses | Path Coefficients | p-Values | Supported? |
|---|---|---|---|
| **H1:** Assurance→Intention | 0.121 | 0.116 | No |
| **H2:** Empathy→Intention | −0.129 | 0.043 | Yes |
| **H3:** Reliability→Intention | 0.251 | 0.019 | Yes |
| **H4:** Brand Credibility→Intention | 0.136 | 0.076 | Yes |
| **H5:** Emotional Values→Intention | 0.076 | 0.216 | No |
| **H6:** Conditional Values→Intention | 0.040 | 0.477 | No |
| **H7:** Brand Loyalty→Intention | 0.417 | 0.000 | Yes |
| **H8:** Customer Service→Intention | −0.070 | 0.482 | No |

brand credibility ($\beta$-value = 0.136, $p = 0.076$) and brand loyalty ($\beta$-value = 0.417, $p = 0.000$) on intention to stay in hotels in the post-Covid era. Thus, hypotheses H2, H3, H4 and H7 are supported. Although there is a positive impact of assurance ($\beta$-value = 0.121), emotional values ($\beta$-value = 0.076), and conditional values ($\beta$-value = 0.040) on intention, the paths are not significant ($p > 0.1$). Additionally, customer service ($\beta$-value = −0.07, $p > 0.1$) has a non-significant negative impact on hotel booking intentions. Brand loyalty has the most significant impact followed by reliability and brand credibility.

## 7. Discussion

The qualitative study revealed that customers book hotels that maintain proper hygiene, sanitization, cleanliness, and Covid related safety precautions. In the post-pandemic era, customers prefer hotels that are less crowded, and ensure customer safety. This was also reflected in the study by Gursoy, Chi, and Chi (2021). Chi et al. (2022) in their empirical study have also found that the expected safety measures in hotels affected customers' hotel visit hesitations. In the post-pandemic era, customers are willing to visit hotels which ensure customer safety (Chi et al. 2022) and are even willing to pay an extra amount (Gursoy, Chi, and Chi 2021). Additionally, in order to avoid/ minimize human-to-human contact, customers prefer technology use in hotels like, the use of digital payment modes (Gursoy, Chi, and Chi 2021). The findings of our study from India thus complement the findings by Chi et al. (2022) and Gursoy, Chi, and Chi (2021).

The analysis of textual reviews captured the values and quality aspects that customers mostly look for in hotels. It was found that customers mostly look for consumption values like, epistemic ("Great view", "spacious"), functional ("food", "location", "ambience"), emotional (great/nice experience, loved/enjoyed/awesome), and conditional (discount/offer). Customers
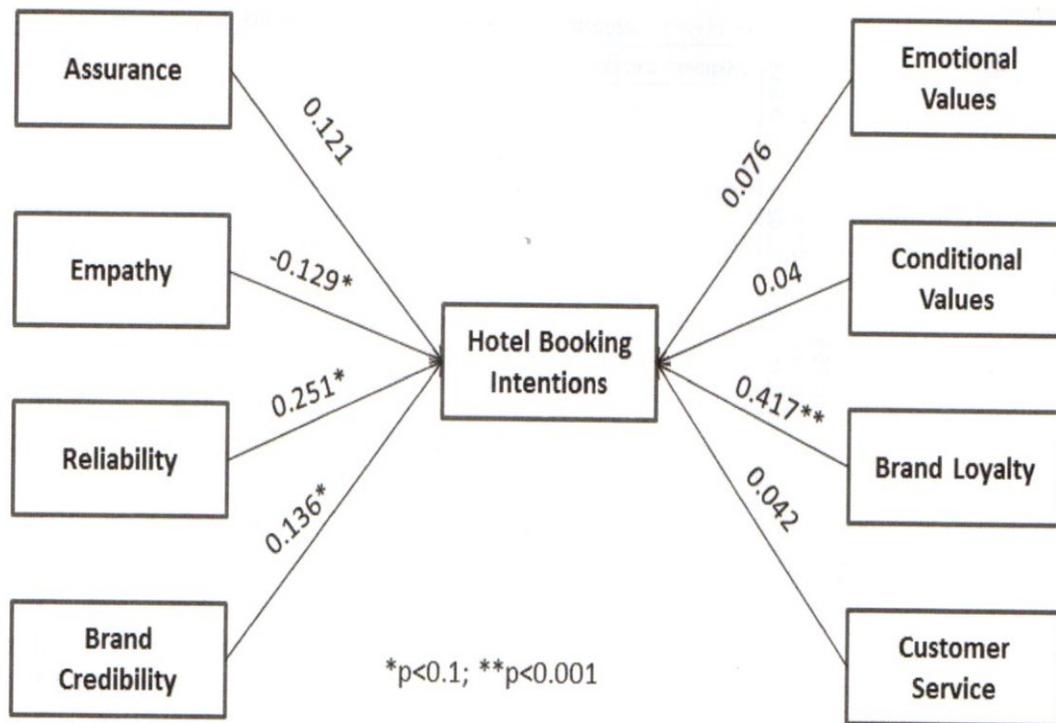
**Figure 2.** Path analysis results.

also prefer hotels that provide good quality customer service (including, food quality, hotel services, staff behavior, room cleanliness), and show empathy (comfort, warmth and peacefulness). Although authors have found that consumption values (Hu, Fu, and Wang 2011; Sthapit et al. 2019) and quality aspects (Fan, Gao, and Han 2022; Chang and Cheng 2022) affect hotel visit intention, earlier studies have mostly used quality as a functional value (Rahnama 2017). This present study examines the service quality aspects and the consumption values from the actual experiences posted by customers in the form of online reviews in the Covid and post-Covid era. This contributes to the existing literature of customer behavior regarding hotels in the post-Covid era.

In the quantitative study, hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 have explored the different service related aspects (assurance, empathy, reliability and responsiveness (here, customer service)) to understand customers' hotel booking intention in the post-pandemic era. Findings show that while empathy and reliability have a notable impact on intention to book hotels, assurance and customer service have an insignificant impact on intention to book hotels. However, unlike prior studies (Basil, Ridgway, and Basil 2008; Yang and Yen 2018), findings show that empathy has a significant negative impact on intention. Earlier researchers (Irfan, Kee, and Shahbaz 2012; Wulandari and Kassim 2015) have also found that empathy has a negative impact on customer satisfaction. This might be due to the fact that trying to keep customers' happy to some extent is good, but if customers feel disturbed due to

a lot of notifications in the post-Covid era, they might feel irritated. In this post-Covid era, customers are more interested in reliability (Cha and Shin 2019; Lo and Lin 2020). If the hotels are reliable and can increase customer's trust, the brand credibility increases (Shams, Brown, and Alpert 2017; Chin, Isa, and Alodin 2020) and gradually increases customer's brand loyalty (Young and Corsun 2021). Findings confirm that brand credibility and brand loyalty has a notable effect on customer's intention. Thus hypotheses H3, H4 and H7 hold true. Interestingly, it is found that H5 and H6 do not hold true, i.e., emotional and conditional values have no significant impact on customer's intention to book hotels. This is unlike what researchers (Uen et al. 2012; Teng, Lu, and Huang 2018; Ray, Bala, and Dwivedi 2021) have noted. This is the same reason why empathy also has a negative impact on intention. In the pandemic, people will prefer reliable and trustworthy hotels that have a good brand image. Customers will prefer going to credible hotels rather than going to hotels giving lots of offers and discounts (Chi et al. 2022; Gursoy, Chi, and Chi 2021). Even when people might have some emotional connect, customers will prefer going to hotels who have good brand credibility (Shams, Brown, and Alpert 2017) and are reliable because of the fear of the getting affected by the virus (Gursoy, Chi, and Chi 2021).

Thus, this multi-method study contributes to the existing literature on customer behavior in the hospitality segment by capturing consumption values (like, "Great view", "spacious rooms", "food in hotels",

"location of hotel", "discount", "value for money", etc.) and service quality aspects (like, "customer service", "food quality", "assurance", "responsiveness", etc.) that affect customer's intention to visit hotels.

## 7.1. Theoretical implications

There are three major theoretical implications. First, this work will help scholars researching in the hospitality segment to understand customer behavior in the post-pandemic scenario. In this post-pandemic era, it is important to explore how customers get affected by different factors mainly those contributing to consumption values and service quality. We have found that reliability, brand credibility and brand loyalty have a significant positive impact on customer's intention to book hotels in this post pandemic era. Second, this study has utilized the SERVQUAL and CVT in addition to brand loyalty and brand credibility to capture customer behavior in the post-pandemic era. Researchers in future can utilize this framework to understand customer behavior in other segments of hospitality like, online food delivery services, etc. Third, this study will also contribute to the researches working on strategies implementation during Covid era. Understanding customer's post-pandemic purchase behavior which will help scholars to work on different strategies and see how it affects customer's intentions. This study will enable them to understand from the SERVQUAL and CVT lens.

## 7.2. Managerial implications

There are three managerial implications. First, this work will help hotel managers look into different values and issues affecting customers' hotel booking intentions in the post pandemic. This study has utilized the SERVQUAL, CVT and variables like, brand loyalty and brand credibility to understand customer's hotel booking intentions. This will help hotels to understand customer's post-pandemic purchase behavior which will help them to formulate better strategies.

Second, this study will help businesses in forming an efficient strategy to tackle the situation of uncertainty due to Covid by focussing on reliability, brand credibility and loyalty. This is only possible through better services. However, this study has also found that empathy has a significant negative impact on intention. It means that showing empathy to some extent is good, but too many notifications will disturb the guests and can have a negative impact. Flexibility and adaptability is the key to survival. Businesses could use this research work to implement better strategies and learn from the data and use those insights to thrive. The challenges faced by the hotel industry are same all over but hotels having flexible strategies and implementation efficiency will survive in the long run. Third, the situation of lockdowns and travel restrictions are causing several challenges for the hotel industry, like, shortage of staff, maintaining social distancing, etc., but managers are working tirelessly for implementing best practices to survive and attract customers in their hotels. This work will help hotel managers understand customer perspectives and formulate better strategies.

## 7.3. Limitations and future research

This study has a few limitations. This study has only utilized the customer perspectives and that too from majorly Gen Z customers. This might affect generalizability of this study. Future scholars can capture perspectives of different age groups separately and also perform a comparative study which will help hoteliers to strategize better. Future scholars can also perform a qualitative and quantitative study to capture managerial perspectives. Second, this study has not captured customer perspectives based on technologically advanced hotels as this study is mainly focussed on Indian hotels. Future scholars in other countries can conduct a similar study to explore if the factors change for customers in different countries.

## 8. Conclusions

As hotels are trying to recover from the losses they had suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic, this present study will help hotels to make better strategies by analyzing the consumption values and service quality aspects that mostly affect customers' intention to book hotels. The major conclusions from the multi-method study are as follows:

- Hotels should maintain proper hygiene, cleanliness, safety precautions and Covid-related guidelines to reduce customers' fear of getting affected by the virus.
- Customers' mostly get affected by quality aspects like, customer service (food quality, hotel services, staff behavior, room cleanliness), and empathy (comfort, warmth and peacefulness) during their stay in hotels. Hence, managers in the hotels can focus on improving quality aspects to improve customer footfall.

- Results of the study also revealed consumption values like, epistemic ("Great view", "spacious"), functional ("food", "location", ambience"), conditional (offers/discounts), and emotional (great/nice experience, loved/enjoyed/awesome) values affect customers' stay in hotels. Hotel managers can look for building spacious rooms with good views in good locations to improve customer footfall.
- Since brand loyalty and brand credibility affects customers' hotel booking intention, hotels should aim for building a good relationship with the customer by providing good services and assuring customers' a 'safe' and 'comfortable' stay in the hotel.

Through these findings, this present study provides implications for academicians and practitioners, like, forming an efficient strategy to tackle the situation of uncertainty due to a pandemic like, Covid-19 by focussing on reliability, brand credibility and loyalty.

## Acknowledgement

## Disclosure statement

## Notes on contributors

*Dr. Arghya Ray* has been working as an Assistant Professor in the area of Management Information Systems and Analytics at International Management Institute Kolkata. Prior to joining IMI Kolkata, he has been an Assistant Professor at FORE School of Management (FSM), Adamas University, and a Visiting Faculty at Birla Global University, IIM Ranchi and IIM Jammu. He also has an industrial experience of two years at TCS Limited. With B.Tech. (Silver Medalist) from SRM University, and a Ph.D. from IIM Ranchi, he has to his credit many publications in top level ABDC and ABS listed journals. He has also attended around ten national and international conferences. His research mainly focusses on understanding customer perspectives from social-media feeds in different domains like food delivery, e-learning and travel agency services.

*Siddharth Gupta* is a MBA student at FORE School of Management New Delhi. His has a passion for big data analytics in domains like marketing and tourism.

*Dr. Nripendra P. Rana* is a Professor in Marketing at the College of Business and Economics at Qatar University, Doha, Qatar. His current research interests focus primarily on adoption and diffusion of emerging ICTs, e-commerce, m-commerce, e-government and digital and social media marketing. He has published more than 250 papers in a range of leading academic journals, conference proceedings, books etc. He has co-edited five books on digital and social media marketing, emerging markets and supply and operations management. He has also co-edited special issues, organized tracks, mini-tracks and panels in leading conferences. He is a Chief Editor of International Journal of Electronic Government Research and Associate Editor of International Journal of Information Management. He is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA) in the UK.

## References

Alam, A., U. M. Arshad, and A. S. Shabbir. 2012. Brand credibility, customer loyalty and the role of religious orientation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 24 (4):583–98. doi: 10.1108/13555851211259034.

Albrecht, K. 1992. Only thing that matters. Executive Excellence 9:7–7.

Al-Gasawneh, J. A., K. N. AlZubi, M. M. Anuar, S. F. Padlee, A. Ul-Haque, and J. Saputra. 2022. Marketing performance sustainability in the jordanian hospitality industry: The roles of customer relationship management and service quality. *Sustainability* 14 (2):e803. doi: 10.3390/su14020803.

Al-Gharaibah, O. 2020. Customer retention in five-star hotels in Jordan: The mediating role of hotel perceived value. *Management Science Letters* 10 (16):3949–56. doi: 10.5267/j.msl.2020.7.015.

Al-Husain, R., and R. Khorramshahgol. 2020. Incorporating analytical hierarchy process and goal programming to design responsive and efficient supply chains. *Operations Research Perspectives* 7:100149. doi: 10.1016/j.orp.2020.100149.

Ali, B. J., P. F. Saleh, S. Akoi, A. A. Abdulrahman, A. S. Muhamed, H. N. Noori, and G. Anwar. 2021. Impact of service quality on the customer satisfaction: Case study at online meeting platforms. *International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management* 5 (2):65–77. doi: 10.22161/ijebm.5.2.6.

Anh, T., C. Diem, L. Cam, and T. Viet. 2020. Exploring factors influencing on organizational repurchases intention in B2B tourism context. *Management Science Letters* 10 (3):531–42. doi: 10.5267/j.msl.2019.9.027.

Asree, S., M. Zain, and R. M. Razalli. 2010. Influence of leadership competency and organizational culture on responsiveness and performance of firms. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 22 (4):500–16. doi: 10.1108/09596111011042712.

Awasthi, A., and A. Nain. 2021. Challenges Faced by Hospitality Industry amid COVID-19 Pandemic. In *Hospitality and*