

The role of a hotel room within leisure and work-related travel experiences – perspectives of traveller types

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Abstract

This study focuses on travellers with experience in both leisure and work-related travel, examining their hotel room perceptions, the importance of the room in both contexts, and the benefits they expect. As such, it identifies traveller types based on the significance they assign to hotel rooms. Data were collected from travellers reflecting on past experiences rather than during an active trip, reducing potential bias from specific hotel settings and services. A qualitative methodology was employed, utilising 30 semi-structured interviews for data collection. The analysis showed that interviewees emphasised different needs, expectations and practices when staying in a hotel room for work and leisure trips. Based on the comparison of the importance given to a hotel room during leisure and work-related trips, four different types of travellers were identified: “Comfort Seekers,” “Pragmatic Travellers,” “Moderate Travellers,” and “Advantage Seekers.” Each traveller type demonstrated distinct expectations and benefits sought, resulting in different meanings attached to an overnight stay in a hotel and a hotel room. However, all traveller types shared similarities, such as the importance of good quality sleep during work and leisure trips. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of expectations for a hotel room across both work-related and leisure trips. Consequently, this research deepens the understanding of diverse traveller behaviour and its implications in the hotel room context. By exploring different perspectives of the meaning of a hotel room for diverse traveller types, the study expands the theoretical understanding of hotel rooms beyond their traditional view as mere accommodation spaces.

Keywords: Hotel room, traveller types, leisure travel, work-related travel, travel experience.

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1. Introduction

Typically, hotel rooms are booked based on the needs and preferences of travellers – a hotel room can be an important part of a trip or may simply be a place to spend the night. As such, a hotel provides a place for an overnight stay during work and leisure travel for the different types of travellers. Despite the essential role accommodation plays during overnight travels, previous research has paid surprisingly little attention to the importance of the room itself as a key aspect of the traveller's overall experience. Studies within the hospitality field have explored a hotel room from the perspectives of customer satisfaction (Bodet *et al.*, 2017; Roberts *et al.*, 2018) and experience (Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Kim & So, 2021) and have examined hotel room design and ambience (Anguera-Torrell *et al.*, 2021; Bogicevic *et al.*, 2018; Siamionava *et al.*, 2018), digital technologies (Kabadayi *et al.*, 2019; Elshaer & Marzouk, 2022) and hotel services on a more general level (Ineson *et al.*, 2019). Although some studies (e.g. Cetin & Walls, 2016) have examined the role of the physical environment of hotels as part of the overall experience for different segments, there is still a lack of research focusing specifically on the importance of the hotel room itself.

Studies have largely focused on hotel guests viewed as customers within the hotel environment rather than as travellers on individual trips (e.g. Baek *et al.*, 2020). Segmentation studies of hotel guests (e.g. Chan & Wong, 2006; Kim & Park, 2017) typically focus on profiling visitor segments, for instance, based on their motivations and behaviours (e.g. Alegre *et al.*, 2011; Lichy & McLeay, 2018; Mudarra-Fernández *et al.*, 2018) and discussing their differences. Hotel rooms are a fundamental aspect of the travel experience, yet their significance may vary depending on the purpose of each traveller's trip. While previous research has examined accommodation preferences separately for work-related and leisure trips (e.g. Li & Cai, 2012; Millán *et al.*, 2016; Shiferaw *et al.*, 2024), little attention has been given to how the same individuals perceive hotel rooms across different travel contexts. Given the increasing blurring of business and leisure travel (e.g., “bleisure” travel trends), understanding these shifting perceptions is crucial for both theoretical advancement and practical applications in the hospitality industry.

Previous studies have identified diversified needs and selection criteria for hotels and hotel rooms, depending on the nature of travel (e.g. Chan & Wong, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2020; Unger *et al.*, 2016). However, some studies (e.g. Pesonen *et al.*, 2019) have demonstrated that regardless of the travel purpose, whether for work or leisure, key aspects of a hotel - such as room quality, staff competence and overall atmosphere - remain essential. Notably, the same physical space of a hotel room can serve various roles in shaping the customer experience (Lvov & Komppula, 2024). Hence, it can be argued that different aspects of hotel accommodations may be prioritised for work-related trips versus leisure trips, with certain attributes deemed essential for one group of travellers while serving as supplementary or complementary features for another. This variability highlights a significant gap in understanding how travellers' expectations and desired benefits shape the perception of a hotel room.

Prior research has largely focused on either work-related travel (e.g. Millan *et al.*, 2016; Radojevic *et al.*, 2018) or leisure travel (e.g. Pesonen *et al.*, 2011), often comparing these traveller groups separately, particularly in studies on hotel attributes and pricing (e.g. Rhee & Yang, 2015; Kim & Park, 2017). However, this approach overlooks travellers who combine both work and leisure across multiple trips. Rather than treating work and leisure travellers separately, this research focuses on individuals who travel for both purposes. To address this gap, the objective of the study is to identify and distinguish different traveller types based on the significance they assign to hotel rooms during leisure and business trips. Specifically, the study investigates travellers' perceptions of hotel rooms, their importance in different travel contexts, and the expected benefits associated with them.

2. Literature review

2.1. Hotel room as a research context

This study investigates travellers and their experiences in the context of the hotel room. A hotel and its rooms can be regarded as a physical environment with different activities and interactions within the service setting (e.g. Mossberg, 2008). According to Lvov and Komppula (2024), a hotel overnight stay can be viewed as the actual process of being accommodated in the hotel room and using the hotel services and facilities. Hereof, Kim and So (2021) suggest that the hotel room should be regarded as one of the key elements with the most impact in creating customer experiences. This aspect has been considered in the studies applied in a hotel context – often emphasising the overall guest experience (Baek *et al.*, 2020; Cetin & Walls, 2016; Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Ineson *et al.*, 2019; Johnson *et al.*, 2009). In this regard, it can be argued that the hotel room per se, with its tangible attributes, directly impacts the customers' experiences (Ren *et al.*, 2016). It is also emphasised that experiences arise not only in the physical place but also in the guests' minds (Torres & Kline, 2013). Subsequently, depending on the purpose of the trip, individuals may attach different meanings to the hotel room within their travel experience (Lvov & Komppula, 2024). Thus, it remains unclear whether the meaning of the hotel room changes depending on the type of travel and travel experience as such, or if the meaning of the room is more person-specific.

However, most previous studies on hotel rooms have focused on the tangible and intangible attributes of hotel rooms that influence guest satisfaction and preferences (Amin *et al.*, 2013; Bilgihan *et al.*, 2016; Ineson *et al.*, 2019; Heo & Hyun, 2015; Robbins *et al.*, 2021). Nevertheless, it was noted that each hotel encountered during a trip contributes to the overall travel experience and the level of satisfaction with the travel (Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Ineson *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, an overnight stay in a hotel room plays a key role in overall customer satisfaction (Padma & Ahn, 2020; Ren *et al.*, 2016), with a broader influence on memorable experiences (Wang *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, the hotel atmosphere significantly influences the customer experience (Choi & Kandampully, 2019). As a result, hotels see their customers not just as buyers of services and products, but as partners in co-creating individual experiences that extend joy to their daily lives (Chathoth *et al.*, 2013). While previous studies have extensively explored hotel room attributes, ambience and design, and their effects on guest satisfaction and emotions, there is limited research on how different types of travellers respond to these factors. Specifically, how travelling for leisure or work-related purposes may influence a traveller's expectations and perceived benefits during an overnight stay in a hotel.

Hotel rooms serve as a crucial context for understanding the behaviour of travellers, offering insights into the guest experience, emotions and preferences. It is noted that travellers repeat their daily routines during their hotel stay (Roberts *et al.*, 2018). Still, on the other hand, one of the components of a satisfying experience is "uniqueness," e.g., doing something different from others, something more authentic rather than something ordinary (Kabadayi *et al.*, 2019). Hence, it can be argued that these diversified aspects affect the usage of hotel services, expected attributes and appreciation of the benefits, and also have an impact on the expectations from a hotel room. According to Lvov and Komppula (2024), a guest's expectations of an overnight hotel stay include an assumption of both tangible and intangible hotel room attributes that meet functional needs and provide a meaningful experience. The expectations are anticipations of future outcomes shaped by past experiences, current circumstances and available information, which serve as reference points for evaluating consumption experiences (Hossain *et al.*, 2023) and perceived benefits (Chen & Petrick, 2014). In this case, the benefits of an overnight stay in a hotel room can be seen as the fulfilment of travellers' personal and experiential needs and expectations. Therefore, the meaning a hotel room holds within an individual's travel experience derives not only from functional elements, such as amenities and room layout but also from how these elements are perceived to fulfil expectations and contribute to the benefits of the stay.

According to Knutson *et al.* (2009), the most critical dimension of a hotel experience is an advantage or a benefit the guests expect from staying at the hotel, which includes, for instance, safety, reliability and consistency. Thus, a hotel stay becomes more than sleeping in a bed and a clean room for the night (Torres & Kline, 2013). When travellers choose a hotel, they consider not only cognitive attributes (e.g., customer service and brand) but also affective (e.g., feeling of comfort and entertainment) and sensory (e.g., quality of the room and overall ambience) attributes (Kim and Perdue, 2013). Individuals travelling both for leisure and work may have diverse needs and expectations from a hotel room during their trips. It is, therefore, crucial to examine the interpretation and perception of hotel rooms concerning these travel experiences. Further studies in both leisure and work travel experiences are called for (e.g. Chan & Wong, 2006; Unger *et al.*, 2016; Wang *et al.*, 2020) to increase understanding of how different personal expectations and needs influence the importance and the meaning of a hotel room.

2.2 Segments and typologies of hotel visitors

Hotel guests are usually divided into business or leisure travellers. Li and Cai (2012) pinpointed in their study that work-related travel is typically driven by professional obligations and goals, while leisure travel is motivated by personal enjoyment, relaxation and exploration. Previous studies (Chan & Wong, 2006; Kim & Park, 2017) have also identified various hotel attributes and aspects of hotel accommodation that are important for either work travellers or leisure travellers. For instance, business travellers place relatively more importance on hotel room convenience than leisure travellers (Radojevic *et al.*, 2018).

Work-related travel studies (e.g. Millán *et al.*, 2016; Shiferaw *et al.*, 2024) emphasise that work-related travel has a functional, task-driven aspect of travel, where the primary goal is to achieve work objectives. Callan and Kyndt (2001) focused on business travellers' perceptions of hotel service quality. Accordingly, during work trips, travellers do not necessarily spend much time in the room but wish to have a comfortable stay during their trip (Rhee & Yang, 2015). Business travellers are typically segmented based on their need for functional and practical elements, as they prioritise aspects such as quick check-ins, functional amenities and services that support work-related tasks (Lubbe, 2020). On the other hand, leisure travellers often focus on experiences which offer opportunities for activities that enhance personal well-being and gain new experiences (Schiessl *et al.*, 2024; Shiferaw *et al.*, 2024). Also, some studies (Lichy & McLeay, 2018; Sohaili *et al.*, 2022; Tsaor & Tsai, 2023) have focused on exploring bleisure tourism, combining business and leisure travel. It has also been acknowledged that the line between business and leisure trips is not necessarily straightforward, and it is noted that the travel experience can include both work-related and leisure activities (e.g. Unger *et al.*, 2016).

Previous studies on segmentation and typology of hotel customers have categorised customers based on factors such as pricing and value for money (Rondan-Cataluña & Rosa-Díaz, 2014; Tomczyk *et al.*, 2022), hotel choice attributes (Kim *et al.*, 2020), and perceived benefits (Kim *et al.*, 2011; Nessel *et al.*, 2021; Mele *et al.*, 2024). Rondan-Cataluña and Rosa-Díaz (2014) proposed a segmentation model that divides customers into two groups: the "Price-Elastic" segment, consisting of travellers who perceive the hotel's rates as reasonable, fair, and providing good value compared to other hotels; and the "Price-Rigid" segment, which has lower perceptions of price fairness, value for money, and the price-service quality relationship. Furthermore, Tomczyk *et al.* (2022) proposed six distinct customer types based on their response to personalised pricing strategies, linked to customer satisfaction and ethical considerations. Additionally, Kim *et al.* (2020) explored how different customer segments prioritise hotel choice attributes, identifying three segments, "Budget-Oriented and Few-benefits Seekers", "All-benefits Seekers" and "Local Hotel Lovers", in the leisure context (which share a common emphasis on room quality, entertainment and service) and two, "Convenience Seekers" and "Sophisticated and Entertainment Seekers", in the business context (for whom room quality is identified as the most important common attribute).

Chung *et al.* (2004) suggested that customer segmentation should not only rely on empirical data from the industry but also incorporate benefit segmentation, which focuses on understanding the specific benefits that customers seek. This approach provides deeper insights into the reasons behind customers' choices and purchases of products and services (Chung *et al.*, 2004). In this regard, Kim *et al.* (2011) conducted a benefit segmentation study of international travellers, identifying key types, such as "Convention and Business Seekers," "Family and Vacation Seekers," "Gambling and Shopping Seekers" and "Multi-purpose Seekers." Additionally, Mele *et al.* (2024) categorised luxury hotel guests into three distinct types: the "Ethical Enthusiast," who prioritise the ethical, social and symbolic benefits associated with their stay at 5-star hotels; the "Unconcerned Aesthete," who value social and symbolic benefits related to the aesthetics of the luxury hotel; and the "Practical Connoisseur," who show a greater interest in functional service benefits.

Additionally, Nessel *et al.* (2021) identify three customer segments based on benefit segmentation in the tourist accommodation market: "Quality-Seekers," who prioritise comfort and amenities and are willing to pay more for high-quality accommodation; "Bargain-Seekers," who are price-sensitive and prefer affordable, conveniently located accommodations; and "Cleanliness-Seekers," who place a strong emphasis on cleanliness and are willing to pay a premium for a clean, well-maintained environment. To comprehend the role and importance of a hotel room within the broader context of the travel experience, it is essential to identify distinct traveller types that extend beyond the conventional classifications of business and leisure travellers. This typology should provide a more nuanced understanding of individual travellers' expectations, the benefits they seek, and the contribution of the hotel room to their overall travel experience.

3. Methods of data collection and analysis

To enhance understanding of how travellers with experience in both work-related and leisure trips perceive hotel rooms - including their importance in each context and the benefits they expect - a qualitative research approach was chosen. This method is considered suitable for capturing personal perspectives and experiences (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015). Semi-structured interviews facilitated data collection, allowing for flexibility in topic exploration while avoiding rigid phrasing or sequencing (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). This approach provided deeper insights into the individual perception of a hotel room when travelling for both work and leisure purposes, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the role and importance of hotel rooms during these trips.

In this study, the focus is on the travellers who have made both work-related and leisure trips during the last 12 months. Data were collected from travellers reflecting on past experiences rather than during an active trip, minimising potential bias from specific hotel settings and services. This approach allows for a broader understanding of hotel room perceptions across different travel contexts.

To ensure a diverse and representative sample, participants were carefully selected based on factors such as gender, age, profession and the frequency of their work-related and leisure travel. This approach allowed for a balanced exploration of hotel room preferences across different traveller profiles.

All participants were residents of Finland. During the data collection process, 54 individuals were contacted using purposive sampling (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016), ensuring a targeted selection of participants with experience in both leisure and business travel. Additionally, the snowball technique was employed to expand the sample, with initial participants recommending others who met the study's criteria. Of those contacted, 39 agreed to participate in the interview. Nine contacted individuals needed to be excluded from the study, as they did not make any work-related trips. In the final stage, 30 individuals were interviewed online via Teams. The interviews were held in Finnish and then translated into English by the authors. The interviewee profiles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive data of the interviewees' backgrounds.*

	Gender (female, male, other)	Age group (years old)	Field of work	Work trips		Leisure trips	
				Number of trips per year	Usually travelling	Number of trips per year	Usually travelling
ID1	W1	51–65	Education	4–7 trips	alone	4–7 trips	with partner
ID2	M1	51–65	Education	1–3 trips	in an organised group	1–3 trips	with partner
ID3	W2	20–35	IT	8 or more trips	alone	8 or more trips	with partner
ID4	W3	20–35	Office	4–7 trips	in an organised group	4–7 trips	alone
ID5	W4	36–50	Education	1–3 trips	in an organised group	1–3 trips	with kids
ID6	M2	36–50	Business (Executive management)	4–7 trips	alone	4–7 trips	with kids
ID7	M3	20–35	Business (Middle management)	8 or more trips	alone	1–3 trips	alone
ID8	M4	20–35	Office	4–7 trips	with colleagues	8 or more trips	alone
ID9	M5	36–50	Business (Sales person)	8 or more trips	alone	1–3 trips	with kids
ID10	W5	36–50	Business (Executive management)	4–7 trips	with colleagues	4–7 trips	with kids
ID11	W6	36–50	Business (Executive management)	8 or more trips	with colleagues	4–7 trips	with partner
ID12	W7	36–50	Business (Executive management)	1–3 trips	with colleagues	8 or more trips	with kids
ID13	W8	36–50	Business (Middle management)	1–3 trips	with colleagues	4–7 trips	with kids
ID14	W9	36–50	Education	8 or more trips	in an organised group	4–7 trips	with kids
ID15	M6	36–50	Business (Middle management)	4–7 trips	alone	4–7 trips	with partner
ID16	W10	36–50	Office	1–3 trips	alone	1–3 trips	with partner
ID17	W11	20–35	Business (Entrepreneur)	1–3 trips	alone	1–3 trips	with kids
ID18	M7	36–50	Education	4–7 trips	in an organised group	4–7 trips	with partner
ID19	W12	20–35	IT	8 or more trips	alone	1–3 trips	with partner
ID20	M8	51–65	Business (Middle management)	8 or more trips	alone	4–7 trips	with partner
ID21	M9	36–50	Education	1–3 trips	in an organised group	8 or more trips	with partner
ID22	W13	36–50	Office	1–3 trips	with colleagues	4–7 trips	with kids
ID23	W14	36–50	Education	8 or more trips	in an organised group	1–3 trips	with kids
ID24	W15	36–50	Office	8 or more trips	in an organised group	8 or more trips	with kids
ID25	M10	36–50	Business (Entrepreneur)	8 or more trips	alone	4–7 trips	with partner
ID26	W16	36–50	Office	1–3 trips	with colleagues	1–3 trips	alone
ID27	W17	51–65	Education	4–7 trips	in an organised group	1–3 trips	with partner
ID28	W18	36–50	Office	4–7 trips	alone	4–7 trips	with partner
ID29	M11	20–35	Business (Sales person)	8 or more trips	alone	8 or more trips	alone
ID30	W19	36–50	Business (Middle management)	8 or more trips	alone	4–7 trips	with partner

All 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted during May-October 2023. At the beginning of the interview, participants were informed of voluntary participation, informed consent and anonymity issues of the research, the purpose of the data collection and usage. All the interviewees confirmed their voluntary participation in the research. First, participants were asked what the last work trip they made was and how the hotel was chosen, as well as what they did during the hotel stay and what was important for them. Next, similar questions were asked regarding the leisure trip practices. In the final stage, interviewees were asked how they describe the importance of the hotel room within their work-related and leisure travel experiences.

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Anonymisation was used to protect the participants' identities. Since one interview is never like another, data collection aimed to reach the data saturation point (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). After the 26th interview, the interviews started to have certain iterations and similarities. Four more interviews were conducted with individuals of diverse profiles to ensure the potentially arising additional aspects. After the 30th interview, the saturation point was reached. Accordingly, material collection stopped as there was sufficiency and saturation regarding collected data (Ritchie *et al.*, 2005). Interviews lasted between 25 to 45 minutes, with an average duration of 35 minutes per interview, resulting in 1,050 minutes of material collected. The total word count of the transcribed material is 40,344 words.

This study investigates travellers who engage in both leisure and work-related travel, analysing their perceptions of hotel rooms, the significance of those, and the expected benefits. The interviewees were categorised based on the importance of a hotel room during work-related and leisure trips. The individual's perspectives were coded based on whether the room was regarded as important during a) a work trip and b) a leisure trip. Based on the analysis of the importance individual interviewees give to a hotel room during leisure and work-related trips, four different types of travellers were identified: those to whom the hotel room was 1) important during work-related and leisure trips, 2) not really important during the trips, 3) important in leisure trips but not during work trips, and 4) important during work trips but not so important during leisure trips. Later, the types were named based on the benefits sought by "Comfort Seekers," "Pragmatic Travellers," "Moderate Travellers" and "Advantage Seekers".

Table 2. *Example of the data analysis*

Interviewee	Codes	Sub-themes	Main theme
I15: When I check the room pictures, I have a look to see if there is a desk, because I have to do some work in the evening. A fridge or a bathtub are not important for me during the work trip. Also, the gym is super important for me. But anyway, I need the hotel to be good and that all the basic services are working there.	Convenient work environment; Possibility to use the gym; Hotel must be good; Services are important.	Hotel room as a place to work. Hotel as a comfortable place	Benefit of a convenient overnight stay. Benefit of well-being
I15: If we go for a beach holiday trip abroad, we spend more time in the hotel, especially in the hotel room. But if we go for a city break- we don't spend much time in the room, and the hotel location is of greater importance. I am not looking for maximum luxury, or the hotel doesn't need to provide the top services and experiences. It should just be a nice place to stay.	Place to spend time with the family; Hotel location is important; Great experiences of a hotel stay; Nice place to be.	Room is important depending on the type of travel. Room as an experience creator.	Benefit of a good leisure time Benefit of a new experience

Additionally, the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016) to identify the expected benefits and important aspects of a hotel room. The coding was made inductively from the data, with two independent coders involved in the analysis to ensure reliability. Both coders independently reviewed and coded the data, followed by discussions to resolve any differences in interpretation. This process helped to refine the coding scheme and ensure consistency in the categorisation of themes. Any disagreements between coders were resolved through consensus, further strengthening the reliability of the analysis. At later stages during the analysis, aspects linked to leisure and work-related trips were also explored separately. Those aspects collectively reflect the diverse travellers' expectations, from functional needs to more experiential benefits associated with their stay. Table 2 gives an example of the data analysis process.

4. Findings

The analysis showed that interviewees emphasised different needs, expectations and practices when staying in a hotel room for work-related and leisure trips and also pointed out diverse levels of importance of the hotel room during these diverse types of trips. To systematically explore hotel room importance across both work-related and leisure travel, the following findings describe each traveller type according to their preferences and behaviours. The specific preferences, expectations and benefits anticipated from an overnight hotel stay are highlighted.

4.1 Comfort Seekers

"Comfort Seekers" (T1) were individuals for whom a hotel room is important per se during both work-related and leisure trips, meaning that a hotel room has a significant meaning during trips. In their responses, they mentioned the hotel room as an important part of both work-related and leisure travels. Representatives of this traveller type were in the age range of 36-50 years old. They were working in the business field, representing the mid and top management of the companies. This type of traveller did not change their preferences or expected benefits from the trip depending on the trip's purpose. As a result, travellers of this type recognised that it was them travelling for different purposes, and still, they were the users of the services in different roles:

I21: We can't always choose what we want, but what we can, what is available, or what we can afford. But somehow, we are the same people travelling in both cases (work and leisure). That's the challenge for the hotels, to fit our needs.

For work, they travelled alone, aiming to meet with customers or visit the company's distant department/office. Such trips were regular during the year, so hotels were already booked on their behalf by the company. As such, they were not just searching for a good night's sleep in the room as the main benefit of the hotel stay. They also expected the hotel rooms to be convenient, which supported the need to complete work tasks successfully (e.g., such attributes as comfortable work desk; hotel digital customer service solutions; and Wi-Fi). Once the work was done, the hotel room should have been comfortable and provided a possibility to relax and relieve work stress (e.g., such attributes as wellness and fitness). Though work trips balanced the need for practicality and functional benefits of an overnight stay, at times, the comfort of the accommodation took precedence over practicality:

I19: During work trips, I have a very intensive and dynamic schedule, so I want the hotel to be on a prima level. It is always better to have a luxury hotel with excellent accommodation. For me it is important, and it even gives extra value and convenience - that everything is updated, all the things are working well and all the services are nearby.

Often, the meaning of the hotel room was tightly related to the feeling of relaxation in one's own personal quiet space of the hotel room: "For me, it is both: a place to relax and a place to get sleep. (I10)".

During work-related trips, this type of traveller also focused on their free-time activities and personal well-being. In some cases, they even combined expectations and experiences of both work-related and leisure trips:

I19: *I like being in the hotels. I like staying in the hotel room, it feels like a mini getaway. Also, when I try new hotels – I have new experiences. It should also be a functional space for my work.*

Still, the interviewees recognised the presence of the work feeling throughout the whole time of being on a work trip. Likewise, the main difference between leisure and work-related trips for this type of traveller was that one did not have work duties on the leisure trip:

I30: *During leisure trips, I don't need to do any work, so I have different expectations. What I am seeking during any leisure trip is comfort, safety and enjoyment. Maybe not so many adventures, but a good, interesting time.*

Conversely to work trips, this type of traveller preferred to make hotel reservations for their leisure trips themselves. Most of them described leisure trips with their partner as a search for comfort, exciting new experiences and quality time. This type of traveller was ready to pay more for boutique hotels and pampering services, like massages, spa treatments or room service. Depending on the trip, this type of traveller even avoided family hotels. They were looking for memorable experiences from the unique hotels:

I21: *I am searching for a small, local, nice hotel, that may be run by a family. Places where you can get very individualised service.*

Since travellers of this type travelled much and had vast experience of hotel stays, many services were just expected to be available and work properly. The “Comfort Seekers” evaluated the whole process of being accommodated in the hotel and expected that memorable experiences were created through high-quality services. Thus, complimentary amenities and room upgrades were appreciated and noticed by them. Especially, new experiences as a benefit of the hotel stay and leisure travel were most appreciated.

4.2 Pragmatic Travellers

“Pragmatic Travellers” (T2) emphasised the functional aspects of the hotel room. During both work-related and leisure trips, representatives of this type gave less recognition to the hotel room itself, as it played a very functional side role during their trips. In their responses, they mentioned the hotel room as not being an important part of either work-related or leisure travels. Many of the individuals belonging to this type were women, working in the business sector or in the field of education and were making work-related trips to participate in conferences and seminars, or travelling as part of a group with students. On average, this type of traveller made one to three work trips per year, and stayed at a hotel suggested by an event/conference or in the company’s partner hotel. The main focus of the work-related trip was only on work. Therefore, the hotel's surroundings were seen as a key convenience benefit:

I2: *For me, the hotel location is very important, especially in relation to the place of the seminar or the conference. If the hotel is a bit better, but located further away, vs. a lower quality hotel located closer to the conference - I will choose the closer hotel.*

As such, the most important issue for the “Pragmatic Travellers” was a hotel room’s practicality - being a place to complete work tasks: “We talk about the work trip: you go there to do the work, not to get some luxury experiences. So more practical things are of greater importance. (I4).” In this regard, hotel room

quietness was important in both cases - completion of the work tasks and getting a good night's sleep. Also, travellers wished to be fresh and energised in the morning, and in addition to a good night's sleep, breakfast was an important service: *"But often it goes that I don't spend much time in the hotel, it is for sleeping and breakfast."* (I26). Sometimes, if there was enough free time, travellers included leisure activities, such as sightseeing, in their work trips. That could be noted as an element of the leisure benefit.

For their leisure trips, this type of traveller was on vacation with their partner or as a family with kids, travelling one to three times a year. Hotel room price had a central role when searching for accommodation, as budget played an important aspect in their leisure trips. When travelling with kids, this type of traveller was looking for included services available at the accommodation facilities, such as access to an aquapark or kids' area. Hotel choice relied on one's personal opinions and own previous experiences, rather than on online reviews:

I12: *Usually, when travelling with the family, we choose hotels where we've stayed before, because they have a decent price, good breakfast and four people can fit in one room.*

On leisure trips, a hotel room was not considered important of itself, but rather as a part of the whole package, where the focus was on the other benefits – good leisure time and new experiences. As such, while on trips with kids or trips abroad, a hotel room was considered "a base for the trip":

I27: *I would say the meaning of the hotel room is as a base: a place where we spend time, where we plan the next day, and where we sleep.*

As the hotel room did not have merely any key importance during both work-related and leisure trips, it can be concluded that the primary benefit expected from the hotel room was mostly the good quality sleep. In addition to that, convenience was highlighted as a benefit of a hotel room, as a place to complete work tasks on a work trip. In contrast, during a leisure trip, practicality was emphasised in terms of budget-friendly accommodation and ensuring a good night's sleep. Interestingly, this type of traveller appreciated the leisure benefits of both work-related and leisure trips by actively participating in free-time activities outside the hotel room.

4.3 Moderate travellers

"Moderate Travellers" (T3) considered a hotel room as just a place to sleep on a work trip but recognised a hotel room as a "second home" on their leisure trips with the family. In their responses, they mentioned the hotel room as not having any importance during their work trips, but important as such during their leisure travels. Individuals representing this type were between 36 and 50 years old and had families with kids. They mostly worked in offices, and their typical work-related travel was related to seminar or conference participation. They usually travelled alone five to eight times a year for work. For those trips, hotel accommodation was chosen depending on the location, and breakfast must be included. The main benefit expected from the hotel room was good sleep, which included the presence of a quality bed with comfortable pillows, darkening curtains and quietness:

I24: *The hotel room level can be a bit lower, just a good bed. Because the only thing basically you do in the room is sleep.*

"Moderate Travellers" stayed one to two nights in the hotel during the trip. They usually travelled only with hand luggage and expected very practical attributes from the hotel room:

I24: *For me, it is important to have a good hairdryer. Also, all the shampoos, body wash and other things. Because on the short trip, you don't want to take so many things with you in a small bag. So that all the convenient things are there for me.*

Furthermore, during the work trip, these travellers relied on the hotel to be a safe and secure place for an overnight stay. Anyhow, if there was some free time, a gym or a sauna were visited in the search for a well-being benefit. For this type of traveller, any additional or extra hotel services usually remained unused, since there was either no time or the employer was not paying for them. Otherwise, the hotel room had a meaning of personal space to relieve work stress and enjoy the hotel stay, which refers to the benefit of relaxation during the hotel stay:

I14: *When I get to the room after the workday, I have some time to prepare for the next day. But otherwise, I relax and go to sleep.*

For their leisure trips, the hotel accommodation was usually chosen carefully, based on the hotel stars and reviews, which were compared to the room price and services included. There were high expectations from leisure trips and the benefit of comfort should have been present:

I22: *If I compare those to work trips, leisure trips should be comfortable. During the leisure trip, I want access to the restaurant, the swimming pool and the sauna – I want to focus on relaxing and enjoying. When I plan a leisure trip, I don't start with the budget, but rather with the hotels I like. I have a look first and try to find the hotel which would be most comfortable for me.*

This type of traveller was making family trips with the kids four to seven times a year. The hotel room was expected to be well-decorated, as it was considered as a “second home,” a place to gather for the family and spend time together on a rainy day. Even staying in a room per se was considered an experience:

I16: *There is a very big difference between a work and a leisure trip, and the meaning of the hotel room is different. First of all, you may spend more time in the room during the leisure trip. It is the place for the family to be together. It should be nice to be in the room.*

If travelling only with a partner, they sought relaxation and luxury: “If I travel with just my husband, we look for an upper-scale hotel, to have a little bit of luxury. (I23)” For them, the hotel room had a significantly more important meaning during the leisure trip. This applied to both, family trips and travelling with a partner, as the aim was not only to fulfil the benefits of quality leisure time, but also to create new memorable experiences. Furthermore, after the departure, travellers spend time leaving a review of a hotel stay and sharing their experiences of the overnight stay.

4.4 Advantage Seekers

“Advantage Seekers” (T4) prioritised a pleasant and relaxing stay in a hotel room during work trips, while they were budget-conscious travellers on their leisure trips. In their responses, they mentioned the hotel room as an important part of their work trips, but not as important during their leisure travels. Individuals belonging to this type were typically 20-25-year-old men, who made work trips to meet with customers or visit companies’ distant departments/offices. This type of traveller expected a hotel room to be relaxing and practical to support their business activities during the work trip. On a leisure trip, the price of the accommodation was the most important factor in choosing a hotel. This type of traveller travelled alone for work around eight times a year or more. Therefore, being a “heavy user” of the hotel services, they wanted to explore the destination in search of the best suitable option for accommodation:

I3: *During my work trips, I have previously checked all other hotels, and actually I have stayed in all of the hotels there, as there are several four- and five-star hotels. I like comfort, and for me, it is important to have specific things in the room, especially when I have a choice, and the prices of the rooms are not much different between the hotels.*

On a work-related trip, hotel choice was dependent on the employers' price policies and reservation guidelines, as well as the hotel location. Since work duties required some preparation in the hotel, they needed a work desk and a convenient room, as well as a relaxing atmosphere in the hotel, which supported their business activities:

I8: *As well, I would say that the atmosphere in the hotel should be relaxed, so it doesn't feel busy, because a work trip is already stressful. You must remember to do many things during the trip, so the relaxed atmosphere in the hotel supports and helps to handle the stress, especially if you work from the hotel.*

Once the work was done, there was a need to fulfil the benefit of well-being. Moreover, the hotel room and the hotel as such should support the feeling of relaxation. Thus, wellness and fitness were desired by these interviewees. "Advantage Seekers" wanted to enjoy the maximum benefits available in the hotel environment:

I7: *Work travelling is already painful enough, so I don't want to be in a crappy hotel, especially when the company is paying.*

This type of traveller makes leisure trips around eight times a year, with the main purpose of exploring new destinations alone or with a partner. Since representatives of this type did not have a family or any kids, on the leisure trip, they were very budget-oriented travellers, who did not even necessarily regard a hotel as a place to stay overnight. If the hotel accommodation was considered as an option, the booking was based on a comparison of the best price, together with hotel services and hotel reviews:

I8: *Usually, I compare prices through the different web pages, as you can find a lot of different hotels. I don't use one specific web page. For me, during my leisure trips, a hotel is just a place to sleep.*

On a leisure trip, a hotel room was regarded as only a place to sleep overnight, good customer service and hotel room design and a good view could complement their stay:

I7: *For me, during leisure trips, the hotel room is not as important, no matter if I am on a beach holiday or exploring the city. Usually, I plan the activities for the trip.*

It can be summed up that, during the work trip, functionality and comfort of the hotel room were "must-be" benefits, supported by the well-being and relaxation benefits of the hotel stay. Since, for the "Advantage Seekers," the main purpose of the leisure trip was to gain new experiences, a hotel room was just a place to sleep and all other, mostly practical benefits were compared to the price paid.

5. Discussions

The findings of this study reveal that individuals place varying degrees of importance on the hotel room during their work-related and leisure trips, resulting in the determining four different traveller types: "Comfort Seekers," "Pragmatic Travellers," "Moderate Travellers" and "Advantage Seekers." These traveller types differ in terms of the perceived importance of the hotel room, the meanings attached to the hotel room and expected benefits from the hotel room. The findings indicate that the perceptions of hotel rooms and the expected benefits of them are shaped by both the type of travel and personal

factors of the traveller. While the nature of the trip - work or leisure - affects specific needs, such as convenience for work or comfort for leisure, personal factors, like individual preferences, habits and family status, have a more significant influence on overall expectations and experiences of the hotel room. A summary of these profiles is provided in Table 3, which highlights the key aspects of each type, including their expectations regarding hotel services and factors influencing their hotel choice.

The findings reveal that all traveller types, including “Comfort Seekers,” “Pragmatic Travellers,” “Moderate Travellers” and “Advantage Seekers” prioritise good quality sleep during both work and leisure trips. Specifically, the convenience of the overnight stay and the quality of sleep emerge as the most crucial benefits, significantly influencing customers' perceptions of their hotel experience. These findings align with previous research by Callan & Kyndt (2001), Heo & Hyun (2015) and Robbins *et al.* (2021), who also identified the importance of sleep as a core benefit of the hotel stay.

For “Pragmatic” and “Moderate” travellers, the primary benefit sought during work trips is simply a restful night's sleep, with minimal additional expectations from the hotel room. Similarly, leisure travellers, particularly “Advantage Seekers,” focus primarily on a good night's rest, without expecting extra amenities. However, the study also reveals that, for those on work-related trips, the meaning of the hotel room extends beyond rest when free time is available. Travellers expect to relax in a comfortable environment, engage in wellness activities (e.g., gym, spa, sauna) or explore the local area through sightseeing. These leisure preferences influence the choice of hotel services and amenities.

The importance of hotel rooms during leisure travel is influenced by travel companions. “Moderate Travellers” on trips with children especially appreciate home-like and comfortable aspects of the hotel room. This aligns with McIntosh and Siggs (2005), who emphasise the creation of a “home away from home” experience in accommodations, characterised by relaxation, tranquillity and a sense of security. In this regard, new meanings of the hotel room emerge. For “Comfort Seekers,” who view the hotel room as an important part of their trip, their preference for comfort during leisure travel can extend to work trips. If the hotel room on a business trip does not meet their expectations for relaxation, they may look for a more suitable option and consider exploring other hotels in the area. The expected comfort would be similar whether travellers are on a business trip or a leisure trip with a partner in search of new experiences, particularly when staying in a five-star hotel, as seen with “Comfort Seekers.”

The findings show that for the “Comfort Seekers” and “Pragmatic Travellers,” whose duties included some degree of necessary distance work, a hotel room was recognised as a workspace. This dual functionality highlights the evolving role of hotel rooms in accommodating both professional and personal needs during trips. Additionally, if it is the first time visiting a new destination on a work-related trip, the travellers would notice the feeling of being secure and in a safe environment, which is consistent with Roberts *et al.* (2018).

Though hotel room prices are not of such importance on a work trip, the same travellers would be much more price-sensitive on their leisure trips. Moreover, during work trips, travellers may not spend much time in the hotel room, but they still prioritise comfort to ensure a pleasant stay, which aligns with Rhee and Yang's (2015) findings. This research highlights the tangible aspects of a hotel room, such as bed quality and quietness, as essential for meeting travellers' expectations, reinforcing the importance of sleep quality as identified in previous studies (e.g., Robbins *et al.*, 2021).

On leisure trips, especially for “Comfort Seekers,” travellers are interested in available hotel services. This aligns with research by Cetin and Walls (2016), which suggests that customers actively shape their hotel experiences, recognising the room as a “travel base,” where they can maintain their well-being through amenities, like gyms and spas.

Table 3. *Summary of the traveller types.*

		Comfort Seeker	Pragmatic Traveller	Moderate Traveller	Advantage Seeker
Importance of a hotel room	Work-related trip	Important	Not important	Not important	Important
	Leisure trip	Important	Not important	Important	Not important
Hotel room meaning	Work-related trip	Hotel room for work Hotel room for sleeping in comfort Hotel room for personal relaxation and relief from work stress	Hotel room for sleeping	Hotel room for sleeping	Hotel room for work Hotel room for sleeping in comfort Hotel room for personal relaxation and relief from work stress
	Leisure trip	Experiences creator	Hotel room for sleeping Travel base	Second home	Hotel room for sleeping
Expected benefits	Work-related trip	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay Feeling of comfort Wellness Relaxation Quality leisure time New experiences	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay Quality leisure time	Good night sleep Wellness Relaxation	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay Feeling of comfort Wellness Relaxation Quality leisure time New experiences
	Leisure trip	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay Feeling of comfort Wellness Relaxation Quality leisure time New experiences	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay Quality leisure time	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay Feeling of comfort Wellness Relaxation Quality leisure time New experiences	Good night sleep Convenience of an overnight stay
Hotel choice factors	Work-related trip	Hotel location Hotel choice is dependent on the employer's price policies and reservation guidelines Hotels are chosen on the interviewee's behalf	Hotel location Hotel choice is dependent on the employer's price policies and reservation guidelines	Hotel location	Hotel location Hotel choice is dependent on the employer's price policies and reservation guidelines
	Leisure trip	Reviews Hotel ratings Included services	Personal opinions and own previous experiences Price and included services	Reviews. Hotel ratings Included services Room price	Price. Convenience
Hotel services	Work-related trip	Dining: Breakfast restaurant Fitness: Gym, sauna	Dining: Breakfast	Dining: Breakfast Fitness: Gym, sauna	Dining: Breakfast Fitness: Gym, sauna
	Leisure trip	Dining and refreshments: Breakfast, restaurant, bar, room service Wellness and fitness: Gym, sauna, spa	Dining: Breakfast, restaurant, bar Wellness and Fitness: Gym, sauna, spa	Dining and refreshments: Breakfast, restaurant, bar, room service Wellness and fitness: Gym, sauna, spa	Dining: Breakfast Fitness: Gym, sauna

		Comfort Seeker	Pragmatic Traveller	Moderate Traveller	Advantage Seeker
		Leisure and entertainment: Pool, entertainment options, lounge areas		Leisure and entertainment: Pool, entertainment options, lounge areas	
Field of work and reasons for work-related trip		Business: Meeting with customers Visiting distant department/office	Education: Visiting seminar, conference	Office: Visiting seminar, conference	Business: Meeting with customers
Reasons for leisure travel		Quality leisure time	Explore new destination. Family vacations	Quality leisure time Family vacations	Explore new destination
Behaviour after stay		Give feedback if something was outstanding	Sometimes participate in the feedback	Usually give feedback	Participate in the feedback
ID		ID10; ID11; ID16; ID19; ID20; ID21; ID25; ID30	ID1; ID2; ID4; ID5; ID12; ID13; ID17; ID18; ID26; ID27	ID6; ID9; ID14; ID15; ID22; ID23; ID24; ID28	ID3; ID7; ID8; ID29

Additionally, the findings of this study reveal several similarities and differences when compared with previous research on traveller typologies. One notable contribution is the identification of the "Comfort Seekers" group, whose preferences blend both business and leisure travel elements. This contrasts with earlier studies, such as Lubbe (2020) and Schiessl *et al.* (2024), which typically classified travellers into distinct business or leisure categories. The "Comfort Seekers" align with the leisure "Relaxation Seekers" and "Delight Seekers" (Tomczyk *et al.*, 2022), and the leisure "Quality Seekers" (Nessel *et al.*, 2021), both of whom prioritise comfort and memorable experiences, as well as the leisure "Local Hotel Lovers" (Kim *et al.*, 2020), who value room quality and atmosphere over price.

The "Pragmatic Travellers" group, which values efficiency and functionality, shares similarities with business travellers in previous studies, such as those by Lubbe (2020) and Schiessl *et al.* (2024). This group also overlaps with both leisure "Budget Adventurers" (Tomczyk *et al.*, 2022) and "Bargain Seekers" (Nessel *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, the "Moderate Travellers" group, identified here, shares some characteristics with the leisure "Family Explorers" (Tomczyk *et al.*, 2022) and business "Convention and Business Seekers" (Kim *et al.*, 2011), who prioritise hotel stays as a base for exploration and rest.

Furthermore, while some studies, like those of Cetin and Walls (2016) and Kim *et al.* (2020), emphasise the role of demographic and psychographic factors in shaping hotel choice and satisfaction, the traveller types in this study focus on the traveller perceptions and individual expectations within the hotel room itself. For instance, "Comfort Seekers" place significant emphasis on the relaxation and ease provided by the hotel room, while "Pragmatic Travellers" are more concerned with practical aspects, such as convenience and functionality. This distinction aligns with findings from Lvov and Komppula (2024), who argue that the same physical space as a hotel room can have different meanings depending on the needs and expectations of diverse customer segments.

The study also demonstrates that factors, such as the presence of children or the travel companion, influence the expected benefits and the meaning of the hotel room, adding layer of complexity to previous studies, such as those by Rondan-Cataluña & Rosa-Díaz (2014) and Schiessl *et al.* (2024). These factors suggest that traveller preferences are shaped not only by the type of trip but also by the social context of the travel experience. While the findings of this study share some similarities with previous research on the business and leisure traveller, it expands on those travel types by offering a more detailed understanding of how different traveller types assign meaning to their hotel room.

The findings of this study also indicate that some travellers consider the hotel room as an important element in shaping their experiences within leisure and work-related travel. Travellers emphasised tangible and practical hotel room elements that directly influence gaining benefits from the hotel stay, which prompts a new booking. These findings align with Chathoth *et al.* (2013) and Wang *et al.* (2020), who highlight the traveller's desire to co-create memorable experiences. Additionally, the importance travellers place on the tangible and perceptual attributes of the hotel room resonates with the research of Ren *et al.* (2016). Finally, the role of the hotel room experience as a starting point for future bookings is consistent with the conclusions of Chan and Wong (2006).

A key novelty of this study lies in its approach to distinguish travellers based on their perceptions of hotel rooms across both business and leisure contexts, rather than solely focusing on one type of travel. This provides a more nuanced understanding of how individuals navigate and prioritise different aspects of hotel accommodation, reflecting the increasingly blurred boundaries between business and leisure travel. By focusing on traveller perceptions and the benefits they seek in various contexts, this study offers new insights into how hotel rooms contribute to the overall travel experience, bridging gaps in previous research that segmented customers based on more traditional, context-specific criteria.

6. Conclusions

This study increases understanding of the perceived importance of a hotel room across different traveller types, and hence, responds to the call by a previous study by Lvov and Komppula (2024) of understanding how travellers on both leisure and work-related trips perceive the role of a hotel room. The introduced four traveller types, "Comfort Seekers," "Pragmatic Travellers," "Moderate Travellers" and "Advantage Seekers," illustrate that the travellers who are staying in hotels on work and leisure trips, perceive the importance of the hotel room differently, but the benefits sought can be somewhat similar. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the difference between work and leisure travel by suggesting that the importance of hotel room experiences is more influenced by travellers' personal preferences for accommodation than by the type of travel. This study challenges prior assumptions about the separate nature of work-related and leisure accommodation choices, while also highlighting the different expectations travellers may have for hotel rooms. Furthermore, the sample enabled the evaluation of needs and perceptions for both types of trips without the potential bias that might arise if interviews were conducted during an active trip (whether work or leisure) in a specific hotel. This approach ensures a more comprehensive understanding of travellers' perceptions across various contexts. The study suggests that hotel room experiences should not be seen in isolation, but rather as part of the broader travel experience. This insight can help hotel managers tailor services and marketing strategies to meet the varying needs of these different traveller types.

As previous research suggested, more in-depth studies on customer segmentation are needed to help hotels tailor their offerings to meet the specific needs of different guest groups (e.g., Chung, 2004; Kim *et al.*, 2020). Considering the importance of segmentation in the hotel marketing processes (Bodet *et al.*, 2017), the traveller types help to understand the diversity of travellers' expectations of the hotel accommodation, specifically room and its functionality and design (Wittmann-Wurzer & Zech, 2019). Furthermore, this study links traveller types to their perceptions of hotel rooms, demonstrating how these relationships may also contribute to guest satisfaction (e.g., Millán *et al.*, 2016; Bodet *et al.*, 2017; Radojevic *et al.*, 2018). This study adds a novel perspective on traveller definitions within the context of hotel management, specifically focusing on the importance of hotel rooms for the individual traveller. Hence, this study enriches studies that have usually explored these aspects either connected to work-related or leisure travel (e.g. Chan & Wong, 2006; Kim & Park, 2017).

Notably, Kim *et al.* (2020) highlight that, since a hotel primarily sells the experience of a stay, it should focus on delivering the most enjoyable and entertaining experience possible for travellers and focus on

supporting the customers to gain the benefits they expect to receive from the stay, whether in leisure or business contexts. By focusing on supporting the customers to gain the benefits they wish to have, for instance, a good night's sleep, the hotel managers should consider what kind of services they could provide to support the customer to get this experience. In this example, are there certain relaxation activities or products provided in the hotel room that help the customer to orientate for a good night's sleep and the waking up moment or morning activities can complement this experience. Similar supporting actions and services should be considered to support other benefits sought by the customers. This could include providing additional and more detailed information about the hotel room and services available already in the booking phase. In particular, on a work-related trip, travellers appreciate more comfortable, ergonomic furniture in the rooms and additional options, such as a second screen, which enables them to have better working conditions in the room. As travellers become more concerned about their well-being, access to a gym, sauna and spa will be important, especially during a business trip. In addition, a hotel room should provide guests with the opportunity to relax. Moreover, leisure family travellers are affected by the trip budget, so hotels should offer budget deals for more spacious room reservations or a discount for a second room reservation in case of family reservations.

By acknowledging the importance of the hotel room, managers can plan, arrange and decorate the rooms in a way that might raise the interest to travel to the same hotel for a different purpose. However, rather than focusing on business and leisure travel segments, hotel managers could reconsider customer segmentation based on the proposed traveller types. Accordingly, identifying the importance of the room within the overall travel experience can help in suggesting an appropriate accommodation package option for their customers. The findings of this study have important implications for hotel marketing strategies and service design. By understanding the distinct needs of traveller types, hotels can tailor their offerings to better align with guests' expectations and perceived benefits. For example, "Comfort Seekers" may prioritise premium amenities and high-quality service, while "Pragmatic Travelers" may value functionality and efficiency. Proposed traveller types also highlight the evolving nature of traveller behaviour, demonstrating the need for more personalised and adaptable hotel experiences. Hotels can leverage this insight to offer customised packages, flexible services and targeted promotions that meet the specific preferences of different traveller segments, ultimately enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty. Hence, it is important to acknowledge that it is the same person with one's own preferences for hotel accommodation, travelling for different purposes.

As with any empirical research, this study also has its limitations. This research was done only among Finnish travellers, which gives insight from the perspective of one nationality and does not indicate potential intercultural differences. Hence, there is a need to examine the importance and meanings of a hotel room also among other nationalities. It is acknowledged that this is a qualitative study, and as all travellers do not take both work and leisure trips, the findings cannot be generalised for all travellers. Further research is essential to keep pace with the changing expectations of various traveller types and the emerging benefits associated with hotel accommodations. Building on the current study, conducting a quantitative analysis could reveal whether these findings are applicable to a broader population and diverse nationalities. Such research would enhance our understanding of the meanings and needs in the context of hotel rooms.

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