

**THE CORRELATIONAL RESEARCH ABOUT THE IMPACT OF HOTEL BRAND ON CUSTOMER CHOICE IN UZBEKISTAN**

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**Abstract:** The research paper examines and administers questionnaires to hotel customers in Uzbekistan to determine the impact of hotel brand on customer choice. According to the research, the hotel brand is one of the most important factors that can influence a customer's decision, and this is due to the trust and high level of satisfaction that these hotel brands promise to their customers. In addition, the research looks at customer responses to online reviews and information about hotel brands in Uzbekistan.

**Key words:** brand, branding, hotel management, social media, decision-making

**1.Introduction:**

With its rich historic and cultural heritage, friendly people, and natural beauty, Uzbekistan, located in the heart of Central Asia, is ready to expand its tourism and travel industry. Uzbekistan's government sees tourism as having significant potential for expansion. For many years, Uzbekistan was closed to foreigners, but the government has begun policy changes to freely accessible to its rich historical and cultural heritage in order to facilitate tourism development. The tourism industry was severely impacted by the pandemic in 2020-2021, and hospitality service providers and other sector participants received various forms of state assistance. In accordance with the worlddata.info statistical website Uzbekistan ranked 30th in the world with 7 million foreign tourists in 2019.

Countries	%
Kazakhstan	38.2%
Tajikistan	26.4%
Kyrgyzstan	17.1%

Russia	7.2%
Turkey	1.2%
China	0.6%
South Korea	0.5%
Germany	0.3%
Japan	0.3%

**Table1. Tourists Arrivals by Nationality [1]**

As the number of tourists visiting Uzbekistan grows and the tourism industry develops, so does the number of hotels in Uzbekistan. The State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, there are 1,156 hotels in the Republic of Uzbekistan as of January 1, 2021[2]. The majority of the hotels are in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand.

A brand can be defined as a collection of tangible and intangible attributes intended to raise awareness and identity, as well as to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization. Branding as a long-term strategy encompasses a wide range of activities, from product innovation to marketing communications [3]. The goal of branding strategy is to generate brands that stand out from the competition, thereby decreasing the number of competitors on the market. Branding is an essential component of any company that wishes to succeed in the industry and gain profit. This thesis explains the impact of hotel brand on customer choice as the main subject of its study.

**2. Problem Statement**

The term "brand" has numerous definitions in the English language. Small and medium-sized businesses, or a combination of these, create an image that identifies a product and distinguishes it from competitors. The brand represents a modern feature of the product and its contemporary characteristics. It is a feature of the twenty-first century. A modern product could not exist without a brand. Brand, on the other hand, represents consumers' perceptions and sentiments about a product and its performance [4]. There are more than 300 hotel global chain brands [5]. Brand is not just the company's trademark that has an impact on everything. Brand influences customer choice, customer expectation, customer retention, and so on.

**2.1 Hotel brands in Uzbekistan**

Branding means more than just giving name and signaling to the outside world that such a product or service has been stamped with the mark and imprint of an organization. Branding consists in transforming the product category; it requires a corporate long term involvement, a high level of resources and skills.

[6]. For instance, when one hears about national hotel brand in Uzbekistan, mostly boutique, hotel with national attributes comes to mind. How about the “Coca – Cola” brand? What then comes into mind? What emotions are transmitted from the

brain to the whole body? John Stewart, a former CEO of Quaker Oats, for example once said “If this business were split up, I would give you the land and bricks and mortar, and I would keep the brands and trademarks, and I would fare better than you”

[7]. This clearly emphasizes the fact that brands are extremely valuable to businesses, even more valuable than assets, and thus must be properly managed.

As it is stated above there are about 1,200 hotels in Uzbekistan but there is small number of national hotels have successful branding and marketing strategy. Branded hotels are only found in Tashkent, the capital. There are currently four hotels in the 4- and 5-star categories: Hyatt Regency, Radisson Blu, Wyndham, and Ramada. This research also, provides insights to develop hotels brand strategy.

<b>Internationally Branded Hotels</b>	<b>Rooms</b>	<b>Status</b>
Wyndham Tashkent	206	Operating
Ramada Tashkent	206	Operating
Hyatt Regency Tashkent	300	Operating
Radisson Blu	111	Operating
Hilton Tashkent	250	Operating

**Table 2. International hotel brands in Uzbekistan**

### **2.2 Customer choice and brand**

Firms use branding as a strategic tool in order to improve business consistency. Branding has a history that dates back more than a century. Numerous studies confirm that businesses use brands to attract and retain customers by promoting their value, lifestyle, and overall image [8]. Consumers regard a brand as an important component of a service or a product that adds value to the latter. Consumers attach meanings and interpretations to brands based on the services or satisfaction they promise. For comparison purposes, most consumers consider Apple products to be of high quality, prestige, and price. They believe they will be identified if they are seen using it, so they will buy it regardless of price. Brand equity occurs when customers have a good perception of a particular brand name of a product and this gives commercial value to the company. Branding has a significant impact on consumer perception in relation to their behavior. According to Kotler [9], perception is the process by which individuals select, organize, and interpret information in order to form meaningful images of the world in terms of products or services. Perception is critical in decision making. In a competitive world, products are patronized not only for their functional use or characteristics, but also for the social or, in some cases, psychological aspects associated with them. When consumers are introduced to a brand through various means such as advertising, packaging, and word - of - mouth, their levels of brand awareness gradually increase, and as awareness increases, the purchase

decision of that brand in question will be influenced by that brand's perception [10]. This following research analyses the impact of hotel brand on customer decision making.

### 3.Preliminary Literature Review

To begin with, brand and branding are critical aspects of building a successful business. By analyzing more than three numerous of definitions of brand, Upendra Kumar Maurya and P Mishra provided a summary of the existing scholarly literature defining the brand [11]. According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a name, term, design, or symbol. Martineau's brand has descended as an image in the minds of consumers of functions and psychological attributes. According to A.E.Pitcher [12], a brand is a consumer's perception of a product. Clark [13] discovered that consumers place value in the brand's heritage, personal experience with it, and how it reflects what the individual stands for. Yi Zhan investigated the impact of a brand's image on consumer behavior and made recommendations [14]. Suraksha Gupta, David Gallear, John Rudd, and Pantea Foroudi studied the impact of brand value on brand competitiveness [15]. John W. O'Neil and Anna S. Matilla studied how brands affect top and bottom line sales revenue as well as overall asset value [16]. Furthermore, Rob Bailey and Stephon Bell (2006) compared hotel brand recognition with industry consultant definitions and discovered that it appears to be impacted by the brand's franchise business strategy [17]. As far as we know no previous research has investigated the impact of hotel brand on customer choice in Uzbekistan.

### 4.Discussion

In Uzbekistan, a study on the impact of hotel brands on customer choice was undertaken mainly among people aged between 20-30. Several questionnaires were used to interview the group. And the responses of the participants are provided below.

#### 4.1 Brand influence on customer choice

Customers' reactions to branded hotels are depicted in tables 3 and table 4.



Table 3

How important is the reputation of hotel for you from 1 to 10?

Копировать

25 ответов

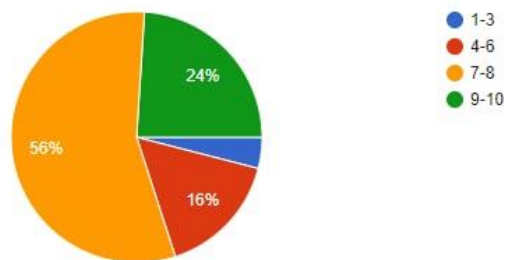


Table 4

### 4.2 Factors influencing customer preference for hotel brand

Table 5 lists several factors that can influence customer choice, and table 6 explains why customers prefer hotels with a good brand reputation.

On the basis of what do you make a choice in favor of a particular hotel chain?

Копировать

25 ответов

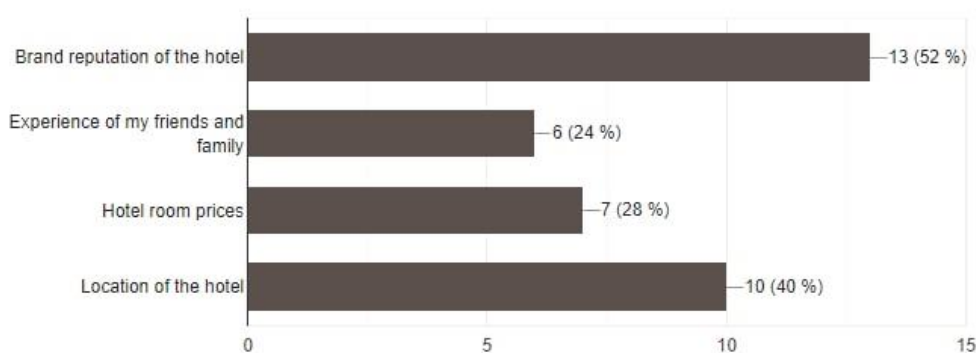


Table 5

How brand of a hotel influences you?

Копировать

25 ответов

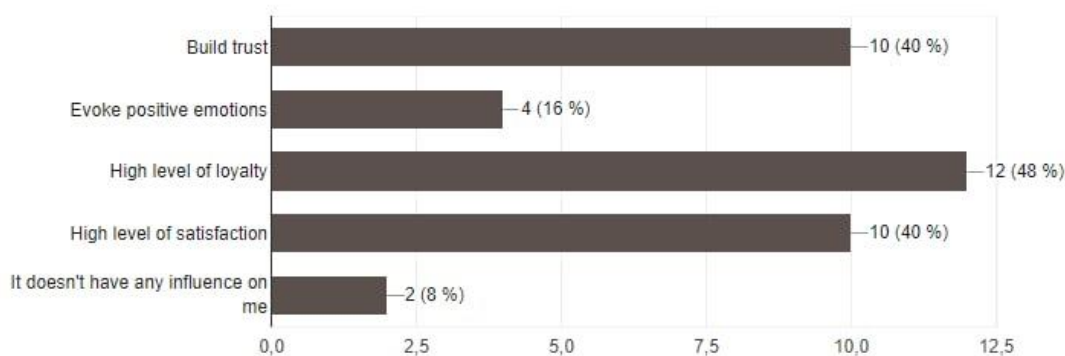


Table 6

### 4.3 The role of social media in influencing customer choice

Do you check online reviews of a hotel you are going to stay?

 Копировать

25 ОТВЕТОВ

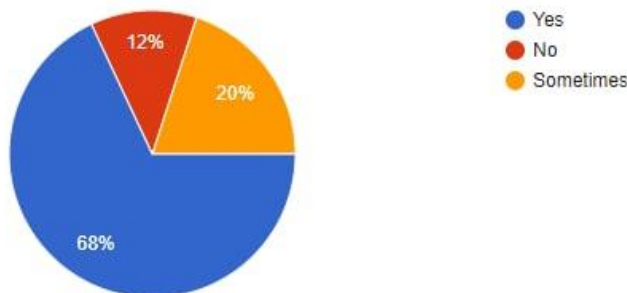


Table 7

Do you believe information about the hotel company on the Social media?

 Копировать

25 ОТВЕТОВ

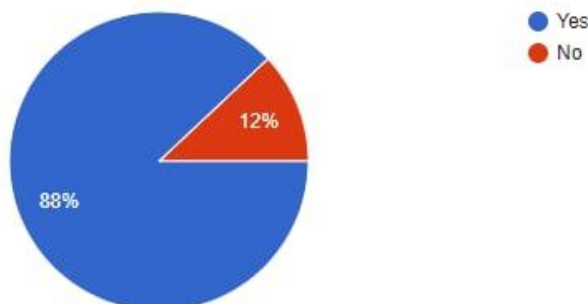


Table 8

## 5. Findings

The survey was administered to customers of various hotels, and the results revealed that 88% of people believe the hotel's brand has an impact on their choice, while only 12% believe the opposite. The questionnaire asked respondents to rate the importance of hotel reputation on a scale of 1 to 10. The majority of participants (56%) believe it is important, and 24% believe it is extremely important. Almost one-fifth of research participants believe that the reputation of a hotel is unimportant. Furthermore, factors that can influence customer choice are shown in the table 5. Participants in the survey cite brand reputation and location as the most important factors influencing their hotel choice. Table 6 demonstrates that research respondents were of the view that a hotel's brand increases guest loyalty. Furthermore, a good hotel brand fosters trust, and most customers expect a high level of fulfillment from hotels with a good brand reputation.

Nowadays, digital marketing is an essential component of any business. As shown in the table 8, 88% of customers believe information on social media, and more than half of them check user reviews of hotels before using their services.

### Conclusion

To sum up, it is clear that hotel brand has an impact on customer choice, and the majority of customers pay attention to the branding of the hotel they are attempting to choose. The most important factors that can influence a customer's choice are the hotel's brand and location. The majority of customers end up choosing good brand hotels because they promise trust and because customers expect high levels of customers' satisfaction from hotels that have a good brand image in the eyes of the people. Only a small percentage of respondents (12%) believe that the hotel's brand has no influence on their decisions. Furthermore, customers trust the information they find on social networking sites and value online reviews.

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