**Abstract**

Boutique hotels appeal to a niche of guests seeking personalized experiences, a unique aesthetic, and a sense of intimacy. Such hotels contribute to the rest of the hospitality industry by catering to a wider range and variety of guest tastes, as well as preferences. While the hospitality industry has noted a sharp increase in the popularity of boutique hotels, there remains a lack of conceptualization or specific definition of this type of hotel. This quantitative study aims to bridge some of the gaps in the literature by examining the perceptions of a purposive heterogenous sample of 252 Israeli consumers regarding boutique hotels. By examining perceptions of boutique hotels versus standard chain hotels, the study helps define some of the unique characteristics of boutique hotels. The main findings of the study included:

* **Push factors**—there was a positive correlation between the tendency for a consumer to choose a boutique hotel and various push factors. Inter alia, the most prominent of these were a desire to escape the monotony of everyday life, a desire for unforgettable experiences with family and friends, and the urge for novel and exciting experiences.
* **Pull factors**—the study revealed distinct pull factors that boosted the attractiveness of boutique hotels. Significant positive relationships were found with excellent quality of service, an inviting, pleasant atmosphere, and a design ethos that conveyed the sense of a unique lifestyle.
* **Push vs. pull factors**—when comparing the strength of these predictor variables, there was a moderate dominance of push over pull factors. However, both were central to determining the likelihood that a consumer would choose a boutique hotel over a standard chain hotel.
* **Services and offerings**—when choosing a hotel, consumers have specific expectations. A positive relationship was found between consumers’ preferences for boutique hotels and their expectations around gourmet gastronomic experiences, unique and stylish interior design, and rooms equipped with the latest technologies.
* **Emotional connections**—in terms of the spectrum of consumer emotions, a notable positive relationship was found between the likelihood of choosing a boutique hotel and a desire for emotional experiences. Guests expect boutique hotels to be sanctuaries of calmness, and to provide an energetic environment and opportunities for excitement and novelty.

From a theoretical perspective, the study highlights the interplay between consumers’ internal motivations (push factors) and the attributes of boutique hotels (pull factors) that drive guests’ decision-making processes. It seems that for boutique hotel guests, luxury is not only related to material comfort, but also—and perhaps even mainly—to intangible experiences, personalized services, and the ability of the hotel experience to create memorable moments.

The unique atmosphere of boutique hotels is perceived by guests as more authentic than that of standard hotel chains. The study’s findings reveal a distinct pattern in the behaviors and preferences of boutique hotel guests, who emphasized their preferences for experiences, emotional connections, authenticity, and personal identity. From a business perspective, entrepreneurs and hotel managers can harness these insights to shape the services they offer. By ensuring they meet the expressed preferences and desires of potential customers, managers, and business owners can increase the attractiveness of their boutique hotel offerings.

This study has limitations. The purposive heterogeneous sample, while ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives, may not be representative of the broader Israeli population. The next-step research could combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies with a larger, and more random sample to offer deeper as well as richer insights into consumer perceptions of boutique versus chain hotel environments.