

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES AND RE-PURCHASE INTENTION OF SERVICES: A STUDY OF HOTEL SECTOR IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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By

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Authors Declaration

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled “**Customer Engagement Practices and Re-Purchase Intention of Services: A Study of Hotel Sector in Jammu and Kashmir**” in fulfillment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision **Dr. Parvinder Kour**, working as **Assistant Professor**, in the **Department of Tourism and Airlines of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India**. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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Certificate

This is to certify that Shabir Ahmad Dar bearing Registration no. 41801043 has completed objective formulation of thesis titled, “Customer Engagement Practices and Re-purchase Intention of Services: A Study of Hotel Sector in Jammu and Kashmir ” under my guidance and supervision. To the best of my knowledge, the present work is the result of his original investigation and study. No part of the thesis has ever been submitted for any other degree at any University.

The thesis is fit for submission and the partial fulfillment of the conditions for the award of Ph.D.

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Abstract

The relationship between a customer and a brand has become very complex and difficult to maintain with the increasing expectations of customers from the brands. In the current setting, it is convenient for managers to acquire new customers, but it is still difficult to retain existing ones. So it has become more difficult challenge for practitioners to maintain a long-term relationship with customers. Customer engagement (CE) has been shown to solve this retention issue by making the customer a part of multifarious brand-related activities. CE can be manifested in a vast array of behaviors such as referrals, Word of mouth, feedback to brand, co-creating with the brand etc. CE is a highly interactive experience which needs efforts from both sides i.e brand as well as the customers, but a highly interactive experience for customers, which strengthens the relationship of customers with the company. From existing customers who have had little interaction with the brand to those who have a very strong relationship with the brand, all can be continuously engaged with the brand by employing different engagement practices. Hence, this study attempted to address this issue by empirically examining the role of customer engagement practices employed by different Grade A hotels across Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir is well known for its scenic beauties, mountains, hospitality and culture, arts and crafts, heritage infrastructure, which becomes a reason to attract and entertain tourists and customers. Thus it becomes imperative for the hotels to make best use of available resources in order to attract more customers to the place. The study has considered few relevant components like hotel location, hotel design and personalized services offered by the hotel, in order to have complete information and analyze the perception and impact of these components to attract customers again and develop a strong relationship, which eventually result in the repurchase intention of services.

As it is evident from the literature that the importance of effective relationship, connection, involvement and participation of a customer are must for the efficient business performance to have engaged customers which can lead to repurchase intention of services in hotels. The mixed approach of research methods that include both qualitative as well as quantitative utilized for this study. For objective 1st, were in the basic motive was to identify the customer engagement practices with respect to hotel location, hotel design and personalized services offered by Grade A hotel's, the

qualitative approach based on the Grounded theory was applied, in which In-depth interviews were conducted with hotel executives/managers. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed to form the final transcript for analysis. Thus the reported customer engagement practices have been coded and a relevant list of themes and activities has been formed. The factors like hotel's location, hotel's design and personalized services offered by the hotels taken into consideration for this study, adds to the list of customer engagement practices, which are helpful for the effective engagement of customers. While as in case of Quantitative part the simple random sampling method was applied. Here the sample units includes customers/ guests of Grade A hotels. The sample size has been calculated as per the Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The sample unit included had been all A grade hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir. As per the krejcie morgan, 1970 formula the calculated sample size for the current study is 375, As the population of Grade A hotels in Jammu and Kashmir is 161 as per the data available on jktourism.com and Directorate of Jammu tourism.

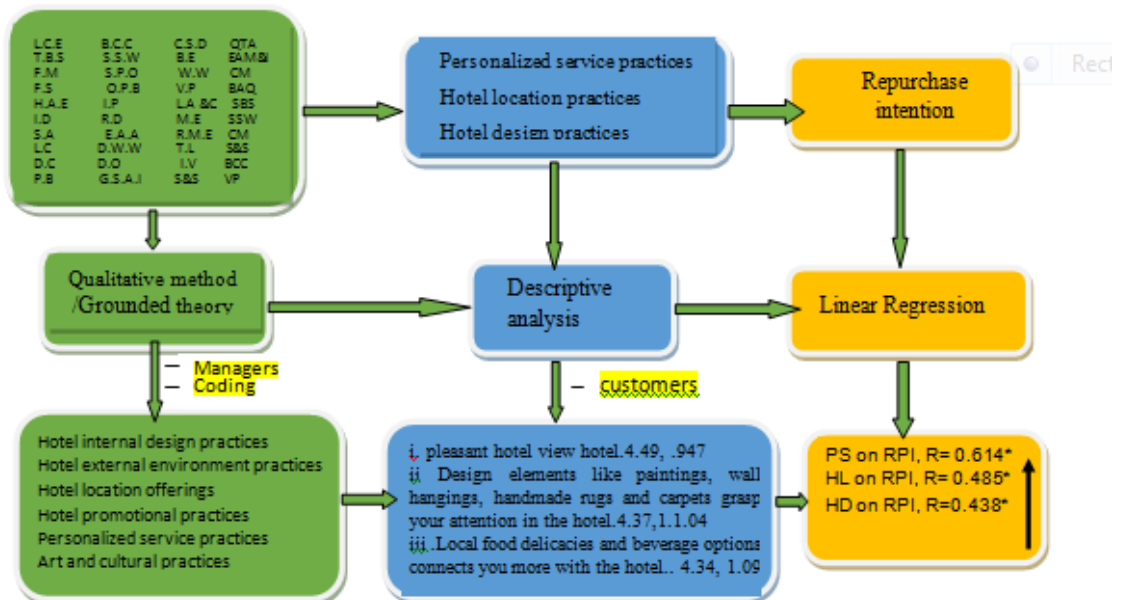
In order to know the perception and impact of identified customer engagement practices on repurchase intention. A questionnaire has been developed and presented to hotel customer's patronizing Grades A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir. The collected data has been analyzed by using mean and standard deviation through SPSS. The linear regression has been applied to calculate the impact of different components on repurchase intention.

The results outlined after the basic computation of data were genuine and impressive at the first instance. The foremost importance of the outcome can be seen by enlisting the number of customer engagement practices with respect to hotel location, hotel design and personalized services. The list of practices that has been generated can act as a tool of confidence and source of motivation for these hotel managers as most of the hotels possess the sources by which these practices can be easily made available to the customers. The second part of the results which was quite important was to verify the impact and perception of identified CE practices on repurchase intention and the best people to judge this was hotel customers and same has been done. It has been found that most of the customers perceive that the identified CE practices are employed /offered in grade A hotels in Jammu and Kashmir. The regression analysis has been used to scale the impact of CE practices on

re-purchase intention. The personalized services has been considered as most impactful component with $r=0.614^*$ followed by hotel location $r=0.485^*$ and hotel design, $r=0.438^*$, respectively. The study stressed that personalized services related customer engagement practices offered by the hotels acts as an attracting tool to retain customers and involve them to repurchase again with the same hotel. The other two components are also contributing immensely.

Customer engagement practices in hotels

Graphical abstract:



KEYS

T.B.E Traditional beverages in the evening, FM folk music,FS folk singing, ID itinerary development,SA seasonal attractions,LCG loyalty centres for guests,DCA digital connect through app, PB packed breakfast,SSCW snow sculpture creation during winters,SPO swimming pool in the open,OPB offering picnic basket, IP itinerary planning,IV issuing vouchers WW walk through the wilderness,BE bonfire evenings,VP view photography,DO discount offers, G.S.A &I GSA for information sharing, BAQ best air quality, PS personalised service, HL hotel location, HD hotel designGT grounded theory

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Abbreviations

AAAA	American Association of Advertising Agencies
ANA	Association of National Advertisers
BTS	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity
CE	Customer Engagement
HRACC	Hotel and Restaurant accreditation classification committee
USP	Unique selling procedure Sustainable tourism development
ARR	Average Room Rate
HL	Hotel Location
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
UT	Union Territory
HD	Hotel Design
MBA	Marriot Bonvoy App
TO	Tour Operators
WOM	Word of mouth
E-WOM	Electronic word of mouth
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SMS	Systematic Mapping Study
ICA	Inductive Content Analysis
CBBAS	Cloud-Based Bibliometric Analysis Service
NAILS	Network Analysis Interface for Literature Studies
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
FA	Factor Analysis
CFA	Conformity Factor analysis
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
CA	Convergent Analysis
DV	Discriminant Validity
ASSV	Average shared squared variance
ARF	Advertising Research Foundation
IV	Indicating variables

KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
ANOVA	Analysis of variances
UGC	User-generated content
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
RPI	Re-purchase Intention
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
CEB	Customer engagement Behaviour
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
ASID	American Society of Interior Design
CM	Customer management
DTK	Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
S-O-R	Stimulus-Organism-Response
SWOT	Strength, weakness, opportunity and Threats
GDP	Gross domestic product
CLV	Customer Lifetime Value
CKV	Customer Knowledge Value
CEV	Customer's Engagement Value

Chapter 1- Introduction

The tourism industry plays a significant role in aiding the economic development of any country. The tourism industry mobilized whopping revenue of USD121.9 billion during 2020, although low as compared to revenue generated in previous years, because of the bad blow exerted by the corona virus. The future revenue projection from the industry is accounted for around 10% of India's GDP contribution between 2019 and 2028. In the financial year 2020, the creation of 41.622 million jobs, accounted for 8% of the total workforce of the country. The revenue generated by the industry is expected to touch USD 512 billion by 2028, which shall be around 9.9% of the country's GDP, thus witnessing an annual growth of 6.9% (World Travel & Tourism Council). Foreign exchange generated by the industry witnessed a rapid increase at the rate of 17.6% in 2018 January, when compared with the same month of 2017. The industry is among the top ten sectors in India to attract FDI, with an aggregate of \$ 10.90 billion inflow of FDI to the industry from April 2000 to December 2017 (Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion). India attracted 7.40 lakh foreign tourists during April 2017, while the figure was 5.99 lakh in 2016 and 5.42 lakh in 2015, and World Tourism Organisation has predicted this figure to rise to 15.3 lakh by 2025. Domestic tourists amounted to 1.65 billion in 2016, registering an annual growth of 15.5%. India has reached the 40th position in the most preferred country by tourists out of 136 countries. Favorable government policies, a rising middle-class population and increasing disposable income among people, good air, rail and road infrastructure and easier availability of e-visas have contributed to all positive development of the sector.

1.1 Hotel industry in India

The hotel industry forms the base for the flourishing of tourism in any country. India's hotel industry has grown extremely well in the past. Star-rated and other hotels are in large numbers to lodge the ever-increasing tourist arrivals. Constant spurt in domestic and foreign tourist arrivals, increasing middle class and disposable income, increase in travelling on business, medical, education, academic and enjoyment grounds, the shift of customer preference towards luxuries and increasing customer demand for qualitative services at even higher prices are the important factors which are driving the rapid expansion of hotel industry in India. In an attempt to cater to the ever-changing needs of customers, Indian hotels have started offering value-added services

to customers such as gyms, swimming pools, hosting social functions, child care service, business centres and conference halls for business and academic meetings. Despite the hotel industry witnessing expansion at a good pace, the per capita availability of rooms is pretty low when compared with international standards due to many factors such as huge population, low penetration of debit and credit card facilities and the reluctance of people to travel leaving their localities. However, this scenario is changing dramatically and with international hotel chains planning for a massive expansion in India. The figure will take care of 50% of the country's hospitality industry by 2022, from the current level of 44%. The Indian hotel industry is expected to witness a whopping growth in the recent years to come.

1.2 Tourism and Hospitality in Jammu & Kashmir

Located in the Himalayas, Jammu and Kashmir possess a lot of charming Valleys such as Lidder Valley, Tawi Valley, Punch Valley, Kashmir, Sindh Valley and Chenab Valley. Mughal Gardens, Gulmarg, Srinagar, Ladakh, Patnitop, Pahalgam and Jammu are the most preferred tourist destinations in the state. Amaranth pilgrimage and Vaishno Devi Temple are the most liked religious spots with more than one crore pilgrims visiting the holy shrines every year. Charming gardens, snow-clad mountains, huge lakes, attractive houseboats, hill stations and natural streams and landscapes at very high altitudes are centres of attraction for tourists. Though terrorism has exerted a negative impact on tourism of the UT, millions of pilgrims visit the place for pilgrimage and to enjoy nature which enabled the place to attain the status of the most preferred tourist destination of India in 2009.

The hospitality and tourism industry is the most flourishing and renowned service segment in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. As a matter of fact, it is one of the major employer and revenue generators of the state. The agriculture sector is the first one on the list followed by Tourism and hospitality, as a key contributor to UT's economy and accounts for 6.98 % towards the UT's GDP (Economic Survey, 2014-2015). This industry has immense potential due to its unparalleled beauty and varied natural resources which are eye retreat for the travellers visiting the state. The state has stood as an epitome in terms of hospitality it provides to its guests and has earned a renowned place as a welcoming host worldwide. The place is rich in varied tourist destinations and fits the tastes and preferences of every tourist visiting it. Tourist destinations like Sonmarg and Gulmarg are a paradise for skiing lovers. Gulmarg

holds the record for being the highest green golf course in the world and also holds the highest cable car (Gondola) service. Places like Pahalgam, Sonmarg, Baderwah, Patnitop, etc promote adventure sports. The place has immense potential and acts as a hotspot for tourism, and has been successful in attracting a number of tourists every year. The J&K has witnessed a hot season in terms of tourist arrivals in the last some years. In the year 2012, the total number of tourists that visited the state was as high as 12.50 lakh (domestic/foreign). Followed by the year 2013, when around 10.95 lakh tourists visited the state. In the year 2015, a total number of 8.77 lakh tourists visited the state including 3.53 lakh pilgrims that visited the shrine of Amaranth Ji and 7.76 lakh who visited Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji respectively. The state because of its outstanding tourism opportunities has been conferred with several awards from time to time. The Pacific Asia Travel and Writers Association (PATWA) has awarded the state as —All season destination‡ in the world for its Introduction to spectacular tourist resorts, the award was presented in ITB, Berlin. The state saw new heights recently when it bagged the award of the best romantic destination (Lonely Planet, 2016).

In August 2016, the state moved a step ahead when it bagged the coveted Today's Traveller Award for its outstanding performance in corporate, hospitality, travel and entertainment. The state also bagged the award for best MICE and golfing destination under the domestic tourism category (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). In the context of the service market, tourism and hospitality hold a major share in the state. The hospitality and tourism industry does not work in isolation but works in close integration with other allied industries such as food & beverages, transportation & communication. Handicrafts and infrastructure, further add to the augmentation and progress of the state.

1.3 Customer engagement

These days' maximum companies undergo marketing to contact their clients. Therefore, customers witness several types of marketing strategies. In the 20th century, traditional marketing was quite prevalent among customers. But it is characteristically short-range oriented with little focus on customer service.

Traditional marketing is always dependable on awareness among customers and reaching them as compared to customer engagement, which has been customized later and allows the clients to be more interactive with the product and company. In the

development and prosperity of company and brand, the top down customer approach followed by firms to maximize the participative association of equivalents, and perceiving that the stake holding by customers is same as the company (Tripathi, 2009). The development of strong emotional relationships with their customers is the virtue of most growing companies. Customers stay loyal to their brands that acquire both their judicious trust as well as their affection. The engaged clients behave differently as compared to others.

Customer Engagement refers to customer experience resulting from the emotional attachment that happens during repeated and constant interactions. Engagement happens when there is an attachment to the brand. The Hospitality sector is the backbone of Jammu & Kashmir's economy, but customer engagement in this sector is in its nascent stage. It is a gainful approach for every business in the current world. The increasing importance of engagement is due to the provision of valuable and sustainable competitive advantage to the organization.

Despite the increasing adoption of customer engagement practices by organizations to manage customer-hotel relationships, the conceptualization and dimension of customer engagement are not well understood. Moreover, previous academic efforts focus on the relationship between different factors of customer engagement such as perceived value, trust, service quality, satisfaction, and commitment. There is a gap between studies already conducted on customer engagement and the area selected for study by the researcher. To address this gap in the literature, this study investigates customer engagement practices and the impacts of customer engagement practices on customer repurchase intention.

Few studies have been conducted in India and outside on customer engagement in banking, retail, the hotel industry etc. But as of now, no such scholarly studies with a long-term perspective in the field have been reported especially for the hospitality sector in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir (India). An extensive study of the available literature identified the research gap and creates the demand to study Customer Engagement Practices and the repurchase intention of Hotels. Since the scope of the Hospitality sector is very wide, therefore the researcher has included grade "A" Hotels of Jammu and Kashmir for the purpose of the study. Hence a systematic study is required to analyze customer engagement practices adopted by Hotel operators in Kashmir, investigate the impact of these customer engagement practices on

repurchase intention in the Hospitality sector as well as explore and suggest customer engagement strategies that can be employed by marketing professionals to engage customers more and enhance the level of customer engagement.

The great amount of attention exhibited traditionally by companies towards repurchasing, cross-selling, level of use, length of the relationship, and transactional behaviour of customers as such acts instantly impact the sales volume and outcomes. However, the ongoing competitive arena is more favorable towards new methods to manage company-customer relationships i.e. word-of-mouth (WOM), referrals and co-creation etc which can significantly impact company outcomes, though at times it takes a long to be effective (Fierro et al., 2014). This results in the growth of new concepts in specialized literature i.e. customer engagement, It has become a relevant issue in the area of marketing management. Customer engagement has emerged with varied conceptualizations in the modern industrial system.

The term customer engagement is also considered a catchphrase to emerge multiple things to repeat patronage intent. While such behaviours are tempting, they never assure you that the customer will always stick to our product and services, and will never look at your competitor's tomorrow. To assure customer loyalty, it is apparent for those companies to involve customers with different tactics. The key activity suggested to marketers is to create channels, to associate and involve customers with the brand, rather focusing completely on the brand to make it more attractive and preferable. A customer invests in a brand in different ways, be it psychologically, emotionally and physically in the process of purchasing, using and consuming the product. This investment leads to engagement with the course of time. This investment is independent of a customer and differs from one customer to another. So the primary task of any marketer is to persuade and inspire the customer to be attached with the brand and spent their time, effort, money and commitment. It is a process of building and preserving strong customer relationships (Shevlin, 2006). The sales and marketing team must reframe their priorities from achieving sales targets to increasing more 'engaged' customers (Smith and Rutigliano,2003). In today's digital world, the uses of CE are manifold as website owners feel it more testing, to grip up traffic on to their sites, while communicating or selling products to the customers. In the broader sense, the concept of customer engagement is appropriate and essential to all product types, services and brands. The marketer tries every effort let the

customers stay there for long, once acquired them (Tripathi, 2009). The exploration of related academic literature has carved out different engagement concepts, which includes customer engagement, CEB's, consumer engagement, customer brand engagement in addition to some straightforward conceptualizations of engagement itself (Hollebeek, 2011). From the marketing perspective, the sequential psychological procedure followed by the customer to become loyal towards the brand is called as customer engagement (Bowden, 2009). This process is suggested for framing a systematic way for the development of loyalty both for existing as well as potential customers. Initially, Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) in March 2006 defined the concept of customer engagement. ARF has undertaken a concrete engagement program in connection with the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) and the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), which states that engagement has tendency to convert a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context. As customer engagement has also been described as customer's behavioural manifestation, influenced from motivational drivers, towards a brand or firm, beyond purchase. The activities included in the process enlist word-of-mouth, recommendations, assisting other customers, writing blogs & reviews, Doorn et al. (2010). Shevlin (2007) stressed the concept of customer engagement as the continuous and fulfilling interaction process, in between a customer and a brand resulting in strengthening the emotional connection between them (customer and company). Vivek (2009) defined the customer engagement as the customer's participation intensity and connection with an organization's offerings and its organized activities. The conceptualization of being, in a state of sustained attention, identified by full absorption and involvement as well as being fully occupied or engrossed in a brand. Thus Engagement on different levels of intensity, that the more a person is engaged, the more intense will be the experience of the motivational force (Higgins & Scholer, 2009). In terms of strategy, engagement alludes to the formation of experiences that permits an organization to build deeper, more significant and sustainable communication between the organization and its customers or external shareholders and proposes that it is not a fixed point that can be reached but a process that expands and evolves over time (Sashi, 2012). With respect to e-marketing glossary, the CE concept is anticipated to increase the time or attention a customer or prospect gives to a brand on the web or across multiple channels". (Singh et al., 2010)

A few researches underlying definition of customer engagement are enumerated in table 1.1. as follows:

Table 1.3: Customer Engagement Conceptualization in the Marketing Literature

Author(s)	Year	Definition
Patterson et al.	2006	“The level of a customer’s physical, cognitive & emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization”.
ARF	2006	“Turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context”.
shevlin	2007	“Customer engagement is repeated and satisfying interactions that strengthen the emotional connection a consumer has with a brand (or product or company)”.
Higgins and scholar	2009.	“The intensity of a consumer’s participation & connection
vivek	2009	“Being engaged is to be involved, occupied & interested in something”. with an organization’s offerings &/or its organized activities”.
Bowden	2009	“A sequential psychological procedure that customers travel through to become loyal towards the brand”.
Doom et al.	2010	“The customer’s behavioral manifestation toward the brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers”.
Wikipedia	2010	“Engagement of customers with one another, with a company or a brand”.
Singh et al.	2011	“Customer engagement concept is intended to increase the time or attention a customer or prospect gives to a brand on the web or across multiple channels”.
hoolebeek	2013	“The level of an individual customer’s motivational, brand related & context-dependent state of mind characterized by

Author(s)	Year	Definition
		specific levels of cognitive, emotional & behavioral activity in brand interactions”.

Source: Hollebeek (2011) & Brodie et al. (2011)

While no universally accepted definition of customer engagement has been formulated, Ron Shevlin defined the concept as, the emotional, psychological or physical investment a customer has in a brand strengthened by repeated interactions." effectively, the connection between the customer and the brand is engagement. Thus, from the above discussion, we can define the term customer engagement as a consumer's rational and emotional attachment towards a service brand or product. It can be considered as a behavioural and attitudinal manifestation towards a product/brand derived from cognitive and affective evaluation developed through consumers experience /satisfaction.

1.4 Significance of Customer Engagement

Using customer engagement tools, companies can engage customers effectively, resulting in an increase in revenue generation from current customers and advancing the outcome of customer engagement initiatives (LaMalfa, 2008), which are discussed as under:

1.4.1 Increase Sales: The craving for an extra number of customers by organizations with the brand can result in a concrete customer fleet that boosts their sales and thus more revenue to the company.

1.4.2 Loyalty to the Brand: By offering emerging and innovative experiences and active participation, the companies can double the brand loyalty from customers, with higher brand loyalty and increasing customer retention ratio for the company.

1.4.3. Enhance Company Image and Reputation: Focusing on persuasive clients also assists in control and fosters an organization's image. Community and collaboration tools ensure customers to be more effective at utilizing products by permitting them to gain from other customers experiences and their ideas.

1.4.4. Minimize Communication Gap: The exchange of ideas through proper communication channels has become easy. These days, it is quite basicfor customers to correspond and network with marketers and other service providers. They can seek answers and solutions to their problems quickly, thus giving expedient options to the

prospective as well as existing customers for developing strong relations with the company (LaMalfa, 2008).

1.5 Customer Engagement Strategies

The initiation of customer engagement through radio, TV, media, and social networks adds to the key strategies. However, the outcome of pure customer engagement was really not quantifiable. The outcome of such promotions was deals and rate of return figures. Currently, the use of online platforms essentially improved the procedures of CE, specifically at various levels of engagement. Since a huge amount of world population are connected through the internet, more than 3 billion web users; it is indisputable that companies should make use of technology to connect with customers (Sashi, 2012). Accordingly, the network is bringing customers and organizations together, making it more convenient for both parties as it is crucial for companies to grab the benefits and concentrate on gaining attention as well as interacting with well-informed to satisfy them.

There should be more effort exerted to engage customers rather giving a satisfactory experience. Companies can develop a rational and emotional connection with the customer, so that a strong attachment with the brand happens. The engaged customers recommend the brand to other customers as well. With the ample amenities and items proliferating, all organizations realized the supremacy of a customer with its diverse impacts. They can decide the kind of goods to purchase and the ones to reject and thus expect effective goods and quality in the offering.

In the current situation, it is discouraging that brands are twisting backwards to oblige the customer and employ customer-centric strategies to gain and hold the customer. Ideally with an emotional message that helps to connect the customer with the particular brand and differentiates the brand promises, and set apart the brand from competitors. So, effective customer engagement strategies must be enforced to connect and interact with the customers. The persuasive nature of the message should efficiently defeat consumer lethargy, lower perceived risk and stir them to switch. For a pleasing relationship with the customer, there must be an enthusiastic connection (Gallup Consulting, 2008). In nutshell, customer engagement strategy is the relationship between organizations and customers derived from using various communication endeavors, incorporated by the organization. Customer engagement is basic tool for the survival of firms in today's technologically connected society

(Trefler, 2014).

These policies will eventually create the effectiveness of promotional campaigns, help to add worth to the brand, and/or goods or management, improve customer satisfaction and assist in customer retention. The nature of customer engagement strategies includes both offline and online mode. In the process of gaining a competitive advantage, the offline strategies has been implemented by Indian companies for last many years. The process includes sponsoring educational and corporate social responsibility programs, hosting an event, and promotional schemes, organizing conferences and seminars on customer engagement, considering customer feedback in product development etc (Gupta, 2012). But it is not sufficient for companies to barely rely only on offline mode of engagement as it is more interesting for customers to spend time on the internet. This reality has led to an evolution in the field of customer engagement.

Thus companies can associate with customers in better ways by switching to online customer engagement strategies. This approach of interaction with a customer or a brand is economical as well encouraging. It has been found that customers expend a good amount of time on internet. Discussion forum or blogs, email marketing, live chats, creating a game, holding online contests, viral marketing, presence on social media etc, are few online customer engagement strategies through which companies can connect with customers. (Cscape, 2010)

The emerging role of social media for showcasing customer care. Millions of customer engagement activities occur every single day on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook as well as numerous customer support forums and online social media communities. Customers are using online platforms to enquire rather than impending directly to an agency via phone or email. To encourage customers to share feedback in convenient ways, so that business will continuously improve and result in customer relationships. In short, it is imperative for the companies to use a mixed approach i.e. virtual as well as live mode of customer engagement strategies.

1.6 Customer Engagement Consequences

As enumerated in the conceptual framework, proposed consequences of CE strategies include customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and value creation and are discussed in the study.

1.6.1 Customer Loyalty: It alludes to repeated buyers provoked by a strong internal disposition over a given timeframe. In developing business rivalries, the loyalty of customers appeared as a main element in gaining a competitive advantage. Loyal customers believe the products and facilities obtained from their suppliers are better than those of the rivals. As frequently as possible, these are clients who see their associations as more than fundamentally transactional. They acknowledge the importance of this relationship which is more than simply the products or services they purchase. (SaferPak, 2004).

It is more expensive and takes four times the cost to attract a new customer rather than retaining the existing one to the extent the cost of the product is concerned. Besides this, it is a loyal customer who likes to stay with the firm for an extended span of time which results in higher purchasing recurrence and additionally larger volumes of buyers over a time frame. In relation to outcomes of customer decisions making processes, loyalty involves repurchase intentions of products or services (Zhou et al., 2013). Marketing scholars identified that customer engagement may improve customer loyalty and purchase decisions (Hollebeek 2009; Patterson et al., 2006). The customer outcomes in the form of perception and attitude get deeply influenced by Customer engagement with a company/brand and therefore result in loyalty (Spratt, Czellar, and Spangenberg, 2009). Customers make decisions about where to invest their time, cash, and exertion consistently (John, 2011).

1.6.2 Customer Retention: "It is the activity undertaken by an organization to reduce customer defections. The customer retention process begins when the company has first contact with a customer and carries on through the full lifetime of client and organization relationship" (Galletto, 2016). An organization's capability to exert a pull on and hold existing customers is not the consequence of its item or services but is also dependent on the way it renders service to its existing customers and the image it develops in the competitive arena. It is like offering the customer more than what they expect; which means exceeding their requirements so that they turn out to be permanent advocates of your brand image. Customer retention is defined as customers' expressed continuation of a business association with the firm. The retention can be improved and built by companies, by employing several retention techniques. These include database marketing, redeemable against a variety of goods or services, discounts, gifts, special promotions, newsletters or magazines, members'

clubs, or customized products in limited editions. It has been characterized that customer retention is linked with employee loyalty since loyal employees develop long-term relationships with customers (Gonetileke, 2011). Successful customer retention includes more than giving the customer what they anticipate. Generating faithful advocates of the brand might mean exceeding customer expectations. The key distinction in a cutthroat environment is frequently the conveyance of exclusive expectations of customer service. Furthermore, in the rising universe of customer success, retention is a noteworthy objective.

1.6.3 Value creation: The value creation component involves the involvement by the consumer in both the stages of product development, that is production stage as well as the consumption stage. The value creation process starts with the element of interaction and leads to customer participation, and the direct outcome is product innovations with ongoing customer engagement; the direct or indirect role of the customer; and the clearness of communication and whether discourse involves listening to the customer, a sporadic conversation or a continuous one (Chathoth et al., 2013).

1.6.4 Repurchase intention: The self-reported likelihood of engaging in further repurchase behaviour represents the Repurchase tendency of the customer (Ha et al. 2010). The utilization and acceptance of technology is a virtue of customer's internal beliefs, attitudes and intentions. As Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) of consumer behaviour, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was founded upon the same hypothesis that customer is the ultimate authority to decide. (Turner et al, 2010). Repurchase intention has a solid impact on the sustainability and growth of the company. It is the effortful engagement technique followed by the companies to develop a meaningful relationship with the customer.

In hospitality-related business, the key to success is the retention of customers for long, to ensure repeat business. The guest room is the core product offered by the hotels which contributes in generating maximum revenue for the hotel, and the sale of this product is a challenging task due to its high perishability. So to ensure maximum business with high occupancy and revenue for a particular day, it is important to have repeat business and customers with repurchase intention.

1.7 Customer Engagement Avenues

1.7.1 Hotel Design: The design of a hotel both exterior as well as interiors, plays a

very important role to attract people. The architectural structures and elements included floors, walls, shatters, pathways, ceilings, floors, signage's and stairways located in public and private areas. According to Grimley and Love (2007) for the designer during hotel construction, the interiors with unique design, style, approach, shade, theme, layout and floorings should comprise the main task.

Design is the progression of creative structure that primarily is composed of interiors, contributed through the architectural and artistic design of the internal areas of the building. It offers the aesthetic perception and constructive circumstances for human life (Blakemore & Rabun, 1997). The design of the establishment has a lot of importance in making hotel spaces comfortable to live in. they make the areas functionally suitable, artistically gratifying and sensitively rewarding. Better approaches add beauty to the objects and make them look charming, eye-relaxing and interesting. Design is meant for all kinds of spaces be it houses, apartments, food lounges, financial institutions, and all other establishments. It will have a direct impact on the growth and revenue generation aspect and helps the hotel to accomplish this in the hospitality Industry. The designs and their proper conceptualization help the hotel to be in great demand in the market. Nobles (1999) stressed upon the approach and design of an accommodation establishment will present a unique distinctiveness to the brand and help the operation's appeal and dynamics to existing customers or prospective customers. Buchanan (1999) explored the concept of design as the human power of envisaging, arranging and developing products that permit human beings to achieve their purposes (both individual and collective). Stipanuk (2006) gives great importance to hotel designs in creating features and uniqueness and helps them do different activities effectively. Consequently, the American Society of Interior Design (ASID), explains the hotel designs as a tool to enhance functionality as well as add happiness to the lives of people inhabiting these hotels.

In this context, hotel design is a vast term which contains both tangible and intangible aspects like "Design factors" which comprise the placement of seating like chairs and sofas, tools, gears, and machinery within the atmosphere. These are known as nonverbal visual elements (Kim and Moon, 2009). The other factors like sound, temperature, lighting, scent and music called "ambient factors" are nonverbal, non-visible background elements: Kim and Moon, 2009. All the above-mentioned factors will appreciably have an ever-lasting impact on the customer and hence persuade their

decision-making capabilities.

1.7.2 Hotel location: Location is considered the most influencing factor for the successful investment in the hotel industry (Kim and Okamoto, 2006) as primary location is always high in demand for hotels (Lockyer, 2005), more returns for each room (Sainaghi, 2011), a huge convenience for the customer (Sim et al. 2006), good act (Chung and Kalnins, 2001), and fewer chances of failure (Baum and Mezias, 1992). It is worth mentioning here that location of an accommodation establishment is a permanent investment, once decided upon a flawed location strategy can never be rectified easily. Thus it is considered an important activity to analyze the location of the hotel beforehand and identify the factors leading to the superior location.

1.7.3 Personalized Service: The relationship between businesses and customers is constantly evolving. In the present era of technology, there are enormous ways and routes through which customers can be reached. The high awareness of products and services by the customers has a strong backing of modern technology. They have sound knowledge of the organization. So, customers crave for personalized services and products in such scenarios. Thus, personalized services include catering for the actual needs and want of the customer. Thus, it builds a strong connection between a customer and the company. Customized solutions bring about any problem that can have a lasting impact on the customer and it leaves them more motivated and satisfied. So, it becomes mandatory for businesses to come forward and be more concerned to offer personalized care and service to their customers/potential customers. All this is possible by treating customers as the unique individuals they are, rather than a passing paycheque, we stress greater loyalty by developing real-time and memorable moments for them, as well as creating the positive brand identity required to attract new business. To create an unforgettable experience for guests, the key is service personalization. A personalized hotel experience goes beyond the kind of amenities we have or discounts in store. Guests understand instinctively that the time of management is valuable. So, they appreciate getting a chance to express any concerns or queries they may have about their service. The companies find a safe place to respond and generate a fleet of loyal customers with an effective competitive edge. With an aim to improve the quality of service to the customers, the companies give more emphasis on bringing customized service to their customers and ensuring repeat business.

1.8 Justification for the Study

Over the past decade, the abundant customer engagement studies had been carried out with online or service foci (e.g. Grewal, Roggeveen, Sisodia, & Nordfält, 2017; Hollebeek & Andreassen, 2018). There has been research, addressing customer engagement in virtual brand communities (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2018), in connection to hedonic (vs. utilitarian) brands (Hollebeek, 2013), fashion (Islam & Rahman, 2017a), and mobile phone service providers (Leckie, Nyadzayo, & Johnson, 2016). In tourism and hospitality, which represents an important service sub-sector, studies had addressed CE with online reviews (Wei, Li, & Huang, 2013), social media interactions (Baumöl, Hollebeek, & Jung, 2016; Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017, 2018), heritage places (Bryce, Ross, Kevin, & Taheri, 2015), and airline brands (So, King, & Sparks, 2012), among others. However, despite available literature, the role of tourist Customer Engagement and its particular conceptual relationships remain under-explored. Addressing this gap, we discover CE's nomological network in the hospitality sector.

Repurchase intention has a solid impact on the sustainability and growth of the company. It is the effortful engagement technique followed by the companies to develop a meaningful relationship with the customer. As Jammu and Kashmir is well known for its leisure and Pilgrimage tourism, the intensity of re-visitation and availing of Hospitality services is not instant but rather unpredictable. So it is very difficult to calculate the loyalty factor which is a favorable attitude towards a brand resulting in the consistent purchase of the brand over time (Assael, 1992). However, the loyalty factor can be kept optional in the study and will be tested only after the final analysis of the data which will depend on the sequence of responses received.

In hospitality-related business, the key to success is the retention of customers for a long period of time to ensure repeat business. As selling of rooms which is basically the main product and source of major revenue generation for the hotel is a challenging task due to its high perishability. So to ensure maximum business with high occupancy and revenue for a particular day, it is important to have repeat business and customers with repurchase intention. The Hospitality sector is the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir economy but customer engagement in this sector is in its nascent stage. So pertinently, we explore the role of certain persistent variables which include geographic factors like the location of the hotel, scenic beauty of the place, Hotel

design and personalized service in driving Customer Engagement and the effect of CE practices on tourist repurchase intention.

While the returns emanating from customer engagement are significantly evident, effective research into this budding concept has been limited. Despite the increasing adoption of customer engagement strategies by organizations to manage customer-brand relationships, the conceptualization and measurement of customer engagement are not well understood. Moreover, previous academic efforts focus on the relationship between customer engagement and relevant customer-related factors, such as service quality, perceived value, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. There is a gap between studies already conducted on customer engagement and the area selected for study by the researcher. To address this gap in the literature, few studies have been conducted in India and outside on customer engagement in banking, retail, the hotel industry etc. But as of now, no such scholarly study with a long-term perspective in the field has been reported especially for the hospitality sector in UT of Jammu and Kashmir (India). An extensive study of the available literature identified the research gap and creates the demand to study the drivers, and consequences of Customer engagement practices in the Hospitality sector. Since the scope of the Hospitality sector is very wide, therefore, the researcher has included Grade A Hotels of Jammu and Kashmir for the purpose of the study. Hence a systematic study is required to analyze customer engagement practices adopted by Hotel operators in Jammu and Kashmir, investigate the impact of these customer engagement practices on customer satisfaction, and customer Re purchase Intention in the Hospitality sector as well as explore and suggest customer engagement strategies that can be employed by marketing professionals in order to engage customers more and enhance the level of customer engagement.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Effective research cannot be achieved without studying critically what already exists in the form of general literature and particular matters. Therefore, it is important to consult authenticated data sources available with highest level of accuracy and relevant to the field. The essential data sources can be in the form of journals, books, magazines, periodicals, articles and results from the previous research studies. It helps to have wide range of references and information available at first hand, so that to draw conclusions and analyze the gap for further study. The current study stresses for a thorough analysis of available research components, to pave the way for future scope and contribution.

2.1 Customer Engagement studies

McMullan (2005): The inter-relationship between attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of customer loyalty development has been explored. Findings of the study demonstrated reliability and validity of the loyalty scale and highlighted the sustaining and mediating effects related with different levels of loyalty development. CE consists of four components i.e. vigor, dedication, absorption, and interaction and was identified as a higher order construct. Results denoted that customer engagement can play significant role in promoting service loyalty in service industries.

Greenberg (2008): Focused on the role of social media for effective customer engagement. The customer engagement can be done through social media by applying certain ways i.e. Wikis, blogs and podcasts. The user generated content is yet another tool which includes reviews, comments, social media tags, bookmarks, grading, ratings, snaps and videos. Author clarified in between the instruments and suggests that substitutes for methodology for client engagement. It was found that every tool has its own reward and problems and thus should be employed sensibly.

Lambert (2008): Stressed that in different situations, engaged customers are loyal customers. The steep graph of confidence level going low and downwards in market place, only the presence of loyal customers provide real credibility. Findings revealed that even reducing cost, the employees deliver superior service in effect of the relationship between engaged customers and employees.

Bowden (2009): Presented customer engagement as a sequential psychological process, experienced by customers to be loyal towards a brand. The enhancement of loyalty both for new and existing customers can be achieved by method of Engagement. An exploration into the process of customer engagement was done with the help of customer's food dining experiences. The outcome of the study indicated the contribution of rational intimidator, that varies across new and recurrence buying division of the customers.

Lay & Bowden (2009): The customer brand relationships segmentation has been done by applying a conceptual framework based on profiling of customers either they are new or repeat purchase customers of a specific service brand. Authors further propounded that although the significant step in loyalty formation is customer satisfaction, but it becomes less important as customer grows on loyalty ladder through different mechanisms. The results further suggested that there is positive role of calculative commitment, effective commitment, trust and involvement in customer engagement process.

Kumar et al. (2010): Proposed that the value of customers cannot be assessed only on the basis of their transactions with a company. The task is significantly important in order to avoid undervaluation and overvaluation of customers. Findings of study revealed four different behaviours that include customer referral behaviour, customer purchasing behavior, customer influencer behavior and customer knowledge behavior. The concept of customer engagement behaviors was conferred as customers' behavioral manifestation towards a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.

Bijmolt et al. (2010): Outlines the segregation of customer engagement in the marketing literature into two divisions, one is uni-dimensional conceptualization, which is predominantly focusing on only behavioral aspect of customer engagement.

Singh et al. (2010):Examined the prospects of customer engagement in Indian market and developed the model of customer engagement, as well as discussed engagement of customers through effective implementation and practice of web 2.0. It was found that online customer engagement in India is still at introductory stage, but its impact can be noticed soon due to massive implementation of this strategy by companies.

Higgins and Scholer.(2009): Explained that sustained attention in terms of getting

involvement, being part of a product by engrossing, having a keen interest in the product by getting absorbed and finally getting fully occupied is known as customer engagement, including the consequences of a particular attraction or repulsion force.

Kurian (2011): assessed the role of mobile number portability in engaging customers in telecom sector. Mobile number portability creates volatility in the telecom market, but it is an expansion of already existing churn propensities. It was found that mobile number portability makes an exceptionally competitive business sector, where service providers need to go all out to hold their clients and also attain new customers by offering them, what they truly need.

Hollebeek (2011): presented the idea of client brand engagement and characterized it as a state of mind portrayed by an individual client's motivational, image-related and context-dependent levels of intellectual, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions. The center of attraction is the interaction between a customer and the brand. He further elaborated customer brand engagement and its main elements.

Gupta (2012): the study inspects the CE process, CE concept, and its consequences in driving successful business. It has been stated that "CE denotes engagement of customers with one another, with a company or a brand". It was explored that giving customers a voice, motivating them to participate, interact and develop intimacy in different ways help in engaging customers.

So (2013): In promoting brand loyalty, the significance of customer engagement has been studied. The author enumerating in a sequential mixed method approach has developed both the phases i.e. quantitative and qualitative. The CE scale was used to test the conceptual model in first approach. The interview of 16 highly engaged customers have been conducted as per the second approach. It was found that brand loyalty is positively affected by customer engagement.

Wirtz et al. (2013): The author developed a conceptual framework based on four key components and three antecedents which includes i.e. brand introduction, web use, financing and administration as former, and brand related social and utilitarian as later. The role of brand communities has been ascertained in view of customer engagement. There was more emphasis on building online brand communities for companies to engage customers.

Verint Systems Inc. (2014): explained how customer engagement optimization solutions from a company can help them by enhancing customer interactions, optimizing their workforces and enhancing quality of processes. Organizations can profitably expanded client loyalty, upgraded execution and revenue, lessened risk and working expense. Client engagement projects can assume an imperative part in encouraging interactions that can help constructing that loyalty. It was explored that requirements for optimizing customer engagement are consistency, continuity and customization.

Hollebeek et al. (2014): developed and validated customer brand engagement scale in social media settings and proposed that enthusiasm, attention, absorption, interaction and identification are the five important dimensions of customer engagement.

Suja & Muthiah (2014): examined marketing from different perspectives of customer's for instance client's inclusion, customer cooperation and client's engagement in order to develop a theoretical framework. This expands on to develop three dimensions, to provide a conceptual approach of customer engagement. Authors identified five customer engagement sub-process i.e. learning, sharing, advocating, socialization and co-creating. The number of results which may emerge as an after effect of the clients engagement procedure are client's experience, enthusiastic holding, tactile and fulfillment. It was explored that customer involvement and participation leads to customer engagement.

Garcia et al. (2014): an inclusive metric for understanding customer engagement in Facebook has been proposed. The appraisal of engagement accomplished as a consequence of activities on Facebook permit advertiser to assess the productivity of the activity and through its longitudinal assessment, the variance as indicated by various posting methodologies utilized. Results revealed that the proposed measure of engagement was done on the basis of the premise of post, in such way that the sort of post (topical, content-related, composition, with photos, content, recordings and so forth) that creates a more prominent level of engagement, demonstrating the methodology that should be taken by firms in their postings on social networking Facebook.

Fierro et al. (2014): analyzed the importance of frontline employees in customer engagement. Authors stated that employees play a significant role of spokesman for

the company in customer-company relations and in enhancing level of engagement and satisfaction. Employees who are motivated and skilled and can produce earnings for the company by having constructive impact on non-transactional behavior of customers. It was found that key aspects like training and motivation impact employee performance and are significant in enhancing level of customer engagement and success of company.

Hollebeek et al. (2014): developed a client brand engagement scale in online media networking settings. Authors recognized three customer brand engagement dimensions including cognitive handling, fondness and actuation. A reliable 10 item customer brand engagement scale was developed by using Confirmatory factor analysis. Results suggested that the key customer brand engagement consequences comprise consumer self-brand connection and brand usage intent customer and brand involvement acts as a customer brand engagement antecedent.

Vivek et al. (2014): the empirical understanding of customer engagement concept has been propounded in the sense that engaged individuals comprises both existing as well as potential customers. A three dimensional view has been conceptualized with respect to customer engagement, which includes mindful attention, stimulated participation and societal connection. The concluded scale of 10 items was developed and it was validated through different approaches. The findings suggested that validated multidimensional customer engagement scale has immense help for managers. It will be simply identified by managers that if there exists any strengths and weaknesses pertaining to engagement strategies.

So et al. (2014): the customer engagement has been viewed as the important factor in structuring loyalty with respect to tourism brands. The customer engagement relationship has been keenly assessed with antecedents of customer loyalty in assistance with structural equation modelling.

Salgaonkar & Salgaonka (2014): With regards to electronic goods segment, the author examined the customer engagement antecedents in social media and their impact on customer loyalty. Complete 30 variables pertaining to develop client engagement and customer unwaveringness in online media networking, were distinguished. The services of surveymonkey.com have been used for circulation of developed questionnaire. It has been ascertained that client engagement has a strong

association with customer unwaveringness with the help of regression analysis.

Chan et al. (2014): in the context of online brand communities, the author explored the concept of customer engagement. A research model was developed to analyze the impact of user engagement on loyalty. The sample size of 276 brand community members has been reached through an online survey. It has been suggested that customer engagement mediates associations between customer loyalty and community characteristics.

Dessart et al. (2015): in the context of online brand communities, the concept and dimensions of customer engagement has been presented. The semi structured interviews of twenty one online international brand community members has been conducted for data collection. They cover enormous brand segments and social media platforms. The three key engagement dimensions include cognition; affect and behavior. Findings of study suggested that online communities and social media platforms are engaging more customers.

Brodie, Ilic, Juric, &Hollebeek, (2013): Customer engagement is getting acknowledged by both practitioners as well as academicians due to its emergence as an exceptional construct in recent times. But, due to limited studies and lack of empirical investigation on CE, a more comprehensive study has to be adopted.

So et al. (2014): Hospitality sector is more inclined towards customer interactions. The hotel as well as airline customers are affected significantly on behavioral intention of loyalty due to Customer engagement.

Bryce et al. 2015: This study establishes relationships among the concepts of culturally specific motivation, perception of authenticity, engagement and attendant behavioral consequences based on domestic visitors' experiences at Japanese heritage sites.

C Leckie et al. 2016:The results reveal that consumer involvement, consumer participation and self-expressive brand have differing effects on the CBE dimensions (cognitive processing, affection and activation) and brand loyalty. Specifically, involvement, participation and self-expressive brand are all found to positively impact cognitive processing. Also, involvement and self-expressive brand positively influence affection. While, a positive relationship is established between involvement and activation, self-expressive brand emerges as a negative driver of activation.

Sharma and Rather (2017): The author suggests that for future studies, we should strictly consider the socio-demographic factors so that different customer engagement levels can be determined, especially in hospitality industry. Keeping in mind the three basic connections, which include emotional, psychological and behavioral (multidimensional) in the service contexts. The more dedicated customers with a strong relationship can be made possible by developing engagement strategies to survive and create competitive advantage for the hotel.

Islam and Rahman .2017: This study investigates whether and how the unique characteristics (information quality, system quality, virtual interactivity, and rewards) of online brand communities affect customer engagement. The consequent effect of customer engagement on brand loyalty is also examined. This study frames and empirically validates a model for engaging customers with online brand communities on Facebook, considering the moderating role of gender.

Grewal et al. 2017.This article proposes that firms that use consciousness as a foundational philosophy can create a more engaging and meaningful customer experience. A retailer or service provider with foundations in consciousness has a higher purpose and values that get espoused and fulfilled throughout the organization, working in a way to optimize benefits to its multiple stakeholders.

Hollebeek and Andreassen 2018: The authors explore the theoretical foundations of customer engagement and service innovation, and integrate these in their S-D logic-informed “hamburger” model of service innovation. In the model, they acknowledge the key role of organizational resources in enabling service innovation, which will interact with specific service innovation actors (e.g. customers, employees) to create successful service innovations. The model next proposes service innovation development and implementation, from which focal service innovation actors will seek, and derive, particular types of value (e.g. profit for the actor of the firm), as shown at the top of the model. They conclude by offering a set of future research directions that arise from the model.

Ricardo et al (2019): It is important for the companies to listen to the suggestions and feedback from their customers in order to have an advantage in the market and live up the competition. The findings also suggest that engagement cognitive

processing component and hedonic experience have high impact on review customer endeavor.

Xu and Wang (2020): the author has exercised stimulus-organism response (S-O-R) framework, to check the motivation boasting, innovative behaviors and enhancement of employees with regards to the customer interactions, positive impact in connection with the hotel industry. The involvement of customers with the brand or company happens with high level of customer engagement, leading to the customer interactive experience. It has also been found that maximum customer interactive experience had a motivating effect and influences employees, enhance their innovative behavior both directly and indirectly through inherent and extrinsic motivations.

2.2 Hotel Design studies

Kirk I et al. (1999): The study confirmed the significance of physical environment in relation in creating and establishing affective response of customers (i.e. emotional experiences) and their tendency to repatronage and recommendation to others for leisure services. This study had followed SERVQUAL approach from a theoretical perspective, to generate affective responses critical to determine the behavioral intentions, in connection to components of service-quality. purposely, the study reiterate that in the case of leisure services, the overall perceived service quality and physical environment together influence the excitement felt by customers, having a strong impact on behavioral intentions, leading to repatronage intent and favorable recommendations.

Cary C. Countryman (2006): The physical environment of hotel lobby is comprised of certain atmospheric elements which include color, lighting, layout, style, and furnishings, were examined from a hospitality and lodging perspective. It has been derived from the study that color, lighting, and style are holding significant relation with overall feeling of a hotel lobby. Color proved to be the most considerable of these three atmospheric elements.

Heidi et al. (2009): The improvement of establishment atmosphere can have over arching benefits. However, there is substantial risk involved as positive effects are associated with uncertainty. Such risks were only recognized by hospitality managers, not by design experts. Thus atmosphere and product/ service are two different offerings by any hotel. Efforts should be formulated to get a balance in between the

two so that aesthetic elements and operational requirements should not overkill the other.

Baek and ok (2017): the consumer perception with regards to lodging design patterns has been identified and relationship understanding among consumer responses, hotel product/service and repurchase intention has been ascertained, by incorporating consumer emotional arousal and quality expectations in a theoretical model. The booking intention is strongly impacted by aesthetics and symbolism in hotel design as suggested by the findings of the study through emotional arousal and quality expectation.

Alfakhri et al. (2017): the servicescape concept with broad dimensionality has been holistically evolved from hotelscape. The development had reflected the contribution extended by aesthetics and design in affecting consumer behavior while experiencing a service. The cosmopolitan type customers were interviewed. Thus, by deploying an interpretive phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of art and design in a hotelscape. The conclusion suggested that aesthetics and design can facilitate marketing aspirations in hedonistic consumer groups. Furthermore, it affects customer experience and subsequently impacts spending, WOM, repatronage and loyalty.

Seonjeong (Ally) Lee (2020): in the context of hotel industry, by using Stimulus-Organism-Response model, the study investigated effects of positive design factors on customers' responses derived from the positive design framework. It was found that customers get positively convinced by corporate social responsibility to atmosphere, escapism, and compatibility' well-being; whereas, only escapism and compatibility influenced self-brand connection. Both well-being and self-brand connection led to customers' brand loyalty.

2.3 Hotel location studies

Arbel and Abraham (1977) : The suggestions enumerated from the findings of the study concludes. The rates offered by medium class hotels located in urban periphery can be somewhat same charged by city center hotels with a substantial market potential. There is low rate sensitivity to distance. So a small rate deduction by a comparatively distant location hotel makes selection possible. Thus a tourist prefers to lodge a hotel more often that is in the vicinity of tourist attractions and commercial avenues.

Shoval et al. (2011): The current study has contributed tremendously towards tourism research. It has been implied that consumption patterns at a destination are deeply influenced by hotel location; in practicality it has implications for both destination marketing as well as product development. The tourism m has been recognized as a spatial selective, which is greatly impacted and driven by location of the hotel. the results also suggested that tourism precincts can have deep influence to guests from certain hotels and mostly extraneous to guests staying in other hotels, depending on ease of access and distance.

Yang et al (2012): the important factors responsible to the hotel location choice by an ordered logit model, including both hotel and location attributes were investigated in this study. The outcome stressed that, star rating, years after opening, service diversification, ownership, agglomeration effect, public service infrastructure, road accessibility, subway accessibility, and accessibility to tourism sites are important determinants while choosing a location for the hotel.

Dionysis Latinopoulos (2020): The hotel Location is a paramount factor for hoteliers and urban planners in the urban space alike. The operational method has been applied, to analyze the tourist demand in connection to hotel location, in the urban area of Thessaloniki, Greece. The combination of spatial analysis and guests' satisfaction with hotel location has been derived. It has been found that hotel located in urban spaces impact drastically to the satisfaction level of tourists due to easy accessibility to service avenues around.

Leon et al. (2021): the research has revealed that customer satisfaction and average room rate is directly impacted by hotel location, with its easy access to major tourist spots around and specifically in context to urban–territories, with its urban and coastal landscapes. The different behaviours of urban–territories which include both pricing of the hotel and customer satisfaction, with respect to hotel location have been proved by the study. The results also indicated that urban landscapes have comparatively higher customer satisfaction and room rates than coastal landscapes. However, there are significant differences in terms of customer satisfaction as reported by coastal hotels with no major distinction in room charges depending on their location.

2.4 Service related studies

Kumar et al. (2017): The various identified factors that moderate the service experience, and categorized as offering-related, value-related, enabler-related, and market-related. A framework has been formulated by compiling views through interviews and revising relevant literature, to explore the effectiveness of interaction, orientation, and Omni channel model and its use to create positive service experience. The study illustrates that service experience on satisfaction and emotional attachment is moderately influenced by perceived variation in service experience, which ultimately impacts customer engagement (CE). Further, propositions have been derived from the research factors to create positive service experience. It was also implored that the focus of MNC's should be shifted towards these moderators to ensure consistency in positive service experience, in an effort to enhance CE.

Bitner et al. (2017) :Service encounters have a role in all industries, including traditionally not defined as service industries. The study results suggest the effective use of technology with regards to the changing nature of service encounters and its improvement. The immediate outcomes of technology and its effectiveness in (1) customize service offerings, (2) recover from service failure, and (3) spontaneously delight customers. The drastic technological intervention is examined as an enabler of both employees and customers in efforts to achieve these three goals. It has also been alerted that improper handling of technology can lead to negative impacts as it is embraced by all customers.

Grewal (2018): The importance of creating an engaged customer base is recognized by firms and academics, though an in-depth understanding. The use of consciousness as a primary tool by companies can help to develop more engaging customer experience. The higher rationale and values of a firm that is strongly rooted in consciousness gets advocated and fulfilled throughout the organization, with an aim to maximize the profits to its share (investors, employees, customers, suppliers, the environment, the community). Such strong and motivated foundations leads to achieve effective engagement with customers, convey exceptional customer experiences, generate emotional associations with customers.

John A. Czepiel (2020):The important aspect of the client's experience, is being considered as interaction with hotel staff, the consideration for measuring Customer

satisfaction in hotels has been linked to these aspects of the client’s experience. One of the important service personnel in every hotel is the receptionist. Since this person is having maximum customer interaction, both at the time of arrival and handling queries and complaints. The results suggest that customers turn up with specific expectations in connection to suitable receptionist behaviour and (b) there is always a general preference for deference politeness strategies and much focus is exerted transactional part of the interaction.

2.5 Genesis of the Research Problem

The various studies discussed above provide various dimensions about customer engagement, customer loyalty, customer retention and customer engagement strategies adopted by companies in India and outside India. Few studies related to growth and structure of Indian hospitality sector has also been discussed above. However, few prominent studies are further analyzed and categorized on the basis of their indexing, year of publication, findings and conclusions and presented in tabular form.

Table 2.2: Customer engagement findings in indexing journal

Details of the journal/ book	Year	Indexing of journal	Main finding or conclusion relevant to proposed research work	Remarks
Asia Pacific Journal Of Management , “(Determinants of relationship quality and loyalty in personalized services)”	2000	John Wiley& Sons (Asia) Ltd	The study concludes that the most significant determinant of customer trust and satisfaction in personalized service encounters is the physical environment and the customer environment influences only satisfaction but not trust. The friendliness and knowledge of Service contact personnel’s towards customers strongly influence relationship quality.	It has been suggested that all three components like physical environment, friendliness and expertise of service personal strongly influence trust and satisfaction.
European Journal of Marketing	Feb 2002	(Emerald Publishing Limited)	Factors described through a model to which customer repurchase intention is influencing.	The study explains well the impact of seven factors on customer repurchase

				intention.
“(International Journal of Hospitality) Towards an understanding of total service quality in hotels”	2007	Elsevier Publishing Company	The results suggested the confined clustering in connection with service quality in hotels.	Physical experience, service experience and quality food and beverage are the essentials to form convenient groupings and should be considered as first order set of relationships.
Journal of Service Research (Customer Engagement as a New Perspective in Customer Management)	Aug 2010	(Sage publications)	The customer Management has experienced a new development in the form of customer engagement. The significance of which lies in the consideration of Customer engagement as a behavioral manifestation towards the product or company that stretches beyond transactions.	The finding has suggested a new behavioral dimension of customer engagement.
(Journal of service) Undervalued or Overvalued Customers	2010	(Sage publications)	The study has revealed important facts in order to create value to the firm, which doesn't depend only on purchase behavior of customer but other ways has been suggested for generating value to the firm .the above important dimensions with broad scope and thinking describes the customer's CEV.. the future scope of the study will be the propositions on the relationships between the four components of CEV	The generation of value for the firm can be created through many ways like CLV, CRV, CIV and CKV not merely depending upon purchase behavior of customers.
(Journal of service) Customerengagement	2010	(Sage publication s)	The concept of customer engagement behaviours	The study focuses on managing

behavior: theoretical foundations and research directions			(CEB), beyond purchase, stemming from motivating forces, is developed and discussed by the author. effects of CEBs on the customer, enterprise, and society. According to the authors, businesses can manage CEBs by adopting a more integrated and thorough strategy that takes into account their progression and long-term effects.	CEBs both customer centric, firm centric as well as societal by following integrative and comprehensive approaches.
“Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, (Customer Engagement: Exploring Customer Relationships Beyond Purchase)”	2012	(Springer)	The wide range of participation and involvement by existing as well as potential customers has been proposed by a novel CE model, which acts as its antecedents. The value, affective commitment, marketing, loyalty, trust, word of mouth and brand community involvement has been considered as its potential outcomes.	The study model clearly mentions the customer engagement antecedents and potential consequences as well.
(Management decision) Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media	2012	Emerald Group Publishing Limited	There is a vibrant role of internet in the emergence of concept of customer engagement with respect to the opportunities and modes provided by it, particularly the accommodative features of Web 2.0 technologies and applications, which have the potential to change how sellers and customers interact. Its significance has mostly been acknowledged by professionals hoping to use social media to create long-lasting relationships with deep emotional connections. By creating a conceptual framework	The internet has resulted in building relationships in between sellers and customers and also helps in developing different strategies.

			for customer interaction, it serves as the foundation for creating customer engagement strategies that can be implemented using both online and offline tools and technology.	
“(Management Research Review) Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community”.	2012	Emerald Group Publishing Limited	The customer behavioral engagement (CEB), suggests such as liking content with regards to the brand, leaving comments for the product, and reading messages, positively influences all relationship benefits. TEB.	It has been suggested that a strong relationship is possible between firm and customer if a strict follow-up is made on social media activities between companies and customer.
“(Journal of Service Management) How to transform consumers into fans of your brand”.	2012	Emerald Group Publishing Limited	The function of fan pages has been examined as a new online service for the relationship between customers and brands, found that fan-page engagement was a significant driver for the relationship between consumers and brands, and identified a number of important factors for effective brand fan pages. Additionally, our empirical findings show that one of the most significant factors drawing visitors to fan sites is the fan page’s own quality material, both hedonic and functional. Brand fan sites must provide their followers with engaging, amusing, and creative material.	This new tool of attracting has featured the concept the concept. featured the concept. and binding relationships between customer and the brand through Fan pages
(International Journal of Hospitality Management, Customer engagement	2013	Elsevier Publishing Company	According to this study, potential customers perceive hotel management replies as	In order to develop a strong customer-firm relationship, it is mandatory for

behaviors and hotel responses			showing respect for their patrons or as an integral element of customer relationship management programmes at the hotels. Customers believe that three hotel management responses towards negative CEBs include customer relationship management, online reputation management, and online service recovery management.	the management to respond to the queries of the customer in any mode.
Empirical research articles	2014	(Sage Publications)	The investigation suggested the relationship between customer engagement with traditional antecedents of brand loyalty by using SEM.	
(Journal of service research) The Role of Customer Engagement, Behavior in Value Co-Creation: A Service System Perspective	2014	(Sage Publications)	The study determined the variables that influence CEB. The study of a physical service system adds to and supports past studies on the antecedents of CE that drew on a variety of online communities centered on brands and product innovation. We discovered that the major drivers of CEB are the customer's sense of ownership over the focal firm's product and empowerment within the service system, which are backed up by the supply of access and the readiness of the focal firm to hand over some control to the community.	The study lists out the various antecedents of CE in virtual communities and centered focus on brand and product innovation.
"Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism. (The Role of Physical Environment, Price	Dec 2014	(Routledge Taylor and Francis group)	The significant indicator of consumption emotions and perceptions has been revealed from the findings of this study as	It has been evident that physical environment significantly affects the price

Perceptions, and Consumption Emotions in Developing Customer Satisfaction in Chinese Resort Hotels”.			the physical environment, which in turn affect customer Satisfaction. Moreover it has been ascertained that the relationship between physical environment and customer satisfaction is highly mediated by consumption emotions and price perceptions.	perception and consumption emotions, which results in customer satisfaction.
(Computers in Human) “Benefitting from virtual customer environments: An empirical study Of customer engagement”.	2015	Elsevier Publishing Company	VCE on CE intention	A virtual customer environment has a significant impact and supports the VCE benefits. i.e. hedonic benefits, social integrative benefits,
(Journal of Services) “Consequences of customer engagement and customer self-brand connection.”	2016	Emerald Group Publishing Limited.	The connection between the consumer’s self-brand, customer advocacy and financial performance and customer engagement has been looked upon. The study concentrated on a complex organisation that has a consistent strategy yet serves the public in several locations (bank branches). The study significantly and creatively adds to the body of literature. In order to highlight a brand’s primarily social and symbolic nature, the concept of self-brand involvement is again investigated to the extent that consumers have assimilated it to their self-image. Second, by highlighting two crucial factors, customer involvement and self-brand connection, the study expands research	The concept of customer engagement has an important role in developing self-brand connections both emotionally and behaviorally.

			on the emotional ties between clients and businesses.	
“Information and communication technologies in tourism Customer Experiences with Hotel Smartphone: A Case Study of Hong Kong Hotels.”	2016	Springer	In the competitive world, it is pressed upon hotels to remain distinctive and increase value to their products and services. The study results shows that providing complimentary “handy smart phones”.	The complementary offerings by hotels to their customers have a significant impact on market satisfaction.
South Asian journal of tourism and heritage. (Customer Engagement in strengthening customer Loyalty in Hospitality Sector	July 2016	Annual International referred Research journal	The significant and positive impact has been ascertained as per the findings in between customer engagement and customer loyalty, affective commitment.	The study reveals that customer engagement impacts two behavioral factors i.e. loyalty and affective commitment.
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. (Exploring the service profit chain in a Thai bank)	Sep 2016	(Emerald Publishing Group Limited)	The essential service features for customers in their happiness and engagement has been found to be the convenience, courtesy, competency, and internal branding There is a close relation in between them and customer engagement and satisfaction. Further research revealed a connection between customer involvement and satisfaction and both customer acquisition and retention.	The customer engagement has deep relationship with internal branding and staff attributes which leads to customer retention.
“(International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences) The impact of service quality customer engagement and selected marketing constructs on airline passenger loyalty.”	2016	(Emerald Publishing Group Limited)	The empirical findings show that key predictors of consumer loyalty include service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, brand image, and customer engagement. and shows the important predictors of consumer loyalty. The impact of customer engagement on customer	The customer engagement has overarching effect on customer loyalty and other higher order constructs like service quality, Perceived value, customer satisfaction, and brand image are

			loyalty and its measurement is the most significant and influential finding in the study. The ground-breaking findings demonstrate that, when compared to the other variables, customer interaction has the greatest impact on customer loyalty.	predictors of customer loyalty.
“International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences. (customer engagement and selected marketing constructs on airline passenger loyalty)”	October 2016	(Emerald Publishing Group Limited)	The result suggests that Customer satisfaction has the largest total effect on customer engagement. The customer engagement proved to be most influential impacting passenger loyalty, followed by customer satisfaction..	The study indicates that customer satisfaction affects customer engagement which in turn leads to customer loyalty.
“(Journal of the Academy of marketing science. Customer engagement in service”	2017	Springer	The four sets of moderators identified factors (offering-related, market-related, enabler-related, and value-related) that impact a good customer experience. It was therefore stated that by assuring customer happiness and forging strong relationships with the companies, good service experiences have a favorable impact on CE in the end. We also find that perceived diversity in service experience acts as a moderator, affecting satisfaction and emotional attachment. We develop viable study hypotheses on the numerous links between components, moderating variables, and the framework in order to be associated to CES, etc.	The positive service experience impacts Customer engagement by ensuring customer satisfaction and emotional attachment.
“(Journal of the	2017	Springer	The stressing outcome of	A relationship

Academy of Marketing Science) Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences”			the study adds to the theory of engagement. The result narrated that a satisfying and emotionally bonded relationship based on trust and commitment forms the baseline for the engagement of customers with the company.	based on trust and commitment is indication of engaged customer.
“(Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services) Customer engagement and online reviews	2017	Elsevier Publishing Company	The multi-dimensional operational structure of customer engagement as per existing literature “(Brodie et al., 2011a, b; Calder et al., 2009; Vivek et al., 2012) has been validated. The study confessed the as an antecedent, and suggested that it is necessary for customers to download or visit a mobile shopping site, stay there for a while, and make a purchase. The survey had also suggested that customer engagement is probably going to have a big impact on how likely consumers are to leave online reviews, which are quickly becoming a crucial source of information for prospective customers.	Trust has significance impact in attracting and attaching a customer with the firm and customer engagement is much needed for customers to write online reviews as source of information.
(Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management) “Customer engagement behavior in hospitality: Customer-based antecedents.”	2017	Routledge Taylor & Francis	First, the conceptual model of Doorn et al. (2010) for CEBs has been provided with approval for partial validation.	The important antecedents of CRB has been identified and thus indicating their importance in final decision making process.
“(Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services) Customer Engagement and Online Reviews.”	2018	Elsevier Publishing Company	The consistency of available literature in relation with online reviews and establishing importance of satisfaction	It becomes evident from the study that a customer with trust will surely make a next

			and trust has been laid down in the study. This study also considered trust as an antecedent and made the argument that it is necessary for customers to have trust in order to download or visit a mobile shopping site, spend time there, and then make a purchase.	purchase with the firm.
“Journal of Hospitality Application and Research (Customer Engagement in Increasing affective commitment within Hospitality Sector).”	Jan 2018	Emerald publications Group limited	The findings suggest that affective commitment have positive impact on customer engagement in the hospitality sector.	Effective commitment is deeply impacted by customer engagement.
Journal of Services (Consequences of customer engagement and customer self-brand connection).	2018	(Emerald Publishing Group Limited)	In the context of self-congruity theory, the degree to which consumers have assimilated a brand into their self-image has been further investigated as a brand link, stressing both its primarily social and symbolic nature. Second, by highlighting two crucial factors, customer involvement and self-brand connection, the study expands research on the emotional ties between clients and businesses. Customer engagement has been conceptualized as a proactive, beneficial, and touching psychological state that creates from a customer’s interactions with a brand during various consumer and purchasing experiences (Sprott et al., 2009; Brodie et al., 2011).	Self-brand connection exploration has been done highlighting its social and symbolic nature and customer engagement and self-brand connection emotional bond has also been identified.
“Journal of Retailing	Islam	Elsevier	The	The study suggests

andConsumerServices (Customer engagement in the service context: An empirical investigation of the construct, its antecedents and consequences).”	et.al. (2019)	Publishing Company	engagement has a favorable impact on brand experience and repatronage intent, which in turn have a positive effect on service quality.	that service quality leads to brand experience and in turn affects repatronage intent.
“(Journal ofRetailing andConsumerServices) The influence ofidentity-driven customerengagement onpurchase intention.”	2019	Elsevier Publishing Company	Behavioral engagement is heavily impacted by Customer attitudinal engagement as indicated in the study. This finding also revealed that carrying positive attitude with respect to engagement with the brand community results in ultimate behavioral participation which leads to the active interactions with community members.	Behavioral participation can be harvested by showcasing positive attitude towards engaging with the brand community.
“(Asia PacificJournal ofMarketing andLogistics) Examining the mediating role of social interactivity between customer engagement and brand loyalty.”	2019	(Emerald Publishing Group Limited)	The study’s conclusions showed that brand loyalty and social interaction are significantly influenced by customer involvement behaviour. The findings have inspired professionals to design Facebook pages with entertaining and engaging features and interactive information quality in an effort to increase user engagement on the social media network.	There should be more informative And entertaining featured social media pages to impact customer engagement behavior.
“Marketing Intelligence & Planning (What s-commerce, implies? Repurchase intention and its antecedents.”	2019	(Emerald Publishing Group Limited)	S-commerce cues have a positive effect on customer engagement.	The customer engagement has a mediating role in attracting customer’s especially young generation towards firm through social commerce cues.
“(Journal of the	2020	Springer	Findings suggest that	Positive emotions

Academy) Customer engagement in social media: a framework and meta-analysis.”			conation effects performance.	positively Firm-	strengthen customer engagement through positive-firm performance.
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After going through the results of above mentioned studies conducted by varied groups of researchers and academicians, it has been evident that customer engagement has got enough dimensionalities and constructs depending upon the psychological, emotional and behavioural aspects. Few of the studies discussed mostly about the customer engagement strategies adopted by companies, some resulted in analyzing the impact of psychological dimensions on the customer loyalty and retention. Some more studies assess the effectiveness of customer engagement on value co-creation and brand trust. The behavioural and emotional dimension research has also been conducted and results were enormously appreciating the role of customer engagement. The above studies have been conducted in different sectors of banking, IT, telecom and hospitality across India and at global level, but there are very scarce studies conducted in Jammu and Kashmir Hotel sector enumerating role/ consequences of customer engagement practices.

2.6 Research Gap

Over the past decade, the abundant customer engagement studies had been carried out with online or service foci (e.g. Grewal, Roggeveen, Sisodia, & Nordfält, 2017; Hollebeek & Andreassen, 2018). there has been research, addressing customer engagement in virtual brand communities (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2018), in connection to hedonic (vs. utilitarian) brands (Hollebeek, 2013), fashion (Islam & Rahman, 2017a), and mobile phone service providers (Leckie, Nyadzayo, & Johnson, 2016), In tourism and hospitality, which represents an important service sub-sector, studies had addressed CE with online reviews (Wei, Li, & Huang, 2013), social media interactions (Baumöl, Hollebeek, & Jung, 2016; Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017, 2018), heritage places (Bryce, Ross, Kevin, & Taheri, 2015), and airline brands (So, King, & Sparks, 2012) etc. Addressing this gap, the CE’s nomological network in the tourism and hospitality sector has been explored. Specifically, the exploration of the different customer engagement practices, strategies with respect to design,

location and personalized services offered by the hotels, in the highly tourist influx area of India i.e. Jammu and Kashmir. The place is well known for its natural scenic beauties, mountains, rivers, meadows, climate, crafts, cultures, food delicacies, traditions, religious architecture, heritage places and hospitality traditions. These factors have an influence on the customer engagement. Secondly, the place is famous for a range of tourism purposes, including recreation, leisure, adventure, and pilgrimage, thereby offering broad insights into customer motivations and behaviors. But as per current literature available, no thorough study has been conducted in connection to above factors, in order to identify the different customer engagement practices associated with them.

The important and relevant dimensions which are the basic characteristics of hotel sector, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir include unique hotel designs (both facade and interiors), hotel location and personalized services offered by the hotel personnel's. These factors are unexplored in terms of their relationship and impact on customer repurchase intention. The literature is obvious about the relationship between customer engagement and brand trust (so et al, 2014), brand commitment (rather et al., 2016), brand loyalty (Brodie et al., 2011), customer engagement behaviors (Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg, 2009), co-creation and value creation (Alexander et al,2015),service consciousness and CE (Grewal, 2018), consumption patterns of customers and hotel location (Showel et al. 2011), hotel location and guest satisfaction (yang et al. 2012), service experience and customer satisfaction (kumar et al. 2017), aesthetics, design and customer loyalty and word of mouth etc. but there is no evident study which relates the impact of customer engagement practices with regards to hotel design, hotel location and personalized service on the repurchase intentions of services particularly in the hotel sector of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

So as per the above mentioned statements there is a good amount of data available to describe the role and impact of customer engagement on customer loyalty, customer retention and value creation. A few latest studies explain the role of CE on repurchase intention in Insurance and IT sector in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. But there has been no such study conducted in India especially in UT of Jammu and Kashmir. So to meet this dearth of literature with regards to the Customer Engagement practices and repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir, Hotel sector. The current

study aims to realize the relationship and impact of Customer Engagement practices on the repurchase intentions of services.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction to Research

Research methodology may be defined as a systematic method dealing with the identification of the problem, collection of information or data, analysis of data, and arriving at a certain conclusion either as the solution of the problem concerned or a certain generalization for some theoretical formulation. Since there are numerous aspects of research methodology, the decision has to be taken from a range of alternatives. To choose an appropriate method, there is a need for comparison between the options and a deep analysis of objectives has to be made. In this chapter, the research objectives and procedures which comprise the overall research design, sampling technique, data assembling and analysis methods as well as statistical methods employed for data interpretation have been adopted through the detailed research methodology approach. The chapter will further provide knowledge and open up the assumptions of the study and research methodology used.

3.2 Research Questions

To bridge the current research gap, investigate the customer engagement practices and their impact on the repurchase intention of services. The work endeavor to explore answers to the following research questions and a way to meet them:

Q1. What are the different existing customer engagement practices adopted by hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir, and how the perception of customers varies with regard to customer engagement practices?

Q2. How do customer engagement practices impact the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir?

3.3 Statement of the Problem

The issue of customer engagement becomes a frontier problem of marketing and marketers. The emotional attachment that a customer experiences during repeated and ongoing interactions is referred to as Customer participation by connecting with the customer in a way that drives purchase decisions and loyalty (Gupta, 2012). Customer

engagement is the need of the hour while conversing with customers, partners, and employees. The sound health of a company depends on the extent to which it creates meaningful and long-term interactions with its customers. Engaged customers are a company's best resources. It is imperative for the companies to identify and implement whole set of market strategies rather than merely working on producing quality products and cost reduction. On the other hand, Customer engagement strategies are very important in ensuring long-term competitive advantage in terms of creating favorable customer relationships, retaining customers, and promoting customer loyalty. Without engaging customers, it is difficult to build a successful company or organization.

In the era of globalization, it has become necessary for marketing professionals to understand the dynamics and importance of customer engagement strategies and practices. There is a research gap between studies already conducted on customer engagement and the area selected for study by the researcher. Few studies have been conducted in India and outside on customer engagement in banking, the telecom sector, the tourism industry, etc. But as of now, very less scholarly studies have been reported especially for the hospitality sector of Jammu & Kashmir, India. Moreover, empirical research into the concept of customer engagement has been limited in India. Therefore, the present study has significant relevance for a systematic investigation. Hence a systematic study is required to fill the research gap and analyze customer engagement practices, assess the impact of these customer engagement practices on customer loyalty and repurchase intention of hotels as well as suggest customer engagement strategies that can be employed by marketing professionals of hospitality service providers to enhance the level of customer engagement.

3.4 Objectives of the Study

In the light of above research questions, the objectives of the present study are:

- (1) To explore different existing customer engagement practices adopted by Hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir.
- (2) To study the perception of customers regarding customer engagement practices adopted by hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

(3) To analyze the impact of customer engagement practices on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

3(a).To study the impact of hotel location on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

3(b) .To study the impact of Hotel design on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

3(c) .To study the impact of personalized service on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

3.5 Hypotheses

H1: Hotel location does have a significant impact on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

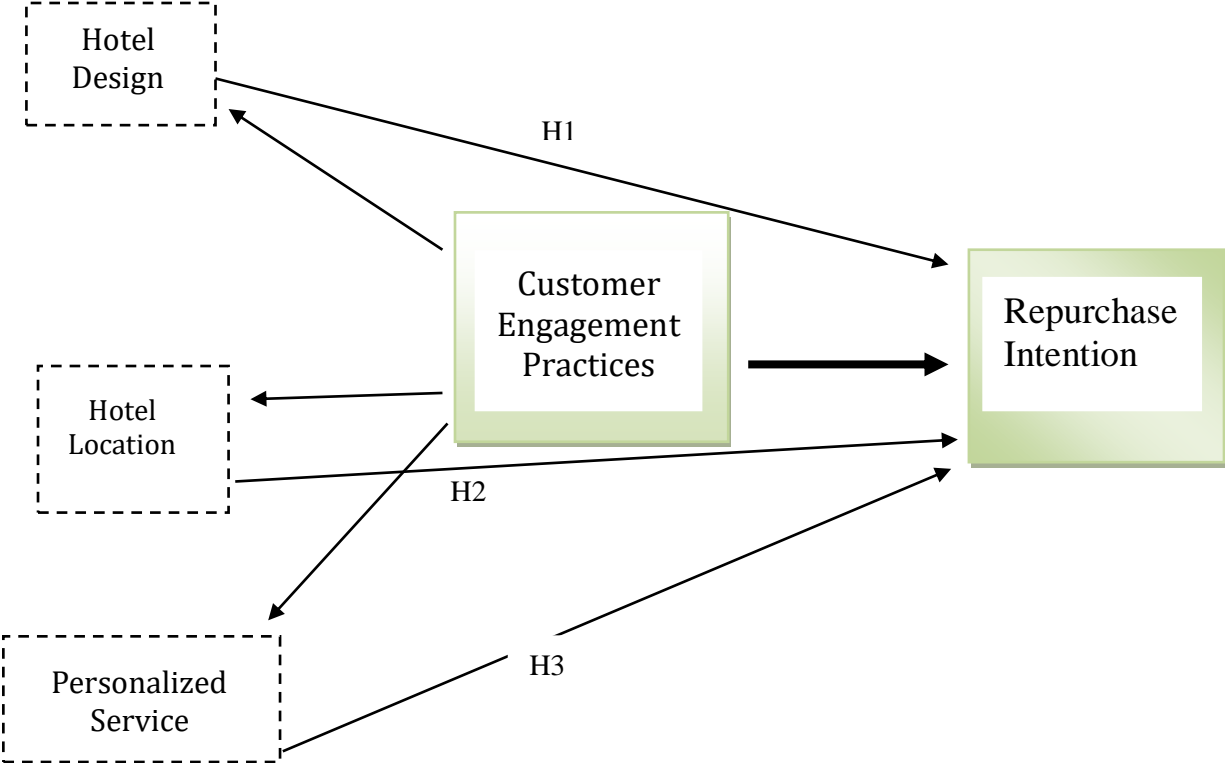
H2: Hotel design does have a significant impact on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

H3: Personalized service does have a significant impact on the repurchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

S.No	Objective
H1	Objective 3(a)
H2	Objective 3(b)
H3	Objective 3(c)

Table 3.4. Objective wise allocation of hypothesis.

Fig. 3.4 Hypothesized research model



3.6 Research Design

A research study is directed by a logical and systematic plan known as research design. It is a road map that guides a scholar in receiving, analyzing, and interpreting explorations. Keeping in mind the motive of the current study, it was submitted that a mixed approach of both exploratory and descriptive research methods be more appropriate. The gaining of more knowledge about a phenomenon or the subject concerned is evident from the exploratory research. The study is exploratory since it endeavored to identify different customer engagement practices existing/ employed by hospitality service providers to enhance the level of customer engagement. It is descriptive since the aim of the study is to know the perception of the customers towards identified customer engagement practices and scale their impact on the repurchase intention of hotels. The problem was formulated and conceptualized based on a review of the literature available on the subject and the problems encountered in the industry.

The selection of an appropriate method can be made through analysis of objectives and comparison of various alternatives. The decision-making at every stage of the research process is guided by a systematic study. In this chapter, the research objectives and procedures which comprise the overall research design, sampling technique, data assembling and analysis methods as well as statistical methods employed for data interpretation have been adopted through the detailed research methodology approach. The objectives and research questions pertaining to the current study had a wide scope of the exploratory and descriptive nature of the research. The epistemology of Dualism in the field of management research has been extended as per the philosophical perspective of research, Mingers and Gill (1997) stressed strongly for multi methodology and the same has been advised by Bazeley (2003, 2007). Mingers (1997: 9) urges for pluralism or multi-methodology that explains most, if not all intervention situations would be dealt with more effectively with a blend of methods from different paradigms. The three main findings that got impacted by three major trends are identified as • widening boundaries, • a multi-paradigmatic profile, and • methodological inventiveness.

While as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17) abridge the thoughtful situation of multi-approach researchers. It has been witnessed that Pragmatism shows a heavy

philosophical base in the mixed methods or methodological pluralism camps.

The research methodology is mostly divided under two approaches: qualitative (post-positivist) and quantitative (positivist), with distinctive positives and negatives. Positivist inquiry takes a realist position and involves a dualist epistemology which requires the separation of the researcher from the researched. Post-positivist inquiry takes a relativist position and allows for multiple constructions of reality and a monist epistemology where the researcher and the researched interact and are bound together (Caulley 1994: 4), providing the following argument in terms of these two methodological approaches. The qualitative and quantitative distinction is often overdrawn and presented as a rigid dichotomy. Too often, adherents of one style of social research judge the other style based on the assumptions and standards of their style. The well-versed prudent social researcher understands and appreciates each style on its terms and recognizes the strengths and limitations of each.

Fig.3.6 Research design flow chart

Research Design	Mixed Approach	
Research Method	Exploratory Research (Grounded Theory)	Descriptive Research
Population	Hotel Managers/ Executives	Hotel Customers
Sampling Technique	Purposive sampling/ non probability sampling	Probability sampling/Simple Random sampling
Sample Size	Theory of Saturation	krejcie Morgan formula, 1970
Analysis technique	Coding method (objective 1 st)	Descriptive analysis (objective 2 nd , 3 rd , 3a, 3b and 3c)
Sampling Extent	Grade 'A' hotels of Jammu & Kashmir.	
Data Sources	Both primary and secondary sources	
Data collection method	Interview Checklist/ In-depth interviews	Questionnaire

3.7 Section A- Qualitative method, (Objective 1st)

The analysis and interpretation of text, interviews and observations to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon can be done through qualitative approach. The current study focuses on the activities and practices offered to customers by grade-A hotels resulting in customer engagement, which are the routine activities followed by these hotels. To know deeply about these offerings, the effective method suggested was to interact with the employees of these hotels who are directly involved in these offerings, especially the managers/ executives. This method facilitates a full understanding of a phenomenon. The process of designing a qualitative research study can be organized into five steps, Literature Review, formulation, instrumentation, sample selection, and sample size. Each step has a systematic approach to deciding upon certain factors. There are various techniques followed to conduct qualitative research ethnography, narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study. The grounded theory approach has been employed in this study.

3.7.1 Grounded theory

To better understand and know the different customer engagement practices employed by grade-A hotels. The grounded theory approach has been adopted (Glaser and Strauss 1967). As per this approach, knowledge is seen as actively and socially constructed with meanings of existence only relevant to an experiential world (Goulding 1998). Due to the conceptual nature of customer engagement regarding hotel offerings, grounded theory is deemed fit as it is done ‘with people rather than ‘on people’ (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Grounded theory plays an important role in theory building and development (Glaser and Strauss, 2017). Therefore managers who are directly dealing with/ delivering services, and handling customer experience across the grade-A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir were contacted for their opinions and insights. Some recent studies have established the appropriateness of this technique in studies like customer engagement (Hollebeek et al. 2016) and customer experience management (Homburg et al. 2017).

3.7.2 Data source

The study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. For primary data collection, In-depth interviews has been conducted with Grade A hotel managers and executives, having sufficient experience in the field. All the respondents were working in grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir. The managers were directly responsible and having maximum customer interaction in the hotel, while proving information, handling complaints, suggesting and recommending places and venues of visit to customers. Secondary data has been collected from articles, books, journals, reports etc. A checklist has been prepared and acts as primary data collection instrument.

3.7.3 Sampling design

The sampling technique is the selection procedure adopted by a researcher to select the unit for the sample. The two sampling techniques include, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, each sample has a known probability of being included in the sample, but non-probability Sampling does allow the researcher to determine this probability” (Kothari, 2004). The researcher chooses such samples based on his judgment regarding the characteristics of the target population.

In the present study, non probability with purposive sampling technique has been adopted for collecting data from hotel managers and executives with respect to objective 1st of the study.

3.7.4 Sample size

“Sample size means the number of sampling units selected from the population for investigation”. To achieve better results, the sample size must be large. In qualitative research, the perception of the population is traced unless the saturation of data reaches. The approach towards reaching the point of saturation is different and varies from one study to another. However, there is no set guideline to indicate the saturation of data (Guest et al., 2006). The author has also noted that data saturation may be attained by a small number of interviews could be even six interviews. However, it is evident to imagine the data in terms of rich and thickness (Dibley, 2011) rather than the size of the sample (Burmeister, & Aitken, 2012). Therefore, managers who are

directly involved in delivering/overseeing service experience across these hotels were approached for their opinions and insights. A total of 32 managers were approached having an experience of more than 6 years in the field of the hotel sector. An interview checklist was developed and the questions asked were open-ended in nature to ensure maximum interaction. Each interview lasted for approximately 45-50 minutes, giving respondents much time to share their thoughts, and insights about their offerings.

3.7.5 Data collection: Both types of data i.e. primary as well as secondary in connection to the objectives of the study have been collected. Hotel managers and executives have been contacted for an assortment of primary data by administering a checklist. The checklist included items on the demographic information of respondents, Customer engagement practices pertaining to the hotel location, hotel design and personalized services, and repurchase intention. The secondary data was collected from publications of tourism departments, tourist corporations, hotel authorities, and literature available on the subject, particularly for the formulation of the problem.

3.7.6 Area of study and sample unit: The area considered for the study were Grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir. As per the data available, with the Department of Tourism (Kashmir), and the Directorate of Tourism (Jammu). The number of grade-A hotels in Jammu and Kashmir is around 161.

3.7.7 Development of interview checklist

A checklist has been compiled after going through an extensive literature review. The items have been identified based on the constructs considered for the current study and relatively, the availability of data on the prescribed subject. The checklist was comprised of two parts. Part 1st contains information about the demography of the respondents like age, gender, experience, nationality, education qualification, etc. Part 2nd contains a total of seven questions intended to be open-ended in nature. The aim was to ensure maximum interaction. The interviewer encouraged the participants to share their experiences on issues they deemed relevant to the topic of customer engagement. The questions were formed in a manner that elicited responses in a nondirective and unobtrusive fashion and avoided “active listening” (McCracken 1988).

3.7.8 Validity of the checklist: The checklist was presented to academicians, scholars, and people relevant to the field for their understanding and input about the items included. There were some minor changes suggested. The draft was corrected for grammatical errors. It was observed that most of the respondents had clarity about the concepts to be sought. Thus, validates the checklist for further action.

i) Interview guide: The average interview lasted for 40-45 minutes. The interviewees were informed in advance to seek their permission and availability. In the first stage, the respondents provided an overview that includes details about their hotel, their clientele, marketing, their products, offerings, etc. This information gives us an understanding of each hotel's level of operation and its standard of service offerings. In the second round respondents provided information specific about the practices with respect to the hotel design, hotel location, and personalized services. The responses were recorded and later on transcribed.

3.7.9 Analysis and interpretation (Qualitative part).

The recorded interviews were transcribed first. The analysis of qualitative data has been done by adopting a coding method and processing the data through Nvivo12 after transcribing the interviews as prescribed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Miles and Hubberman (1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain this stage and differentiates its importance as being the identification of specific features, like the phenomenon and the context in which the concept is embedded, which in turn help to give precision to a category or sub-category.

The ultimate stage of the grounded-theory coding approach is called selective coding. This stage involves adding more core categories relevant to other sub-categories, thus building a conceptual framework from which to develop a grounded theory. It involves the ultimate integration of codes and categories and thus generates a coherent theory. The greatest challenge is the formation of a new theory and ironically, it proves the basis that why many studies give up at this stage of analysis. The result of which indicates the analysts will often choose to present their findings thematically, based on the categories that have been developed following grounded theory techniques, instead of developing a true 'grounded theory'. Sub-themes and themes will be identified and at the final level, the connections between themes will be

established.

3.8 Section B- Quantitative approach, (Objectives 2nd, 3rd, 3a, 3b and 3c)

3.8.1 Descriptive method:

Descriptive research can be defined as a process of studying status and is broadly followed in education, nutrition, epidemiology, and the behavioral sciences. Its works on the phenomena that problems can have a resolution and practices can be enhanced through observation, analysis, and description. The survey is the extensively followed descriptive research method, containing questionnaires, personal interviews, phone surveys, and normative surveys. The current study follows the survey method by developing a semi-structured questionnaire to seek responses from hotel customers. Brink and Wood (2007) have recognized the two important levels of descriptive research. The level I is characterized by a research problem where little or no previous knowledge exists and where one may not be able to formulate a solid conceptual basis. In Level II descriptive research, prior knowledge of the topic exists, the variables and methods to measure them are known, and there is a conceptual basis. Hence for the current study, the variables have been identified by extensive literature review and by developing themes based on analysis of objective 1st, as the main aim of the study was to know the perception of customers towards customer engagement practices and to analyze their impact on customer repurchase intention.

3.8.2 Data source: The survey has been conducted by developing a close-ended questionnaire for the collection of primary data, and the responses have been sought from hotel customers staying in grade-A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir. Secondary data has been collected from articles, books, journals, reports, etc.

3.8.3 Sampling Design

For objectives 2nd, 3rd, 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c), the probability sampling method with a simple random sampling technique has been implemented for data collection from hotel customers/guests. The data was obtained from customers of the Grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir through structured questionnaires.

3.8.4 Sample Size

The sample size has been calculated as per Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The sample unit

included all A-grade hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir. As per the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula, the calculated sample size for the current study is 375. The population of Grade A hotels in Jammu and Kashmir is 161, with a room capacity of around seven thousand five hundred on double occupancy, as per the data available with the Jammu and Kashmir tourism department and Directorate of Jammu tourism.

3.8.5 Questionnaire formation

The preparation of a list of questions beforehand by a researcher is called a questionnaire. A semi-structured questionnaire has been adopted to assemble data from respondents. While framing the questions, the researcher reviewed existing literature to identify the related problems. The data thus collected was compiled and a review of previous empirical studies of customer engagement, and customer engagement practices related literature. The data were collected using structured questionnaires before the final survey following necessary exercises were concluded.

3.8.6 Identifying Variables and Developing First Draft: The questionnaire meant to receive data from customers were designed, so that to know the perception of customers towards customer engagement practices and also scale the impact of customer engagement practices on repurchase intention. The questionnaire was framed using close-ended questions based on the Likert scale (e.g. 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree). Questions with multiple choices were used for studying demographic profiles of customers such as age, qualification, experience, nationality, frequency of visit, etc. Key variables identified for the study were customer engagement, hotel location, hotel design, personalized services offered, and customer repurchase intention.

3.8.7 Analysis of Pilot Study

After designing a questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted to ensure the clarity and understanding of the questions included in the questionnaire by respondents, in the same manner. For this purpose, a sample size of 40 customers and 10 professionals including hotel managers and academicians from a hospitality background were selected. The aim was to clarify the structure of the questionnaire holistically as well as the interpretation of questions included in the questionnaire. This process helped in enhancing the quality and texture of the questionnaire to ensure smooth data collection. As per the results of the pilot survey, 7 statements were removed, 5

statements were added and the language of 13 statements was modified.

3.8.8 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the questionnaire was checked with the help of Cronbach's alpha test to ensure that data collected from respondents is reliable and can be processed further for analysis. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for different variables after collecting data from 40 respondents. The result of the data collected from customers with regards to the statistical reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of customers engagement practices i.e. 0.76 is sufficient more than the desired level of 0.7, which means the data is statistically sound so far as statistical reliability is concerned.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity (BTS) were applied for judging the suitability of the data collected from respondents at a five percent level of significance. The sampled data is found to be adequate and statistically significant at a five percent level of significance for further analysis in all of the cases.

3.8.9 Questionnaire finalization: After incorporating the results of the pilot survey as well as checking the reliability and validity of data, questionnaires were finalized. The final questionnaire framed for customers comprised two sections. Part A provided questions related to the demographic profile of the respondents. Part B comprised questions related to dimensions of customer engagement; customer engagement practices and impact on repurchase intention.

3.8.10 Data Collection

The primary and secondary data have been collected, in connection to the objectives and scope of the study. Primary data was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire administered to sample respondents, which were hotel customers. The questionnaire included items on the demographic information of respondents; dimensions of customer engagement, customer engagement practices, and customer repurchase intention. The publications of the Ministry of Tourism, and existing literature available on the subject particularly in the form of articles, and journals have been used for collection of secondary data.

3.8.11 Statistical Tools Used for Analysis

The present study was designed to analyze existing customer engagement practices, investigate the impact of customer engagement practices adopted by grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir on customer repurchase intention as well as explore new customer engagement practices. The five-point Likert scale has been used to analyze the data. The coding of data collected from the survey was done and feeding was also done on the computer. To prepare data for computation, a data definition file was prepared with variable numbers, column numbers, variable codes, and labels. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 22.0 was used for the analysis of data. The mean scores were computed by assigning weights as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 (e.g. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree respectively). While entering the data in SPSS, SA (strongly agree) has been assigned the value of 5, A (agree) has been assigned the value of 4, N (neutral) has 3, D (disagree) has 2 and SD (strongly disagree) has 1. Therefore it means that if the result shows a value equal to 3 that is the meaning of neutrality by the respondent, if the mean goes down to 3, it would show disagreed perception on the part of the respondents and if the mean goes above 3, it would show agreement on the part of the respondent. Various statistical tools like descriptive test i.e. mean, and standard deviation has been adopted to figure out the perception of customers towards customer engagement practices. The linear and multiple Regressions were applied for the analysis of data, to scale the impact of customer engagement practices on repurchase intention. Secondly, to test the hypothesis, draw the results and conclusion.

3.9 Scheme of the Study

- The present study is presented in six chapters. The detail of all the chapters is given below:
- The first chapter comprises an Introduction of customer engagement, customer engagement practices employed in hotels,
- The literature review has been described in the Second chapter concerning key variables identified for justification of research objectives.
- The third chapter discusses the research methodology, research design, objectives, and Research instruments developed, sampling technique selected, approaches to conducting the present study.

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- The fourth chapter presents data analysis and interpretation i.e. application of statistical tools to draw results for the justification of objectives.
 - The last and Fifth chapter includes findings, suggestions, and conclusions

3.10 Ethical and Legal Consideration

While conducting research, there was great emphasis put on ethical and logical considerations. There was complete awareness provided to participants regarding the research objectives and nature of the research. Hotel professionals and customers were assured that the data collected through them will be utilized for this research with their consent.

3.11 Summary

The explanation of the research methodology adopted for the analysis purpose of this study has been covered in this chapter. The different activities have been undertaken and reported while conducting the study. It explains the research design, sampling design, sample selection, questionnaire development, and data collection. The pilot study conducted has also been explained. Various statistical tools like descriptive tests i.e. mean, standard deviation, linear regression, and multiple regression were applied to perform analysis and for testing the hypothesis and drawing the results and conclusion.

3.12 Site Selection

Since the research is based on the context of the hotel industry in Jammu and Kashmir, which is why research data has been collected from UT of Jammu & Kashmir (India).

Chapter-4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1st: To explore different existing customer engagement practices adopted by hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

The study has followed mixed approach involving both qualitative as well as quantitative methods for data collection and interpretation. The objective 1st, which is identification of existing customer engagement practices followed in hotels. The Grounded theory method with inclusion of thematic analysis has been implemented. The data was collected from Hotel Managers/ Executives through in-depth interviews. The data collected thus, was transcribed and processed through Nvivo12. The six different themes have been created covering different customer engagement practices existing in hotels. The data analysis and interpretation for the same is as under.

4.1.1 Contextualizing Customer Engagement and Its Practices in Hotel Industry

Customer Engagement definitions:

Customer engagement can be defined as developing relationships through involvement in products and services offered by the hotel. The innovative technological interventions, with provision of incentivized loyalty programs and memberships resulting in memorable experiences. As R3 of the study through interview stated as:

“The hospitality industry is developing every now and then. It is not only about giving the best bed or breakfast or food, but also about keeping the customers involved because the basic needs have already been met. Thusgiving a bed or breakfast is not sufficient in order to have repeat clientele. We need to ensure that, we keep our customers engaged and hooked up to our brand. The best way is by doing and developing something out of the box. One such thing is creating memberships; so that we have customers getting offers every time, and they are involved in a lot of surveys and other activities. The other way is to wish and offer them on special days and events like on a Women’s Day, we would come up with discounts for women for example on Mother’s Day, would offer complimentary lunch for mothers.”

Also the R5 endorsed above concept/ definition as:

“Basically, customer engagement is the emotional connection between the guest and brand. In this activity, we mostly promote loyalty programs. It also leads to customer relationship management; through this, we understand that how we can provide the best experience to the guest in order to have lifetime business, not just one time. So the goal of our brand is to enhance customer loyalty programs to make customers visit us more and more times”

The R2 has taken the concept to next level by adding technological perspective which is smoothly explained by the author as:

“As a brand called Marriott, we have different platforms through which we can engage our customers. We have different customer engagement centres across the country called Marriott loyalty centres. We also have an app called as Marriott Bonvoy App (MBA). When a guest book a certain hotel, there is no need to call the hotel. He can chat with us and enquire about services. So this way, he can kind of engage with us. This digitalization has revolutionized the relationship between the guest and the hotel. It also helps the hotel respond quickly and appropriately to the queries, engages the customer, and brings a sense of trust and responsibility.”

So the above mentioned statements from different respondents have endorsed the concept of Customer Engagement defined as per the study responses.

4.2 Customer engagement in hotels

As evident from the literature, “the customer engagement is an emotional relationship between the company and its customers, based on involvement and participation opinion shared by the customers (Vivek et al. 2009). In addition, the literature supports the definition of customer engagement as quoted by (Shiri et al. 2014) stated that customer engagement is the power of customer involvement and connection with the company’s products and activities”.

Name	Files	- References
Hotel Location Offerings	1	5
Name	Files	- References
External environment	1	1
Prime location	1	1
Bonfire and campfire occasions	1	1
3.Climatic offerings	1	1
Gaming and sporting activities	1	1
Hotel Interior Design Offerings	1	2
Name	Files	- References
Easy approach towards service areas	1	1
internal design elements	1	1
Customer Oriented Practices	1	1
Name	Files	- References
Cultural events in the form of music and singing	1	1
Customer Promotion Practices	1	4
Name	Files	- References
Incentive and discount programs	1	1
Special upgrades and offers	1	1
Gastronomic experiences	1	1
Cultural and monumental attractions	1	1
Personalised Service Related Practices	1	4
Name	Files	- References
Celebrating special occasions for guest	1	1
New Tour and trip facilitation	1	1
express services	1	1

Fig. 4.2.4: Item cluster by similarity coding analysis (source Nvivo12.)

<u>Demographics</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%Age</u>	<u>Demographics</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%Age</u>
<u>Gender</u>			<u>Designation</u>		
Male	27	85.5	supervisor	21	65.6
Female	05	14.5	manager	11	34.4
<u>Nationality</u>			<u>Age (years)</u>		
Indian	31	96.87	25-34	16	50
foreigner	01	3.12	35-44	08	25
<u>Qualification</u>			45-54	06	18.75
intermediate	04	12.5	55 and above	02	6.25
Graduation	14	43.75			
Post -graduation	12	37.5			
professional	02	6.25			

Table: 4.2. Demography of respondents for qualitative study.

4.3 Identified customer engagement practices in hotels.

4.3.1 Hotel internal design practices.

The ability to accomplish in a service setting and repurchase intention about the atmospheric elements and interior design influence customers' (Joseph- Mathews, Bonn, &Snepenger, 2009). Johnson, Mayer, and Champaner (2004) echo Kotler (1973), describing atmospherics as "the endeavor to design buying settings to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability". Kotler (1973), the various factors visualized by the customer include physical environs: illustration, aural, olfactory and palpable. Such components and their perception by consumers have ripened into distinct forms which include furniture, lighting, style, artifacts, and color. Ambient conditions are environment background stimuli that impact human sensors (Kotler, 1973; Turley & Milliman, 2000) that are visual or non-visual, for example colors, auditory, scents (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Spangenberg, Grohmann, &Sprott, 2005), and temperature (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). The increase in creating ambient conditions in the hotel industry has developed utmost interest, such different ambient components jointly influence buyer behavior remains under-researched (Heide, Lardal, &Gronhaug, 2009).

Hotel Industry is well known for catering to the delightful and luxurious needs of customers. The needs can be met both through Tangible elements like Food, beverages etc and Intangible elements which has an over whelming impact for the complete pleasure of the guest. These elements can range from providing best of the designs in terms of interiors, Thematic lighting, artistry and detailed wood work in lobby, lounge as well as in guest rooms, were in a guest gets engrossed with the patterns and structure of the work. Nobles(1999) suggested that 'the best way to enhance the hotel operation's appeal and image can be done with the aesthetically approved design of hotel property, which also can lend an identity to the business among its customers and visitors'. Another important factor is the approach towards different service providing areas of the hotel, which reflects the attractiveness of the design and adds to the charm of internal atmosphere of the hotel. It is imperative to have all the areas of the hotel well connected with maximum accessibility and without any blockages and hindrances. While approaching towards coffee shop, it should be easily accessible from lobby, guest room etc, and essentially next to elevators and

stairways. The Hotel internal environment thus contributes tremendously towards involving customers in the design and interiors. As stated by the respondent 1st during interview:

“When you are sitting in the Tea Lounge, you can experience woodwork done on the ceiling called khatam Bandh. We usually have seen the people visiting Kashmir; they are quite happy with this work and architecture. So we have observed guests, who feel so impressed with the design that they get these things done in their particular Home, Shop, office or any other kind of place. This is something which is attracting them again and again. The people are using Deodar and Oakwood in their offices to get fragrance, to remind them of Kashmir, feeling of being in Pahalgam, and get a resemblance of that particular moment. This indicates how these different design elements impact you.”

Thus internal design elements attach an ever lasting impact on the minds of the customers. Same way the easy accessibility to service areas makes the guest movement more convenient without piling on the service staff for minute tasks.

4.3.2 Hotel location offerings/practices

These are the factors which can be found in and around the hotel. It contributes immensely and involves customers and allows them to enjoy, celebrate and have memorable moments in the hotel. The pleasing articles that leads to engagement of customers may include tourism products, sites, destinations, or service personnel (Hollebeek, 2011a). In hospitality context important factors comprising under this destination component will include location of the hotel, accessibility to various activity areas, seasonal variations, bone fire occasions, gaming and sporting activities etc.

i) Prime location

Space is the spatial relationship between different objects (e.g. Furniture) in a bounded environment (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). The most influential feature of the total consumption experience in physical environment is considered as the place which is part of “4Ps” context (Bitner, 1992; Kotler, 1973). The location of the Hotel is the deciding factor for the customers that, should they patronize this establishment anymore. It is viewed as factor of tourist attractiveness while choosing

accommodation (Chaudhary & Islam, 2020). It forms the basis for classifying the hotels based on their location which includes Commercial Hotels, Suburbs, Motels, Downtown Hotels, Resorts, Transit Hotels, Rotels and Floatels. The above classification indicates the accessibility from different activity and service avenues like shopping malls, markets, government offices, residential areas, highways, motorways, railway, bus stations and airports etc. Thus helps a customer to decide the kind of hotel they should book in for the upcoming trip. As the R4 has stated that:

“As you know, our hotel is centrally located with regular access from the international airport, just 40 minutes ride; the highway NH1 is 10 minutes away. The famous Dal lake is within 15 minutes walking distance from the hotel. The commercial hub of Srinagar, Lalchowk is just 1.5 kilometers away from the hotel. It becomes easy for the guest to enjoy the day trip and go for shopping in the evening. All these factors help us to attract and retain our guests, who usually visit this place for various reasons.”

ii) Climatic offerings

The climate of a place deeply impacts the tourist flow towards that destination. As Jammu and Kashmir is well known for its seasonal attractions, which totally depends upon the diversifying change in climate ranging from -15 degree centigrade in winter with freezing snow carpet layered across valley of Kashmir and +40 degree centigrade in summers in parts of Jammu. So this variation in temperature at different periods of the year gives birth to various seasons ranging from spring, known for arrival of flowers and vegetation in every nook and corner of the region. Then summer with fruits ripening on trees, a complete green cover across orchids, meadows, mountains and plains. The autumn leads to falling of leaves, plucking of fruits like apples across valley also acts as a kind of attraction for tourists towards the region. The winter seems harsh for the locals but proves sensational for the people travelling from other parts of the world. Skiing and sledging on the snow carpet drafts a permanent sketch on the hearts and minds of the people. As evident from the statement of R1 and R6 respectively states:

“Kashmir has a different version of climate. Tourists visit us for all four kinds of weather or climate like spring, autumn, summer and winter. Hence, all these Seasons give them a different look and feel. So having a customer engagement practice, let them know when is the time for the Tulips, how to experience autumn etc. Hence,

engagement is really important to ensure a customer come again.”

“You can see the tourists busy in skiing and sledging over slopes and that at a time when it is +10c degree temperature in other parts of the country. These activities are full of adventure and thrill, at the same time doing all this in freezing conditions puts one more challenge for the hotel. That is to keep the interiors of the hotel quite warm so that when a guest comes back, he/ she must get a good warm room. We have installed centrally heating instruments for the same.”

iii) Bone fire/ camp fire occasions

The thought comes to our mind, when we think of chilly winters and having a whale of time with our best buds. The obvious answer is a bonfire, it is an occasion, were we are always on the lookout to have a fun trip with friends. It does not just keep our body warm in the cold, but also instills warmth in our relationships. So, breaking ourselves free from the shackles of our monotonous life and read on to find out the best meaning of entertainment and memories in the chilly winter nights. The kind of attachment that connects the customers to a hotel in particular and destination in general, because of these activities of bonfire/ campfire truly rendered a lasting impact on the customer. It has been endorsed by the R8 as under:

“We do campfire/ bone fire as we have a small garden with a view of almost whole Gulmarg facing towards Affarwat peak. So enjoying the night view of this amazing place in chilly evenings with a bone fire and some sizzlers served along, will give a feeling of being totally attached to this place”

4.3.3 Occasion oriented practices

A company is more interested in its customers in a customer oriented culture, fulfilling their desires and wants. It gives them quick responses, does a fair valuation with utmost priority and effectiveness. While a positive attitude and admiration towards our customers is primary goal to be achieved. We think about attracting more leads, maximizing sales, up selling etc. With these things being in list, an organization with a genuine customer-oriented approach will desire about customers’ needs and only then about its own benefit.

Hotels try to be involved completely in the facilitation of various ceremonial occasions coming in the way every now and then, be it celebrating anniversaries,

birthdays, special occasions and other related important events. In order to identify the very specific needs of a particular traveler, the hotel track their preferences and try to provide more hurried services to satisfy their time saving needs. This can be achieved by providing express check in and checkout services, breakfast on the go for early morning check outs, quick means of transportation for business travellers to and from the hotel.

There is a good amount of customers visiting new destinations with less or no knowledge about what to do, where to go, how to reach etc about that particular place. The hotel management finds it their moral duty to help such customers with concierge and travel desk facilities. They try to plan their trip as per the needs of the guest. The complete itinerary is planned and developed in consultation with the concerned customers. All these factors bring in a sense of closeness and affection for customers towards the hotel. The statements are apparent as per respondent R3, R7 and R9 respectively as under:

“A lot of practices like, on Women’s Day, the women will dine complimentary, or on Mother’s Day, the mother’s will dine complementarily, or you know on a father’s day, the father’s will dine complementary. All these things or activities keep the customers engaged and involved and at the same time generates revenue for the hotel”

“Creating a lifelong relationship with the guest by providing him or her the right information about their trip, making them comfortable by giving answers to various queries, arranging vehicles while going out of the hotel, helping them plan trips, and making itineraries as tourists want to explore more and new things..”

4.3.4 Service oriented Practices

The behavior that arises in all interactions aimed at enabling a customer to feel he/she is receiving individual attention is personalization (Surprenant& Solomon 1987). The relationship between businesses and customers is constantly evolving. The current time is run by technology; customers can be reached in numerous ways. Today’s customers have full knowledge of services and products. They know more about the company. So, a customer expects for personalized care. It has also been confirmed that customer experience is deeply affected by the amalgam of informatization, interaction, and personalization (Jeong& Shin, 2019). Thus offering more appropriate products and services, that fulfills the basic wants and desires of the customer. This

way, a connection is being developed between a customer and the organization. Also, because of the customized solutions to their problems, it ends up with more satisfied customers. Therefore, these days it becomes imperative for hotels to offer personalized services to their customers. Thus, hotels treat customers as special individuals they are, rather than a passing paycheck, hence by creating realistic and unforgettable moments for them, as well as deliver the best version of you and foster positive brand identity needed to attract new business. The importance of personalized service has been stated by the R10 and R3 respondent respectively:

“While we provide the guest services, there is a keen attention given to guest’s satisfaction. Thus we arrange guest courtesy calls at least three to four times before they check out. At the time of departure, we provide feedback forms to the guest and an online link is also shared with the guest so that they can share their experience. During the stay, we personally visit guests, enquire about their feelings about the stay. If a guest had food in the restaurant, the service personnel and Chef will go to the table and ask for feedback about the food, and verify that if there is anything that needs to be done eventually. The front office manager tries to contact or interact with every guest at least once during their stay, so that every effort can be made to make their stay pleasant.”

“Staff is enough trained to keep the customer’s engaged. We try to go out of the way, if there is something that we don’t have available in our hotel and it can be procured easily outside, we would not hesitate to go and buy it for the guest.

a) Customer Promotional Practices

The hotel operations have never been a smooth task. The revenue maximization and hotel occupancy is becoming more challenging in the current era; A hotel must possess a strong marketing plan in order to make the best of the expected industry revival. The key hotel marketing strategies has to put together that would help to stay ahead in this ever-competitive industry. When a guest returns to the hotel and they expect to be recognized for their loyalty. It doesn’t need to be anything extravagant-small gestures like a ‘warm welcome’ email or a welcome card, a complimentary traditional drink would make them feel elated and welcomed.

The nature of loyalty programs from being entirely transaction-oriented is changing towards amalgamated systems that surely assist in comprising and maintaining

customer relationships (Bijmolt and Verhoef, 2017). The trend of Such Programs has become very well-liked in the current era to boost loyalty among the engaged customers and uphold engagement behaviors (Berry 2015; Boston Retail Partners 2015). So offering discounts due to seasonal fluctuations in demand will keep a customer connected with the brand. Incentives for being loyal to the establishment and creating memberships, in order to keep a customer in close loop regarding the offers and coupons issued by the hotel at varied times. It has been a wise rather ethical practice to upgrade a guest to higher room category without actually asking for it and not charging a single more penny to the guest. So the above mentioned theme has been acknowledged by the R5 and R2 respectively:

“In order to enhance customer loyalty and to make sure customers visit us more and more times, we offer coupons like ‘buy one get one free’. It surely helps businesses to grow and ensure repatronage of services by the guest.

4.3.5 Art and Cultural practices

An eager audience among tourists who like arts and crafts mainly handicrafts, has got attracted since last two centuries, and they are sure that unique elements of their travel experience are these articles believed as souvenirs (Phillips and Steiner 1999). The handmade arts like folk arts, crafts, and handicraft are often puzzled and used in place of handicrafts. So from centuries on, the uniqueness of artistry assists the hotel marketing plan (West & Purvis, 1992), leading to increased revenue and more occupied rooms (Countryman & Jang, 2006). Signs, symbols and artifacts act as crucial material dimensions used to interact with customers and send effective communication regarding service delivery (Bitner, 1992; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011), Eiseman (1998). Thus the art in the form of handicrafts, local food, apparels, customs, traditions, cultural uniqueness, historical remarks in the form of heritage sites, forts and mosques and temples available around the hotel will attract the customers.

i) Traditional Folk Music and Singing

These cultural activities in and around the hotel has attracted customers to make it really a part of their ‘on the trip’ exploration. The guests spent a good chunk of time in observing these folk music instruments and encourage the local singing talents. The significance of the factor has been explained by the R11 of the study as:

“In the evening, we are offering high tea that has local traditional music with folk art and singing with it. The guests enjoy local tea provided, so that it is a different kind of engagement that we are doing with regional music instruments like Santoor and rabab”

4.3.6 Heritage and Monumental attraction practices

As important aspect of travel understanding, the artistry is the general output of love and desire for beauty in the form of responses and feelings shown by individuals' towards aesthetic beauty (Clay, 1908). Design, “art with a purpose” (West & Purvis, 1992:15), acts as a norm to differentiate products and services (Reimann, Zaichkowsky, Neuhaus, Bender, & Weber, 2010). A huge role has been played by the heritage sites in the development of internal tourism. It acts as one of the real chances of economic, social and cultural recovery. These objects help in generating revenue and employment, and influence effectively in the economics of the cities and other areas.

When we talk about hotels that provide a good glimpse of local art in the form of handcrafted carpets layered in guest rooms, gifting products and artifacts , design elements hanging in lobby and other public areas, and also have a full range of such tools available while going for shopping around the city. The other important attraction is the heritage architecture comprising mosques, shrines, temples, forts etc which adds to the overall exploration of every type of customer visiting to any hotel. All these factors are associated with the hotel availabilities and helps drastically in engaging and involving a customer. The R1 has supported the statement as:

“We recommend them to go out and visit the Mughal Gardens. The Heritage properties with Grand architecture like the Friday prayer Mosque called the Jamia Masjid, the Dargah Sharif, Pari Mahal etc. The best thing is that in comparison to other hotels in the vicinity, our hotel has an ethnic touch of Kashmir, in terms of design. Almost every room is furnished with Kashmiri carpet, i.e. Kaleen. In Chinar restaurant, there we have placed mud pottery resembling basic Kashmiri art. The samovar for dispensing Kehwa, so all these things adds to the design and helps to affect and attract the guests towards the hotel”.

4.4 Quantitative Analysis

The identification of existing customer engagement practices has been done through qualitative approach by consulting hotel managers / executives. The themes have been developed by applying thematic analysis using Nvivo 12. Now, as per objective 2nd, 3rd, 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c), which is perception of customers towards existing customer engagement practices and scaling the impact of customer engagement practices on repurchase intention of services. To study the individual impact of hotel location, hotel design and personalized practices on repurchase intention. The questionnaire has been developed and data has been collected from hotel customers. The questionnaire has been divided into two parts. Part 1st contains demographic information about the respondents and part 2nd contains items pertaining to study constructs.

4.4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents (Customers)

This section contains the demographic profile of the respondents (customers). This has been discussed with the help of frequency distribution, which in turn contains frequency (size in terms of number of the respondents) as well as percentage.

4.4.2 Gender Profile of the Respondents: Table 4.4.2 shows the gender profile of the respondents. It is found that approximately 58.66 percent are male respondents and about 41.33 percent are female respondents. It may be said that female respondents are quite lower as compared to male respondents. It may be said that male respondents dominates the research part of the study.

Table 4.4.2: Gender Profile of the Respondents

S. No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male	220	58.66
2.	Female	155	41.33

Source: Survey (Data Processed through SPSS, Version 23)

4.4.3 Age Profile of the Respondents: It may be seen from table 4.4.3 that, out of total respondents, thirty four percent belongs to the age group of 21-30years; around thirty six percent fall in the category of 31-40 years; approximately fifteen percent respondents are in the class of 41-50 years. The remaining fifteen percent are in the

age group of 51 years and above. Respondents from age group of 51 years and above are almost equal to respondents from age group of 41-50 years and quite low from other two age groups.

Table 4.4.3: Age Profile of the Respondents

S. No	Age group in Years	Frequency	Percentage
1.	21-30	128	34.13
2.	31-40	136	36.26
3.	41-50	56	14.93
4.	51 and above	55	14.66
Total		375	100

4.4.4 Marital Status Profile of the Respondents: Table 4.4.4 shows the marital status profile of the respondents. It may be seen that around 70 percent i.e. two hundred and sixty three respondents are married and rest of the respondents i.e. approximately thirty percent are unmarried.

Table 4.4.4: Marital Status Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	married	263	70.13
2.	Unmarried	142	29.86
Total		375	100

4.4.5 Education Qualification Profile of the Respondents: The education qualification profile of the respondents is shown in the table 4.4.5. It may be seen from the table that very less respondents are in the category of others i.e. doctorate,

diploma holders etc. only ten percent respondents are there. Majority of the respondents i.e. around thirty nine percent are under graduate, followed by twenty nine percent respondents who are post graduate. The percentage of intermediate respondents is around twenty three percent.

Table 4.4.5: Education Qualification Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1.	intermediate	88	23.46
2.	Under- graduate	146	38.93
3.	Post graduate	107	28.53
4.	others	34	9.06
Total		375	100

4.4.6 Income Profile of the Respondents: Income profile of the respondents is shown in the table 4.4.6. It is found that around thirty percent respondents falls under the monthly income group of less than Rs.50,000 and 50,000-70,000 is income profile of around thirty five percent respondents. Approximately twenty percent respondents belong to the monthly income group of Rs.70,000-100,000, and the rest of the respondents i.e. around fifteen percent falls in the monthly income group of Rs.100,000 and above.

Table 4.4.6: Income Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Monthly Income (Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less than 50,000	111	29.60
2.	50,000-70,000	132	35.20
3.	70,000-100,000	76	20.26

4.	100,000 and above	56	14.93
Total		375	100

4.4.7 Frequency of visit Profile of the Respondents: Table 4.4.7 shows the data with regards frequency of visit profile of the respondents. It was found that around forty percent respondents are visiting the place for the second time, followed by around thirty three percent of respondents visiting for the first time, and rest of the twenty seven percent have visited more than 2 times.

Table 4.4.7 Frequency of visit Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Visiting Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1.	1 st timer	124	33.06
2.	Two times	149	39.73
3.	More than two times	102	27.20
Total		375	100

4.5 Hypothesis Testing:

4.5.1 H1: personalized service significantly impacts the Repurchase intention of hotels.

For hypothesis testing in this study, the Regression analysis was adopted. The results are revealed as under:

The analysis assesses the relationship between personalized service & repurchase intention, where in former has been taken as independent variable and latter as dependent variable. The regression results revealed in Table 4.5.1 & 4.5.1.1 suggest that personalized service has a significant impact on repurchase intention. The findings signifies that for each unit degree rise in personalized service, the repurchase intention increases by 0.378 units (R- Square = 0.378), and are statistically significant

as depicted by β and t- values. The result suggests a significant impact of personalized service on repurchase intention. So, it is evident from the results that personalized services have a positive impact on repurchase intention.

Table 4.5.1 - Regression Model for the relationship between personalized service & Repurchase intention

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.614*	0.378	0.368	0.36936

* Predictors: (Constant),

Table 4.5.1.1 - Regression Coefficients for PS &RPI

Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Hotel Location	0.613	10.463	.000

R²= 0.378

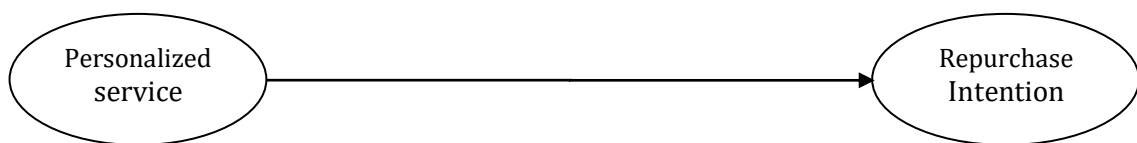


Fig 4.5.1: personalized service significantly impacts repurchase intention.

4.5.2 H2: Hotel location has a significant impact on Repurchase intention of hotels.

For testing the hypothesis, the results derived from the regression are revealed as:

To assess the relationship between hotel location & repurchase intention, the regression analysis has been adopted. The repurchase intention has been taken as dependent variable and hotel location has been designated as independent variable. The results received in Table 4.5.2 & 4.5.2.1 suggests that hotel location has a

significant impact on repurchase intention. The results point out that for every unit rise in hotel location which is an independent variable, the repurchase intention increases by 0.235 units (R- Square = 0.235) and are statistically significant as depicted by β and t- values. The result suggests a positive impact of hotel location on repurchase intention. Hence, it can be accomplished from the regression results that hotel location is positively influencing the repurchase intention.

Table 4.5.2 - Regression Model for the relationship between hotel location & Repurchase intention

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.485*	0.235	0.231	0.40735

* Predictors: (Constant),

Table 4.5.2.1 - Regression Coefficients for HL&RPI

Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Hotel location	0.485	7.595	.002

R²= 0.235

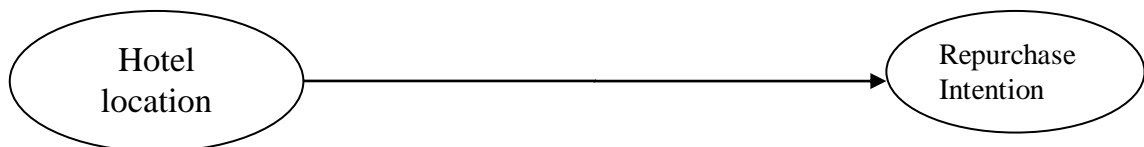


Fig 4.5.2 hotel location significantly impacts repurchase intention.

4.5.3 H3: Hotel Design has a significant impact on Repurchase intention of hotels.

The Regression analysis has been done to test the hypothesis and the results are revealed as under:

To assess the relationship in between Hotel Design & repurchase intention, regression analysis has an important role. Hotel design being taken as independent variable and repurchase intention is taken as dependent variable. The results from the regression analysis revealed in Table 4.5.3 & 4.5.3.1 suggest that Hotel Design has a significant impact on repurchase intention. It has been ascertained that for one unit increase in Hotel Design, the repurchase intention increases by 0.192 units (R- Square = 0.192) and are statistically significant as depicted by β and t- values. The result suggests a positive impact of Hotel Design on repurchase intention. Therefore, it can be concluded from the regression results that Hotel Design is positively influencing the repurchase intention.

Table 4.5.3 - Regression Model for the relationship between Hotel Design & Repurchase intention

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.438*	0.192	0.187	0.41868

* Predictors: (Constant),

Table 4.5.3.1 - Regression Coefficients for HD&RPI

Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Hotel Design	.438	6.676	.003

R²= 0.192

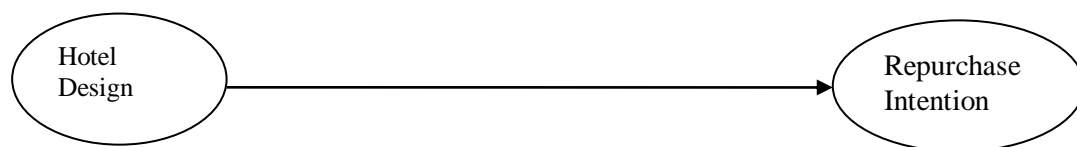


Fig 4.5.3 hotel location significantly impacts repurchase intention

The above mentioned results also proposes that all the three variables are significant and thus having impact on the repurchase intention of hotels, but personalized service with highest value of r-square=0.378 signifies that customers visit a particular hotel

mostly because of personal care given to him by the hotel staff. Personalized services help to build a close relationship in between the customer and the hotel. It really brings a sense of belongingness in customers with respect to the hotel. The other two variables also being significant, definitely impacts the repurchase intention, with r-square= .235 for hotel location and r-square=.192 for hotel design. It clearly indicates that these variables impact the repurchase intention of services.

4.5.4 Regression Model for Hypothesis Testing

S No	Hypothesis	Results
1	Hotel design	Accepted
2	Hotel location	Accepted
3	Personalized service	Accepted

Results of ANOVA indicates the significant impact of customer engagement practices with respect to hotel design on repurchase intention of services, ($f=0.438$, $p=0.003$). Therefore, the null hypothesis has been accepted at five percent level of significance.

The hotel location stipulate that there is significant impact of hotel location on repurchase intention of services, ($f=4.485$, $p=0.002$). Therefore, the null hypothesis has been accepted with five percent level of significance.

For personalized services, the results of ANOVA indicate that there is significant impact of customer engagement practices with respect to personalized services on repurchase intention of services, ($f=0.614$, $p=0.000$).hence the null hypothesis has been accepted with five percent level of significance.

Objective 2nd: To study the perception of customers, regarding customer engagement practices adopted by hotels operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

4.6 Perception of customers

4.6.1 Hotel Design: The analytical part of the Hotel design is elaborated with the help of table 4.6.1. It is found that almost all respondents agreed that the identified customer engagement practices exist in the hotels patronized by them. The mean value of 4.37 also confirmed the results, which shows strongly agreed perspective on the part of the respondents for this particular customer engagement practice.

Table 4.6.1: Analysis of Hotel Design

Hotel Design	Mean	S.D
Hotel building structure/ façade /exterior engages you.	3.89	1.33
Sound/Music in public areas like (lobby, restaurants, lounge etc) engages you in good humor.	3.51	1.39
Hotel ambience has a role in customer engagement.	3.72	.896
Connectivity within different service areas like (guest rooms, restaurants, front desk etc.) of hotel engross guest.	3.85	.98
Hotel interiors like wood work, color scheme, décor involves you.	3.78	.91
Design elements like paintings, wall hangings, handmade rugs and carpets grasp your attention in the hotel.	4.37	1.04
Mean of means	3.853	

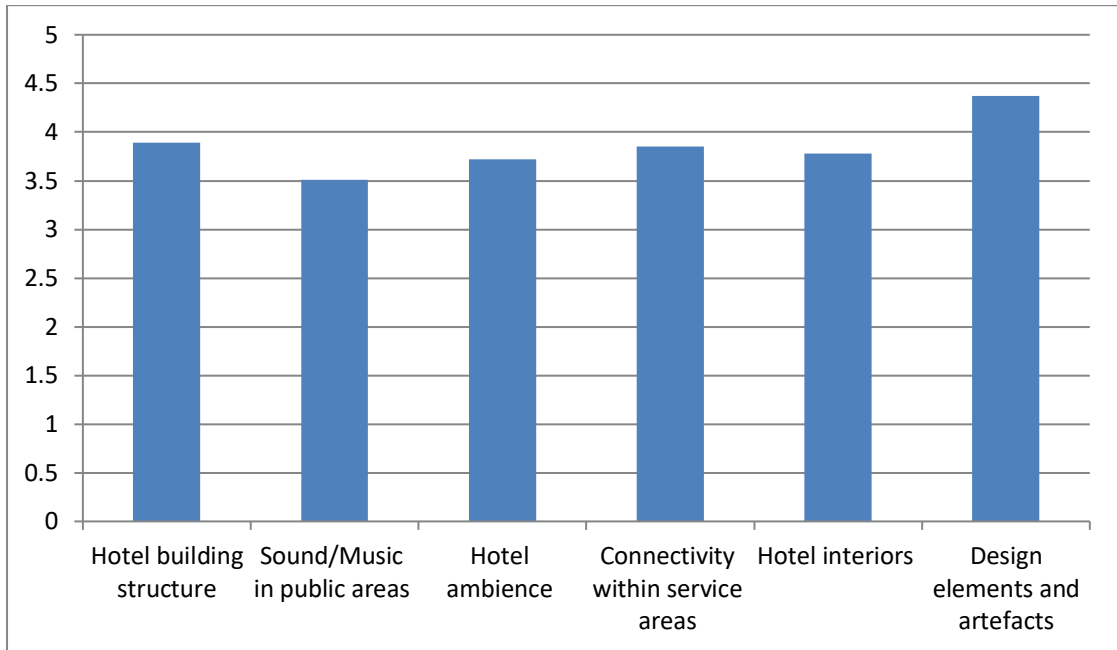


Fig 4.6.1: Descriptive analysis chart showing the perception of customers in connection with hotel design.

The mean value of 4.37 shown by particular customer engagement practice like design elements including paintings, wall hangings, handmade rugs and carpets used in hotels were widely agreed by the customers. It was also found that, hotel building structure/ exteriors with a mean value of 3.89 followed by connectivity within different service areas of the hotel, having mean value of 3.85 is somewhat agreed by the customers.

The customer engagement practice like sound/music in public areas for example lobby, restaurants, and lounge with a mean value of 3.51 although less but slightly agreed by the customers.

4.6.2 Analysis of Hotel location: Table 4.6.2 shows the result of the data collected from the customers of category A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir, with regards to the customer engagement practices pertaining to Hotel Location. It was found that, all identified customer engagement practices exist in hotels, and the respondents strongly agreed.

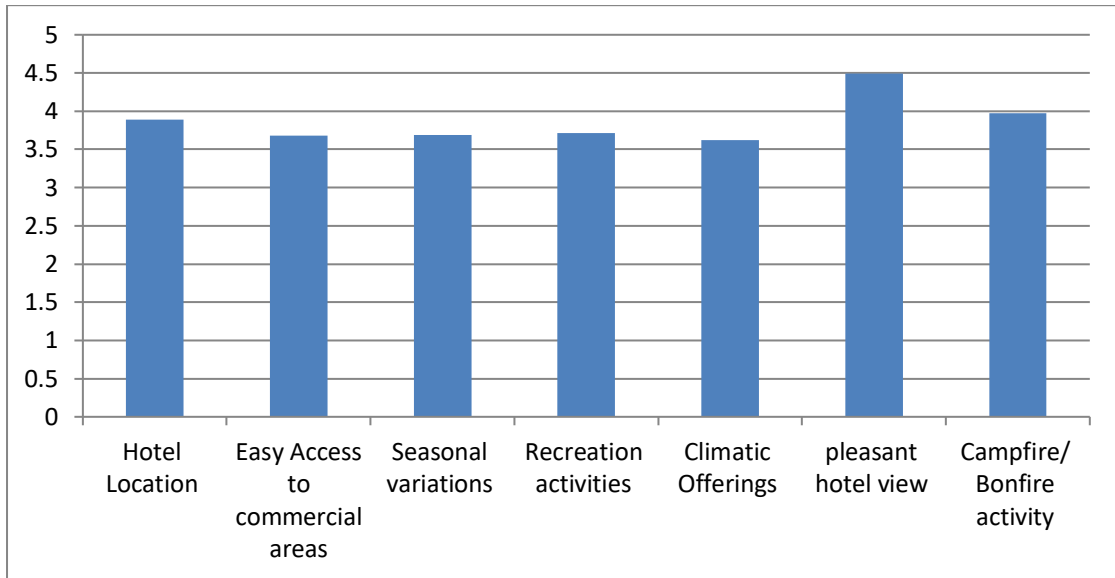


Fig 4.6.2: descriptive analysis chart showing the perception of customers with respect to hotel location

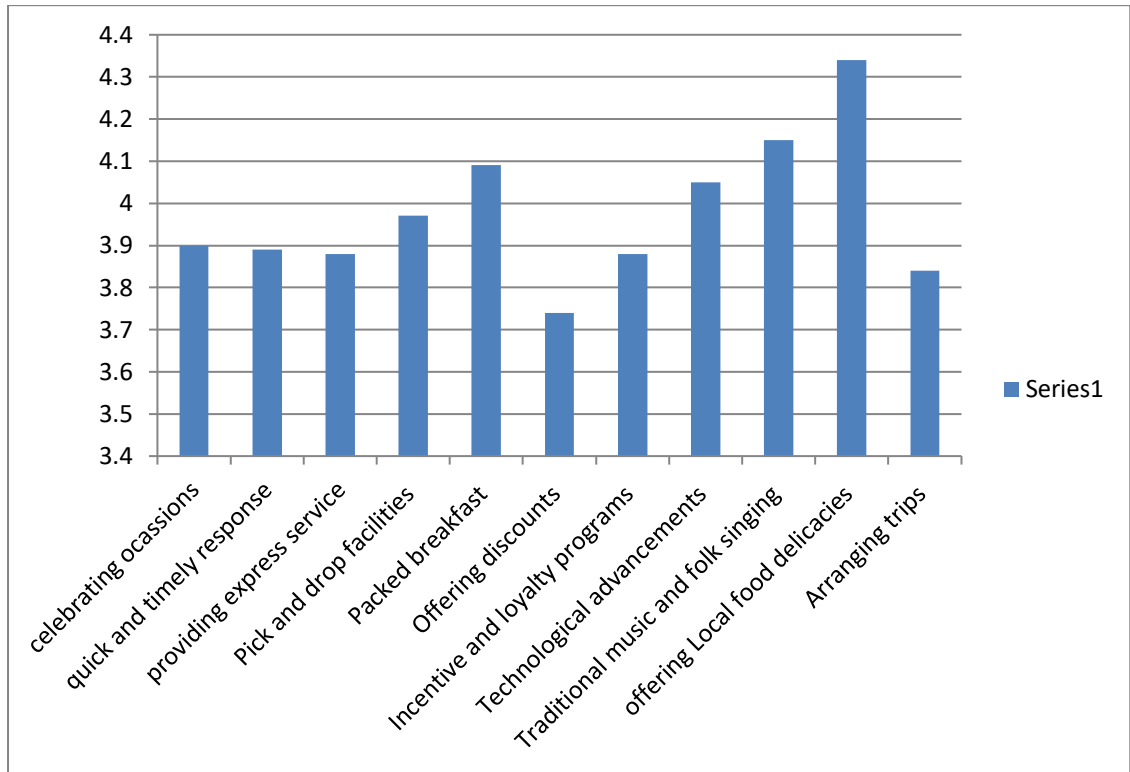
Table 4.6.2 Analysis of Hotel Location

Hotel Location plays a paramount role in engaging guests.	3.89	1.26
Easy Access to commercial areas like Malls, markets, offices from hotel makes you feel relaxed.	3.68	1.18
Seasonal variations like rain, snow and moderate summer temperature engages customer.	3.69	1.3
Recreational activities like, (gaming and sporting) available in and around the hotel attracts you.	3.71	1.18
Climatic Offerings like the plucking of fruits in summer, watching fall of chinar leaves in autumn, flower bloom during spring season etc, connect customers better.	3.62	1.28
A pleasant hotel view involves the guest with the hotel.	4.49	.947
Campfire/ Bonfire activity gives a feeling of enthusiasm towards the	3.97	.967

hotel.		
Mean of means	3.864	

The mean value of 4.49 for the pleasant view from the hotel shows that customers agree strongly by this practice. The enthusiastic activities like campfire and bonfire with mean value of 3.97 also shows that respondents agree. The other customer engagement practices with mean value ranging from 3.89 for hotel location, followed by 3.71, 3.69, 3.68 for recreation activities like gaming and sporting available in and around the hotel, seasonal variations like rain, snow and moderate summer temperature with respect to hotel location and easy access to commercial areas like markets, malls, government offices from hotel respectively shows much accord from hotel customers. The customer engagement practice like climatic offerings including plucking of fruits in summer, watching fall of chinar leaves in autumn etc with mean value of 3.62 , although less as compared to other customer engagement practices, but slightly agreed by the respondents.

4.6.3 Analysis of personalized services: Table 4.6.3.shows the result of the data with regard to the customer engagement practices pertaining to personalized services offered by hotel. It was found that, out of eleven identified customer engagement practices, respondents strongly agree with most of the statements. The mean value of 4.34 for offering local food delicacies and beverages to customer’s shows highly agreed behaviour of the customers.



4.6.3 Descriptive analysis chart showing the perception of customers with regards to personalized services.

Table 4.6.3 Analysis of personalized service

Personalized Services		
Celebrating occasions like birthdays, anniversaries for guests play an excellent role in customer engagement.	3.9	.88
Quick and timely response to customer queries contributes in engaging the customer.	3.89	.97
Providing express service and In-house concierge services helps in customer engagement.	3.88	.93
Pick and drop facilities with skilled chauffeurs for to and fro, engages you amicably.	3.97	.997
Packed breakfast for early checkouts and arranging picnic baskets during day trips has a great tendency to engage customers.	4.09	1.115

Offering discounts on special occasions, like women's day special, mother's day offers, helps in retaining the guest.	3.74	1.011
Incentive and loyalty programs elevate you and thus give feeling of enthusiasm for the hotel.	3.88	1.04
Technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website, holds guest for long.	4.05	1.04
Traditional music and folk singing arrangements involve guests and leave you engrossed.	4.15	1.190
Local food delicacies and beverage options connects you more with the hotel.	4.34	1.09
Arranging trips to local sightseeing and assistance in itinerary development hooks up the relationship between you and the hotel.	3.84	1.009
Mean of means	3.984	

The items like traditional music and folk singing arrangements, packed breakfast for early checkouts and arranging picnic baskets during day trips, technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website etc are customer engagement practices with mean value 4.15, 4.09, 4.05 respectively and all values ranging above 4, which shows respondents are strongly agreed. The mean values for customer engagement practices ranging from 3.74-3.97, which is close to 4 and hence shows that customers agree moderately. The offerings like discounts on special occasions which includes, women's day, mother's day, father's day etc holds least mean value of 3.74 but presents concur from the part of respondents.

4.7 Ranking given to Customers Engagement practices:

The table 4.4.1 shows the overall importance given to various customer engagement practices followed by different Grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 4.4.1: Ranking given to Customers Engagement practices

S.NO	Customer engagement practices	Overall mean	Overall Ranking
1	A pleasant hotel view involves the guest with the hotel.	4.49	1
2	Design elements like paintings, wall hangings, handmade rugs and carpets grasp your attention in the hotel.	4.37	2
3	Local food delicacies and beverage options connects you more with the hotel.	4.34	3
4	Traditional music and folk singing arrangements involve guests and leave you engrossed.	4.15	4
5	Packed breakfast for early checkouts and arranging picnic baskets during day trips has a great tendency to engage customers.	4.09	5
6	Technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website, holds guest for long.	4.05	6
7	Pick and drop facilities with skilled chauffeurs for to and fro, engages you amicably.	3.979	7
8	Campfire/ Bonfire activity gives a feeling of enthusiasm towards the hotel.	3.976	8
9	Celebrating occasions like birthdays, anniversaries for guests play an excellent role in customer engagement.	3.9	9
10	Hotel Location plays a paramount role in engaging guests.	3.898	10

11	Hotel building structure/ façade /exterior engages you.	3.891	11
12	Quick and timely response to customer queries contributes in engaging the customer.	3.89	12
13	Providing express service and In-house concierge services helps in customer engagement.	3.889	13
14	Incentive and loyalty programs elevate you and thus give feeling of enthusiasm for the hotel.	3.881	14
15	Connectivity within different service areas like (guest rooms, restaurants, front desk etc.) of hotel engross guest.	3.85	15
16	Arranging trips to local sightseeing and assistance in itinerary development hooks up the relationship between you and the hotel.	3.84	16
17	Hotel interiors like wood work, color scheme, décor involves you.	3.78	17
18	Offering discounts on special occasions, like women's day special, mother's day offers, helps in retaining the guest.	3.74	18
19	Recreational activities like, (gaming and sporting) available in and around the hotel attracts you.	3.71	19
20	Hotel ambience has a role in customer engagement.	3.72	20
21	Seasonal variations like rain, snow and moderate summer temperature engages customer.	3.69	21
22	Easy Access to commercial areas like Malls, markets,	3.68	22

	offices from hotel makes you feel relaxed.		
23	Climatic Offerings like the plucking of fruits in summer, watching fall of chinar leaves in autumn, flower bloom during spring season etc, connect customers better.	3.62	23
24	Sound/Music in public areas like (lobby, restaurants, lounge etc) engages you in good humor.	3.51	24

The ranking to different customer engagement practices has been assigned on the basis of overall mean, which is calculated by using the SPSS on the data collected from customers patronizing different grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir. As per overall mean, the pleasant hotel view has been found, the most important and preferred practice as per perception of customers.

Design elements like paintings, wall hangings, handmade rugs and carpets grasp the attention of customers in the hotel and assigned second rank as per mean result and therefore may be considered as the next important practice. Local food delicacies and beverage options available with the hotel have been assigned as the third rank as per the overall mean. Traditional music and folk singing arrangements involve guests, and have been assigned the fourth rank followed by packed breakfast for early checkouts and arranging picnic baskets during day trips with great tendency to engage customers, thus assigned as the fifth rank as per the response given by the customers.

Technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website, holds guest for long and allocated the sixth rank followed by Pick and drop facilities with skilled chauffeurs for to and fro, which holds seventh rank. Campfire/ Bonfire activity offered by the hotel falls at the eighth rank followed by Celebrating occasions like birthdays, anniversaries for guests as per the response given by customers. Hotel Location plays a paramount role in engaging guests is considered as the next important practice by the customers and allocated the tenth rank followed by Hotel building structure/ façade /exterior, which holds eleventh rank with respect to mean score. Quick and timely response to customer queries contributes in engaging the

customer and have been assigned twelfth rank as per the overall mean. Providing express service, in-house concierge services and Incentive and loyalty programs elevate you and thus give feeling of enthusiasm for the hotel, have been assigned the thirteenth and fourteenth rank respectively. Connectivity within different service areas like, (guest rooms, restaurants, front desk etc.) of hotel engross guest, is considered as an important practice by the customers therefore allocated as the fifteenth rank. Similarly the ranking based on over all mean goes down from sixteenth with very less difference in mean score till it reaches the twenty fourth rank, specifically considered the least important practice i.e. sound/music in public areas like (lobby, restaurants, lounge etc).

Chapter 5. Findings and Discussion

The present study is focused to identify existing customer engagement practices adopted by grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir, assessing the impact of customer engagement practices on repurchase intention of services as well as to know the perception of customers towards customer engagement practices. In this chapter, findings are summarized and suggestions are given based on the findings. The chapter will help the reader to have a complete view of the work done by the researcher. The present chapter is divided into two sections. Section 5.1 summarizes the important findings of the study, and section 5.2 highlights the discussion of the study.

5.1 Findings

The current section is segregated into three subsections. Subsection 5.1.1 provides the findings towards identification of customer engagement practices adopted by grade A hotels, Subsection 5.1.2 provides the findings from the perception of customers towards customer engagement practices adopted by grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir; Subsection 5.1.3 is based on findings related with the impact of customer engagement practices on repurchase intention.

5.1.1: Identification of Existing Customer Engagement Practices

The study identified the following themes hotel internal design practices, hotel location offerings/practices, Customer-oriented practices, service-oriented practices, customer promotional practices, and Art and Cultural Practices from data reporting and was identified to be used by hotel establishments to enhance customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. It has been identified that the unique cultural and natural beauty in the form of monuments, traditions, customs, handicrafts, music, and cuisine has been constantly used as a means by hotels to engage customers.

Customer Engagement practices concerning hotel location offerings/practices had been taken into consideration, because it has been found in data collection as well in literature that the external environment contributes a lot towards the engagement of customers in hotels as reported by (Bernard et al 2020), which is further supported by the findings of the study in terms of prime location, which includes accessibility to the airport, bus stand, railway station, markets, local gardens, and attraction, etc, scenic beauty, best air quality around, view photography, etc. hence engaging the customer

and helping in the repurchase intention of services and patronage intent. The climatic offerings contributed immensely to the involvement of customers and have been identified as an important destination attribute for tourism destinations (Hu & Ritchie, 1993) for example in the case of beach destinations, the climate is either the main tourism resource (Kozak et al., 2008) and the data analysis like seasonal attraction has indicated the same like snow sculpture creations, watching tulips bloom in the spring and chinar leaves fall in autumn, which is associated with the climate offerings and also contributes to the customer engagement in the hotel.

Hotel Internal design Practices as proved by the existing literature Nobles (1999) suggested that ‘the best way to enhance the hotel operation’s appeal and image can be done with the aesthetically approved design of hotel property, which can lend an identity to the business among its customers and visitors. These internal factors have an overarching impact on engrossing customers in a hotel as evident from the data interpretation and include easily approachable service areas within a hotel, which means that customers feel relaxed if the access between different areas of the hotel like the lobby to guest rooms, business center to the coffee shop, etc is helpful. Other hotel design elements such as handcrafted woodwork like the khatam band quite famous in Jammu and Kashmir, thematic lighting in the lobby and lounges, and subtle music backgrounds in public areas of the hotel which give a distinctive identity to that hotel will engage customers for long and compels them to visit the hotel for its unique features in terms of unique design.

The nature of loyalty programs from being entirely transaction-oriented is changing towards amalgamated systems that surely assist in comprising and maintaining customer relationships (Bijmolt and Verhoef 2017). The trend of such programs has become very well-liked in the current era to boost loyalty among engaged customers and uphold engagement behaviors (Berry 2015; Boston Retail Partners 2015). The customer promotional practices that have been evident from the current study were, it has been recommended that various loyalty programs, incentive programs, coupon offerings, room upgrades without charging extra, etc bring in a sense of belongingness among customers for the respective hotel. Such practices prepare the hotels for low business periods by reaching out to closely related customers carrying memberships and offering them coupons.

The behavior that arises in all interactions aimed at enabling a customer to feel he/she is receiving individual attention is personalization (Surprenant & Solomon 1987). So, a customer expects personalized care. It has also been confirmed that customer experience is deeply affected by the amalgam of informatization, interaction, and personalization (Jeong & Shin, 2019). Thus offering more appropriate products and services, that fulfills the basic wants and desires of the customer. This way, a company can get more connected with the customer. As the data from the current study suggests that a customer feels overwhelmed when approached by guest relationship executives in the front office. They easily open up about their needs and expectations from the hotel. The feedback during or at the end of service consumption like feedback about food and service in the restaurant by service personnel will be a boasting factor and ensures a more preference-oriented product towards the customer. The current study has identified some important preference-oriented practices which are only possible when we build a cordial relationship with the customer.

An eager audience among tourists who like arts and crafts, mainly handicrafts, has attracted since last two centuries, and they are sure that unique elements of their travel experience are these articles believed as souvenirs. So from centuries on, the uniqueness of artistry assists the hotel marketing plan (West & Purvis, 1992), leading to increased revenue and more occupied rooms (Countryman & Jang, 2006). Thus the art in the form of handicrafts, local food, apparel, customs, traditions, cultural uniqueness, historical remarks in the form of heritage sites, forts and mosques, and temples available around the hotel will attract the customers for a long.

5.1.2 Perception of customers towards customer engagement practices

It is found that personalized services with an overall mean value of around 3.984 are mostly agreed as per the perception of the customers, followed by hotel location with a mean value of 3.864 and lastly the perception of customers towards customer engagement practices concerning hotel design with a mean value of 3.85 is less agreed as compared to other two variables. The various identified customer engagement practices in connection with the three main variables with a distinctive mean value have indicated that almost all the identified customer engagement practices have been agreed upon by the customers. The difference in mean values allotted by respondents shows the perception of customers towards such practices.

Out of eleven identified customer engagement practices concerning personalized services offered by the hotel, four of the practices had mean values of more than four like arranging trips to local sightseeing and assistance in itinerary development, followed by Local food delicacies and beverage options, Traditional music and folk singing arrangements and Technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website. The other seven customer engagement practices though having a mean value below four but being very close to four indicates the moderately agree account of respondents.

The seven identified hotel location-oriented practices had given out different mean values with a pleasant hotel view having a higher mean value of 4.49 showing customers strongly agree. Campfire/ Bonfire activity offered by the hotel had a mean value of 3.97 which again shows that respondents agree. All the other five customer engagement practices had also a mean value of less than four but very close to four which indicates the overall agreed behavior from the respondent perspective concerning such customer engagement practices. The climatic offerings like the plucking of fruits in summer, watching the fall of chinar leaves in autumn, and flower bloom during the spring season have the lowest mean value of 3.62 among all seven hotel location-based customer engagement practices but being close to poor shows respondents agree but on a lower scale.

The last but not least variable of the study was hotel design-based customer engagement practices. The mean of mean for the hotel design has been calculated and stands at 3.853, which is close to four and shows the overall agreed perception of the respondents. The highest mean value i.e. 4.37 among all six design-based practices had been designated to Design elements like paintings, wall hangings, handmade rugs, and carpets, which shows a strongly agreed respondent's perspective. The other five customer engagement practices although having mean values below four but being close to four shows a moderately agreed perspective from the respondent's side. The Hotel building structure/ façade /exterior with a mean value of 3.89 and the lowest mean value of 3.51 had been calculated for Sound/Music in public areas like (lobby, restaurants, lounge, etc). The variation among mean values between different customer engagement practices shows the interest of customers for getting attracted towards such activities in and around the hotel. The above results that had been

calculated so far with respect to all three independent variables of hotel location, personalized services offered by the hotel, and hotel design were in almost twenty-four practices/ items had been identified by hotel managers/ executives, etc with a mean value ranging from 3.51 to 4.49. The considerable amount of difference in mean values shows the difference based on the perception of customers towards these customer engagement practices. Now, it has been found that all the customer engagement practices show agreement from the respondent's side. Although some of the practices with mean values close to 5 show strongly agreed and others being below four or close to four show moderately agreed perception as well.

5.1.3: Impact of Customer Engagement practices on Customer Repurchase intention.

3(a).To study the impact of hotel location on the re-purchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

3(b).To studies the impact of Hotel design on the re-purchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

3(c).To studies the impact of personalized service on the re-purchase intention of services in Jammu and Kashmir.

The result with regards to the impact of customer engagement practices on customer Re-purchase intention of hotels is shown in table 5.1.3 and table 5.1.4 respectively. Customer engagement practices are taken as an independent variable, which belongs to three main constructs hotel design, hotel location, and personalized service, and customer re-purchase intention is taken as the dependent variable. R-value ranges from -1 to +1. A value of $r > 0$ indicates that there is a positive linear relationship between a dependent variable and the independent variable as one variable increases, the other variable also increases and the value of $r = 1$ indicates a perfect positive linear relationship. The value of $r < 0$ indicates a negative linear relationship between dependent and independent variables in $r = -1$ indicating a perfect negative linear relationship. $R = 0$ indicates, there is no linear relationship between x and y. Now as per the calculated values derived from the results for R from the study. It has been derived that the cumulative impact of customer engagement practices on the repurchase intention of hotels about R-value stands at 0.594, which indicates a strong

positive relationship between all independent variables i.e. personalized service, hotel location, and hotel design with dependent variable repurchase intention. The value of r-square is calculated around 0.368, which indicates that more than 36% of the impact on repurchase intention is due to studied independent variables. The value of r-square for the current study signifies moderate impact but personalized services with the highest value of $R=0.614$ has a positive strong relationship with the dependent variable i.e re-purchase intention. The other variables like hotel location and hotel design with $R=.485$ and 0.438 respectively show a moderate positive relationship, which indicates that all the customer engagement practices do have a positive impact on the re-purchase intention of hotels.

R-squared is a square of the correlation coefficient and explains the variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable. Its value ranges from 0-1. So a value of $r\text{-squared}=0.378$ percent is a variation in re-purchase intention explained by personalized service. In the same way, the value of $r\text{-squared}=0.235$ percent is a variation in re-purchase intention explained by hotel location and $r\text{-squared}=$ of 0.192 percent indicating a variation in re-purchase intention explained by hotel design and the remaining percentage is explained by factors not considered in the present study.

Table 5.1.3 impact of CEP's on RPI

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate
CEP's	0.594*	0.368	0.357	0.34518

Table 5.1.4 Individual impact of study constructs on RPI

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate
Hotel design	0.438*	0.192	0.187	0.41868
Personalized service	0.614*	0.378	0.368	0.36936

Hotel location	0.485*	0.235	0.231	0.40735
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5.2 Discussions

This study aimed to identify the customer engagement practices used by hotels in UT of Jammu and Kashmir (India). The study identified the following themes hotel internal design practices, hotel location offerings/practices, Customer-oriented practices, Personalized service practices, customer promotional practices, and Art and Cultural Practices from data reporting, and was identified to be used by hotel establishments to enhance their customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. It has been identified that the unique cultural and natural beauty in the form of monuments, traditions, customs, handicrafts, music, and cuisine has been constantly used as a means by hotels to engage customers.

Customer Engagement practices also take hotel location offerings/practices into consideration, because it has been found in data collection as well in literature that the external environment contributes a lot towards the engagement of customers in hotels as reported by (Bernard et al 2020), further supported by the findings of the study in terms of prime location, which includes accessibility to the airport, bus stand, railway station, markets, local gardens, and attraction, etc, scenic beauty, best air quality around, view photography, etc. hence engaging the customer and helping in the repurchase intention of services and re-patronage intent. The climatic offerings contributed immensely to the involvement of customers and have been identified as an important destination attribute for tourism destinations (Hu & Ritchie, 1992) for example in the case of beach destinations, the climate is either the main tourism resource (Kozak et al., 2008) and the data analysis like seasonal attraction has indicated the same like snow sculpture creations, watching tulips bloom in the spring and chinar leaves fall in autumn, which is associated with the climate offerings and also contributes to the customer engagement in the hotel.

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identity to the business among its customers and visitors. These internal factors have an overarching impact on engrossing customers in a hotel as evident from the data interpretation and include easily approachable service areas within a hotel, which means that customers feel relaxed if the access between different areas of the hotel like the lobby to guest rooms, business center to the coffee shop, etc is helpful. Other hotel design elements such as handcrafted woodwork like the khatam band quite famous in Jammu and Kashmir, thematic lighting in the lobby and lounges, and subtle music backgrounds in public areas of the hotel which give a distinctive identity to that hotel will engage customers for long and compels them to visit the hotel for its unique features in terms of unique design.

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boasting factor and ensures a more preference-oriented product towards the customer. The current study has identified some important preference-oriented practices which are only possible when we build a cordial relationship with the customer.

An eager audience among tourists who like arts and crafts, mainly handicrafts, has attracted since last two centuries, and they are sure that unique elements of their travel experience are these articles believed as souvenirs. So from centuries on, the uniqueness of artistry assists the hotel marketing plan(West & Purvis, 1992), leading to increased revenue and more occupied rooms(Countryman & Jang, 2006). Thus the art in the form of handicrafts, local food, apparel, customs, traditions, cultural uniqueness, historical remarks in the form of heritage sites, forts and mosques, and temples available around the hotel will attract the customers for a long.

Further the results of the study suggested that hotel customers perceive that all the identified customer engagement practices lead to engagement in hotels. The mean value of various customer engagement practices starts from 3.52 (Sound/Music in public areas like lobby, restaurants, lounge, etc), which moderately agrees from the customer's perspective, and a mean value of 4.49 (A pleasant hotel view), which indicates strong agreement. The above results specify that almost all the identified customer engagement practices lead to effective customer engagement. The three variables for the study include hotel design, hotel location, and personalized service offered by the hotel. the findings had ascertained with respect to the overall mean value of these variables with some important proceedings. The personalized service tops with an overall mean value of 3.98, which is close to four and shows agreement, followed by hotel location with an overall mean value of 3.86, which is again close to four and indicated agreement from the respondent's perspective. Last but not the least, it been found that hotel design with an overall mean value of 3.843 which is slightly less than hotel location but indicative of agreement as well. The results thus indicate that personalized service practices are highly engaging for customers. The impact of customer engagement practices has been calculated with the help of linear regression. The personalized services have got high significance with $p = .000$, $r = .353$. the results designate a highly significant impact of personalized service customer engagement practices on repurchase intention. The hotel location again has shown significance with $p = .002$, $r = .220$. Which indicates the high impact of hotel location practices on

repurchase intention and a positive correlation between hotel location (independent variable) and repurchase intention (dependent variable). The hotel design had resulted in an insignificant impact on repurchase intention with $p=.090$, $r=.112$.

Chapter.6 Suggestions and Conclusion

In this chapter, results are summarized and suggestions are given based on findings. The chapter will help the reader to have complete view of the work done by the researcher. The present chapter is divided into four sections. Section 6.1 summarizes the important suggestions of the study; section 6.2 list outs the recommendations from the study; section 6.3 provides conclusion and section 6.4 enumerates limitations of the current study.

6.1 Suggestions

After analyzing the responses received from the customers and hotel managers/Executives of grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir. Some suggestions for the betterment of customer experiences and services provided by grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir are as under;

- It was observed that although most of the hotels are located at prime tourism locations in Jammu and Kashmir, which acts as a best practice in engaging customers and had also been agreed upon by respondents. Now it is suggested that while planning a hotel project, the view from hotel rooms and hotel especially must be kept in mind and the further course of action in terms of construction and installation should be planned accordingly so as to provide best view from the hotel.
- Keeping in view the interest of customers in design elements like paintings, wall hangings, handmade rugs and carpets, these artifacts play a pivotal role in depicting the art and culture of the place. They are readily available for use in the market at nominal costs. So, it is imperative for the hotels to make best use of such locally made products, thus boosting the local artisans and providing a lifelong experience to the customers.
- As all of us know that location is significantly important for any business to grow and succeed and same had been proved from the results that hotel location is perceived to be the one of the important components choosed and patronized by customers. So, in this connection for hotels especially the new upcoming hotel projects, they must be planned at prime locations, either near to natural attractions, close to public facilities and access points like bus stand, railway station and airport or in vicinity of commercial areas and markets.

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- Local food delicacies and beverage options are most commonly used practices by hotels to engage customers. Still more efforts should be made to improve this practice. Involvement of more items in the menu from local cuisine and addition of traditional beverages like tea, Kehwa at different occasions to the customers will involve them for long with the hotel.
 - Climatic offerings like the plucking of fruits in summer, watching fall of chinar leaves in autumn, flower bloom during spring season are engagement practices limited to a particular place but acts as a main source of attraction for the customers. These practices have a very limited season and lasts for a very short period of the year. It is suggested to indulge the customers fully by providing information about such happenings, events and activities through social media options, so that they can plan their trips accordingly.
 - Seasonal variations like rain, snow and moderate summer temperature are the practices having a potential to attract customers immensely for that particular period. It has been reported from the mean value that the respondents shows strong agreement, but there is need for more efforts and preparations so that new activities can be offered to the customer. Jammu & Kashmir is gifted enormously with such natural offerings. Hence, hotels should make best use of these particular offerings in engaging customers for long.
 - Technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website is highly agreed by the respondents and involves them for long. Such online platforms are easy modes to get in touch with the customers and provide them valuable information. The need of the hour is to provide such platforms to the customers including a skilled team of employees for facilitating them at every connect. The App and website proves to be very economical sources of interaction in between the customers and hotel. Therefore it becomes imperative for the hotels to make such provisions, in order to ensure, that most of the interactions with the customers happen by using online platforms.
 - Hotels should pay more attention to the theme and ambience as a customer engagement practice as well. As it is observed from the findings, that the customers are not much satisfied with the ambience in certain hotels. This practice holds a huge raw potential and focusing into this can help engaging customers in better way. The development of innovative and entertaining themes in guest rooms, restaurants,

lobbies absorbs the attention of customers like atrium lobby, kashmiri suite and Chinese theme restaurant in certain hotels are the ambience and theme based engagement tools.

- Providing express service and In-house concierge services help in customer engagement and has also been agreed by the respondents. It is observed that most of the hotels are using this practice to engage customers. Still some hotel companies are unable to provide concierge services as they don't possess this important section in their hotel. So hotels should pay more attention on this specific practice as it helps in creating differentiations, relationship opportunities and last but not the least it helps in growing the revenue for the organization.
- Hotels should take initiative in arranging trips to local sightseeing and assistance in itinerary development as it really helps in development of strong bond and trust in between the customers and the hotel and hooks them up with the hotel for long. This has been agreed by the respondents. It has been observed that customers feel stressed while visiting a hotel for the first time and enquiring for information all the time. When such services are provided by the hotels without asking for them as their USP. The customers feel overwhelmed as they get answers for their difficult questions easily. So it is suggested to have these services always available for the customers in order to engage them better.
- Offering discounts on special occasions, like women's day special, mother's day offers, helps in retaining the guest with the hotel which is in tandem with the response of the customers. The hotels spent their valuable time with the customers, update them with the upcoming discount packages and offers. Wish and celebrate their special occasions. The best approach to celebrate is to offer them discounted meals etc. So it is suggested that all the hotels must undergo such practices, have advanced information for the same and make norms to entertain guests on these special occasions.

6.2 Recommendations

In addition to above customer engagement practices based on the finding of the study and after analyzing existing customer engagement practices adopted by hotels to engage customers in a better way. So keeping in view their respective benefits, these practices can be implemented by hotel sector in India.

The practices are suggested as under:

- *Good Customer Service:* Hoteliers should focus more on rendering good customer service. It is already well recognized that good customer service is essential for companies to prosper. As indicated by the Institute of Customer Service, sixty three percent of customers purchase from same company again and again after receiving good service from an individual or the staff. As consistently providing the high-quality services to the customer is the key to customer engagement because customer service interaction plays a crucial role in creating dynamic relationships with a customer which is an imperative ingredient for engagement to occur.
- *Makeover of Customers into Brand Advocates:* The attraction and engagement of new customers, while increasing engagement levels among existing ones by transforming loyal customers into brand advocates. For this, hotel companies should appreciate the customers by offering opportunities and incentives - for example, put into practice 'refer a friend' scheme.
- *Use Social Media as an Engagement tool and not only as entertainment Platform:* Hotel companies need to change their mindset about social media. Social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn are mainly used for establishing a connection with customers. Companies should also use them as effective tools of engagement, if better results are desired. Social media is growing and swelling every now and then. As of July, 2015, about 2.3 billion people are active on social media. Using this social media tool companies can enhance level of customer engagement” (Cscope, 2010).the same number has drastically increased by almost two times and the current stastics has shown that more than 4.48 billion people are connected through social media worldwide. The figure has drastically got doubled from 2.07 billion in 2015.
- *Engage Customers with Product updates and offers through advanced technology:* Notifying customers about new products and offers, there are several platforms such as in-product messaging, email newsletter, mobile, social media and customer care/support etc. A company can improve engagement, by sending in-product messages because, that's what the customers are eagerly waiting for. The product related content and media is delivered directly to a user's internet-connected device or software application, with the motive of informing users, gathering feedback from

them and engaging them with their new product. Marketing to the customers through such channel will lead to higher engagement rates than other digital marketing and online marketing channels.

- Communicate with regular customers and upgrade them special membership: membership customers are those who have been with us for a long time and purchased our product, referred friends, family members, and fans to our business. membership customers are not one-time buyers (Cscape, 2010). Hotels should focus more on these customers by interacting with them frequently and designing promotional schemes and special offers for them. It will surely help in enhancing level of customer engagement.
- Obsess over your customers by delivering Enormous Value: When companies give priority to customers and think about their welfare, it will help in nurturing an army of brand advocates. Such companies always go ahead to answer customer questions and address complaints. It is a fact that customers are distracted. So by obsessing customers by providing enormous value, hotel companies can engage customers and prevent them from switching to another company.
- Hold a Customer-Engagement Summit: The number of tools undertaken to learn from are enormous i.e. blogs, books, articles, newspapers, journals, videos, podcasts and multimedia. Hotel companies should organize customer engagement summit in order to engage customers. Hosting a customer-engagement summit provides opportunity to interact with customers face-to-face. Customers can ask questions on the spot and instead of answering via email or phone, company executives can infuse humor while providing answers.
- Produce Interactive and reliable Content to Feed Customer Demand: Content marketing is an effective way to engage customers. Hotels should switch from traditional marketing strategies to content marketing. The Ability of a company to produce the right content with highest level of reliability in combination with modern technology is significant for generating more leads, more inbound links, and more customers. Hotel should hire content marketing professionals to design attractive and innovative content” (Park & Allen, 2013). So by producing the right content at the right time, companies can attract more customers.

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- **Scale Customer Engagement Budget:** The marketing cost for any product and service or for that matter for any activity in general, there is always a cost that incurs and when it comes to customer engagement strategies a considerable time and training to personnel is needed so “Business is not limited as it used to be once. There are new methodologies, tools, vehicles, and content sort at every corner. Many organizations are confused, in light of the fact that they can’t figure out how they can afford all of costs within their limited budget Therefore, it’s beneficial to scale customer engagement budget” (Awareness Inc., 2011). If a company invest large portion of budget on content creation and distribution, customer engagement will suffer.
 - **Appoint Customer Engagement personnel’s:** The companies across industries are creating versions of this role. Hotel companies should hire professional customer engagement personnel’s having prior exposure in designing and implementing innovative customer engagement practices. The role of customer engagement officer is to provide on-brand, topical and provocative customer engagement strategies needed to engage customers effectively.

6.3 Conclusion.

In nutshell, this study has sufficiently proved and investigated the role of customer engagement practices on customer repurchase intention of services. The results help to enhance customer engagement awareness by improving the current understanding of customer loyalty and satisfaction, which suggests that repurchase is developed through enhancement of the customer engagement experience. Hotels interested in acquiring, retaining and extending customer relationships can no longer do so by only launching good quality products, or cutting cost. They need to initiate practices to engage their customers. The anticipation of customer needs and expectations are outcomes of Customer Engagement initiatives and later on helps to fulfill them effectively. The complete process of brand building needs heavy implementation of effective customer engagement practice. However, it is quite difficult to minutely measure and implement the customer engagement practices. Companies willing to retain customers and enhance repurchase behavior must clearly have engagement strategy and practices in place, and be well prepared to flounder for a while before getting it in order and reaping the benefits of customer engagement marketing. Developing a culture of engagement is not an overnight process. It must commence at

the top and flow downwards. Employees have to be engaged before they can engage their customers. The most significant practical implication from the findings of this study is identification of existing customer engagement practices adopted in Grade A hotels of Jammu and Kashmir with respect to hotel design, hotel location and personalized services offered by the hotel.

In this study, the first objective has been met by consulting hotel Executives/Managers for data collection. A checklist has been developed based on which, an In depth Interview was conducted in order to know the existing customer engagement practices adopted by these hotels in view of hotel's location, hotel design and personalized services offered by the hotel. Qualitative approach based on the thematic analysis method was adopted. After compiling the data received through interviews, the data analysis has been done by coding method where in different themes has been created through open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The final outcome of the analysis has brought six basic themes in terms of customer engagement practices followed by hotels which include (a) Hotel internal design, (b) hotel location offerings/ practices, (c) Customer-oriented practices, (d) Personalized service practices, (e) customer promotional practices and (f) Art and Cultural Practices. The next four objectives have been met by quantitative analysis, where in total of 380 customers of various demographic profiles have been taken as respondents for the cause of data collection in order to check their perception with reference to identified customer engagement practices. The impact of these customer engagement practices had been analysed by using linear regression and multiple regression. As far as perception of the customers toward customer's engagement practices is concerned, it is found that customers more or less agreed for the numerous explored customer engagement practices discussed in the study. The findings confirm that personalized service offered by any hotel has significant impact on the repurchase intention of hotels, followed by hotel location. The customer engagement practices though having moderate to high degree of agreeability for engaging customers, but no significance with respect to impact on repurchase intention of hotels. which indicated that hotels desire for repeated business by customers, they have to focus more on personalized service, take best advantage of location and for design perspective, the practices should be there to engage customers but there will be no impact on repurchase intention.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The most evident fact of life is that every process has some limitations. So same is the case with the current study without being the exception. There was a heavy responsibility and strictness dealt with while conducting the different steps and processes of study. But as the study was conducted by a single person and hence, time management was a big challenge, the financial outcry was felt at every step and the sample size for the study was very complex. The study was based on the perception of respondents as well as the individual exploration by the scholar. Though the researcher has put every effort to gather correct responses for different questions from each respondent, still the researcher has no control over the manipulation made by the respondent while filling in the responses. Thus the various limitations of the current study have been enlisted below. Some of the most important are enumerated as under:

1. since there is a huge scope of study in this particular field. The collected data provided huge information; therefore some interesting results have been revealed. But, according to the objectives of the current study, the researcher limited the result of the present study. However, the researcher tried to include all the necessary information for justifying the result of the study.
2. The present study was based on the experiences and observations of the respondents. In opinion surveys, there would always be possibilities of individual biases in opinions, and results look unreliable. These biases could not be eliminated.
3. The study was undertaken for only Grade A hotels in Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, there is scope for similar caliber of study for other Grades of Hotels in Jammu and Kashmir.
4. A comparative study in between constructs like hotel design, hotel location and personalized service can be undertaken, in order to understand the relationship among them. The study may be extended to include other variables, like socio-cultural, technological, environmental factor, etc. Further, large sample size and inclusion of multi-type stakeholders, like Jammu and Kashmir Tourism development corporation (JKTDC), Ecotourism society, pony wallas, trekkers, pilgrims, etc. shall extend the horizons of understanding the role of customer engagement.

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Appendix-A-Questionnaire

Customer Engagement practices and Repurchase Intention of Services: A study of Hotels in Jammu & Kashmir

Dear Sir/Madam,

This research is based on the study “*Customer Engagement practices and Repurchase Intention of Services: A study of Hotels in Jammu & Kashmir*” for which the information is to be collected, and it is purely academic. I request you to kindly spare some time and give your valuable responses to the following statements.

S.No	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hotel Design						
	Hotel building structure/façade/exterior engages you.	1	2	3	4	5
	Sound/Music in public areas like(lobby, restaurants, lounge etc)engages you in good humor.	1	2	3	4	5
	Hotel ambience attracts you towards the hotel and leads to customer engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
	Connectivity within different service areas like(guest rooms, restaurants, lobby etc.)of hotel engages you..	1	2	3	4	5
	Hotel interiors like wood work, color scheme, décor involves you with the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
	Design elements like paintings, wall hangings and other artifacts grasp your attention in the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Hotel Location						
	Hotel location engages you	1	2	3	4	5
	Easy Access to commercial areas like Malls, markets, offices from hotel makes you feel relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5
	Seasonal variations like raining, snowing and moderate summer temperature engages you.	1	2	3	4	5
	Recreation activities like (Gaming and sporting) available in and around the hotel engages you..	1	2	3	4	5
	Climatic Offerings like the plucking of fruits in summer, watching fall of chinar leaves in autumn, flower bloom during spring season etc, connect you better with the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
	A pleasant hotel view involves the you with the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
	Campfire/Bonfire activity helps in customer engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
Personalized Service						
	Celebrating occasions like birthday, anniversary for guests leads to customer engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
	Quick and timely response to customer queries contributes in effective customer engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
	Providing express service and In-house concierge services helps in	1	2	3	4	5

customer engagement.					
Pick and drop facilities with skilled chauffeurs for to and fro, engages you better.	1	2	3	4	5

Packed breakfast for early check outs and arranging picnic baskets during day trips engages customers.	1	2	3	4	5
Offering discounts on special occasions, like women's day special, mother's day offers ,helps in engaging the customer.	1	2	3	4	5
Incentive and loyalty programs elevate you and thus give feeling of enthusiasm for the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Technological advancements like connecting with the hotel through App, website, holds you long with the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Traditional music and folk singing arrangements involve you with the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Local food delicacies and beverage options connects you with the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Arranging trips to local sightseeing and assistance in itinerary development hooks up the relationship between you and the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
Repurchase Intention					
I would recommend this hotel to someone who seeks my advice.	1	2	3	4	5
I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
I would say positive things about this hotel to other people.	1	2	3	4	5
I would revisit this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
I am a delighted customer of this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
I am willing to maintain my relationship with this hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B-Demographics

Demographics

1. **Gender:** Male Female

2. **Age:** 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-above

3. **Qualification:** a) Undergraduate b) Graduate
c) Post Graduate d) Professional

4. **Marital Status:** a) Single b) Married c) Widowed

5. **Income per month:** a) less than 50k b) 50k-70K
c) 71k -100k d) 100k-above

6. **Occupation:**.....

7. **Frequency of visit to the hotel :** a) 1st time b) 2nd time
 c) more than two time

Appendix-C- Research Paper

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Eco-Friendly customer engagement Practices in hotels: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality industry especially hotels consume a good amount of natural resources and results in waste generation. Hotel industry is considered as main customer oriented industry, where there is huge consumption of energy resources. As we know that limited availability of energy resources on planet earth has made it essential feature of every industry and hospitality industry is not untouched to go for energy conservation. To contribute effectively, hotels have started exercising green practices which include reusing linen practices, natural temperature control techniques, 3R's principle and many more. There is huge significance of environment related issues that continues to rise in hotel industry because of increased knowledge about environmental issues. Keeping this information in mind, the current study stresses on exploring the eco-friendly customer engagement practices with respect to hotel location, hotel design exercised in hotels of Gulmarg, Kashmir as well as its impact on repurchase intention of services in hotels. A checklist was developed to receive data from the hotel managers/supervisors. The outcome specified that some environmental friendly practices like plantation drives, walking through the wilderness, waste water management tools, linen reuse, horse riding as means of transportation, trekking through the green forests, use of natural light and installation of well designed ventilation and LED lighting etc are mostly exercised practices in the hotels of Gulmarg, Kashmir. The study revealed that eco friendly customer engagement practices involve customers effectively and leaves an ever lasting impression on the customer and attracts them again towards the destination.

Key words: Hospitality Industry, Eco Hotels, Green practices, Design based practices, Location based practices

Introduction

Green or eco-friendly hotel is defined as the hotel which provides services and amenities focusing on conserving the environment, energy saving and reduction of carbon emissions (Lee and Cheng, 2018). Green hotels generally exercise environmental guidelines and procedures and implement sustainability in their daily operations (Green Hotels

Association, 2018). There are many factors which inspire the hotels to take on environment-friendly practices like legal guidelines and policies, general environmental organisations and legal concerns (Zhu and Sergio, 2006; Sethasaldjo, 2007; Kasim and Ismail, 2012). Eco friendly hotels following different practices in their normal operations presents a positive image on customers in the market place in comparison to their competitors (Iwanowski and

(¹Research Scholar, ²Assistant Prof., ³Research Scholar)

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Appendix-D- Conference-1st



Amity University Uttar Pradesh
Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism



Amity International Tourism & Hospitality Conference (AITHC 2021)

"Tourism For Inclusive Growth: Promoting Equality and Sustainable Economic Development"

This is to certify that Dr. Shabir Ahmad Dar from LPU has presented Research paper entitled "Sustainable growth in nature-based tourism destinations: Customers' opinions of land consumption options in Gulmarg, Kashmir." We wish

him best of success.

Conference joint Co-Chair
Dr. Narendra Kumar

Conference Co-Chair
Prof. Pranshu Chomplay

Conference Chair
Prof. (Dr.) M. Sajnani
Dean FHT & Director AITT

23rd -24th Sep. 2021

Appendix-E- Conference 2nd

LOVELY FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ARTS

[Under the Aegis of Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar-Delhi G.T. Road, Phagwara (Punjab)]

Certificate No.239319

Certificate of Presentation

This is to certify that Mr. Shabir Ahmad Dar, Research Scholar of School of Hotel Management & Tourism, Lovely Professional University, Punjab. has given presentation on **Identifying the customer engagement practices about hotel services** in the 3rd International Conference on **"Sustainable Developmental Goals and Management Practices" (SDGMP 2022)** held on February 11-12, 2022, organized by School of Hotel Management and Tourism, Lovely Faculty of Business and Arts, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India.

Date of Issue:23-02-2022

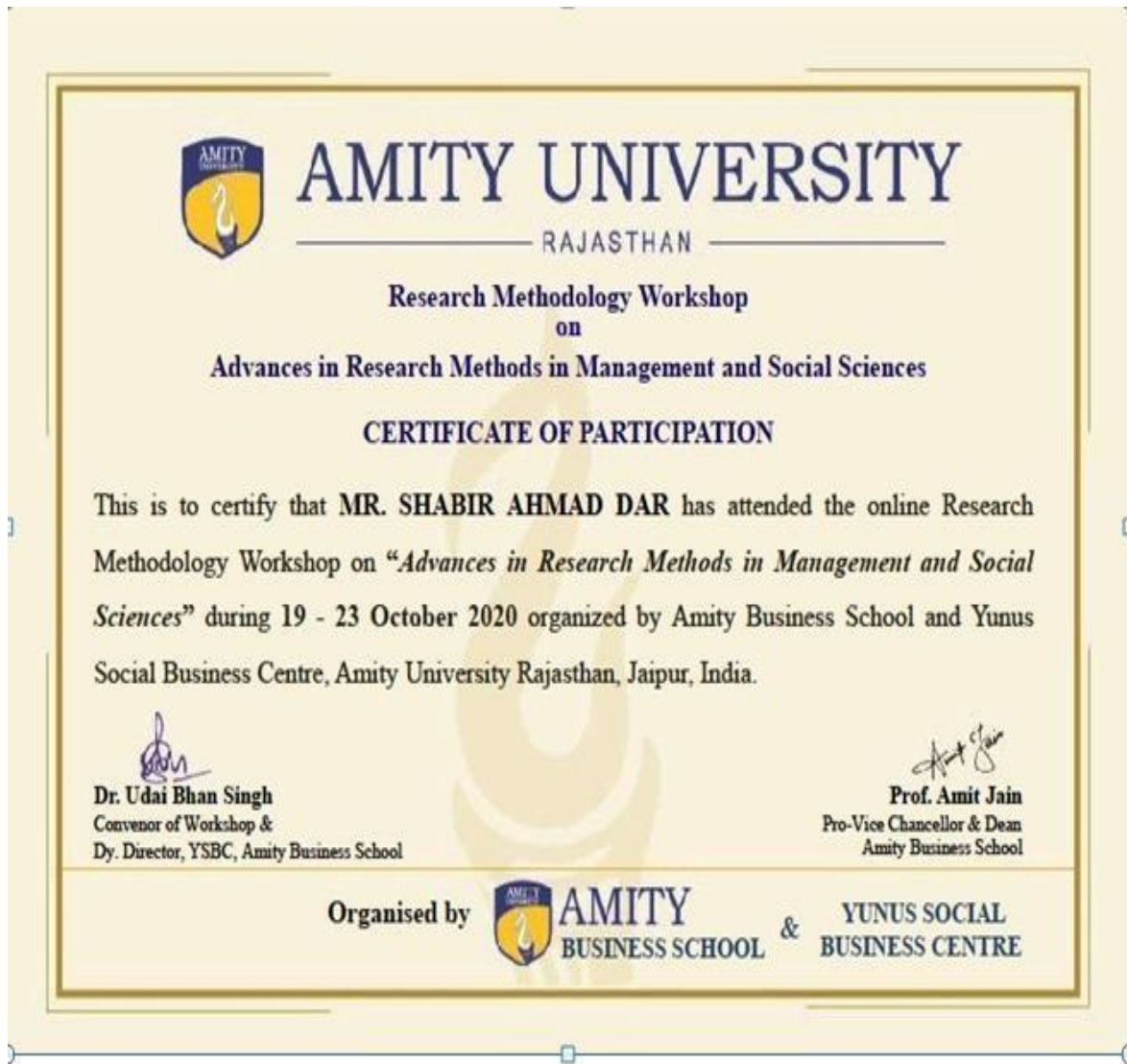
Place : Phagwara (Punjab), India

Prepared by
(Administrative Officer-Records)

Dr. Sandeep Walia
Organizing Secretary &
Conference Convener

Dr. Sanjay Modi
Pro-Vice Chancellor
Lovely Faculty of Business & Arts

Appendix- F- Workshop 1st



Appendix-G-Workshop 2nd



Appendix-H- Workshop 3rd

