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The Influence of Hotel Attributes and Travellers' Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Hotel Selection in Ilorin Metropolis

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Abstract:

Predicting factors influencing travellers' hotel selection is a tough task, given that it is influenced by several variables. Thus, hoteliers' ability to manage travellers' hotel preference requires a thorough understanding of both the tangible (physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials) and the intangible (employees' skills and knowledge of the service, security level, materials that can attract visitors' features and influence their selection choice). In order to assist hotels with an empirical understanding of hotel attributes that influence travellers' hotel selection, this quantitative study examines the influence of hotel attributes and travellers socio-demographic characteristics on the selection of hotels in Ilorin metropolis. With a modified questionnaire that was developed from previous studies, data were collected from 322 travellers, selected via probability sampling from seven purposively selected hotels in the study area. Analyses of data revealed that 67% of hotel attributes that were adopted are very significant in travellers' hotel selection. The average mean scores of foremost hotel attributes as perceived by the respondents is safety/security(3.41), live music/other forms of live entertainment(3.35) uninterrupted power supply (3.21), cleanliness of the hotel surroundings (3.17), the quality of in-room amenities (3.16), free internet services (3.11) and, employees' behaviour (3.10). The outcome of the Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) used in testing the influence of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics of hotel selection at 0.05 level of significance shows that respondents' religion, usual residence as travellers' and income are influential to respondents' preference of hotel attributes. In contrast, respondents' gender, age, marital status, occupation and educational attainment do not have an influence on their preference for hotel attributes. One major recommendation of this study is that hoteliers should carry out a periodic assessment of travellers' perception of hotel attributes that is attracting them. This is important for attaining the guests' satisfaction. In turn, an improvement in guests' loyalty which is seriously needed to stay in business in this highly competitive market, as well as other benefits of providing guests with acceptable services can be achieved.

Keywords: customers' loyalty, service expectation, hotel attributes, hotel downsizing

1. Introduction

Tourism is considered the world's largest industry (Hall, 2008) by virtue of the demand for travel, employment generation in the industry and the amount of money it brings into a destination. The projection by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation that the number of people travelling across the globe would increase is an indication for an increase in tourism activities in the hospitality industry, especially; the hotel industry for its role in providing food and accommodation for travellers. The hotel industry is very essential in its contribution to the development of global tourism earnings. According to Tefera and Govender (2017), the hotel industry is one of the fastest-growing service industries in the world. Even in the face of economic meltdown and insecurity that is ravaging most countries in the world; travelling activities for many of the reason acknowledged by tourism (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2008, Ivanovic & Khunou, 2009) still continue to increase. This means that more lodging facilities are required to be able to adequately respond to the needs of international and local travellers who are away from their usual environment for all the tourism-related reasons. In doing so, the hotel industry has been generating huge revenue which is a significant contribution to the nation's economy. According to Oyibo (2013), the hospitality industries which comprise hotel in Nigeria contributed N680.1 million to the economy in 1980, N492.4 million in 1984, N477.9 million in 1990, N591.9 million in 2000, N1950.0 million in 2004 and N2, 390.0 million in 2006. However, much still left to be desired in the hospitality industry that has the potential to generate more revenues than it is currently doing.

Accommodation remains a fundamental element of travel and tourism. Irrespective of travellers' class, types and demographic variables, travellers would naturally need accommodation especially in view of the fact that they will be outside their usual environment for at least one night. Unequivocally, the hotel as a component of the hospitality industry

is directly responsible for the provision of accommodation and food (Adesina & Chinonso, 2015) to visitors. Jones (2002) affirms, the author described the provision of lodging facility as the spine of the hospitality industry. Although, the key service that travellers want in the hotel is accommodation. Recently, hotels are offering travellers' added services which include but not limited to internet facilities, transport shuttle to and from the airport, catering for banquet and special functions such as meetings, receptions for all kind of celebrations and organised musical concerts. All these additional services are mostly tailored towards attracting more revenue, customised services and attract customers' loyalty and willingness to patronise again.

In view of travellers' essential needs for accommodation -given that they are away from the usual environment - there is a lot of prospect for both old and newly established hotels in any destination that is attracting visitors inward. This study acknowledges the presence of new hotels being established to provide catering services for visitors arriving Ilorin for any of the tourism-related reasons for travelling. And as the number of visitors coming to Kwara state - Ilorin - continues to increase, it is anticipated that the hotels herein will continue to witness more patronage. Especially amidst increase reasons leading to the rise in the number of visitors entering Kwara state. For instance, the last fifteen years had witnessed the birth of more institutions of higher learning - Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Kwara State University, Maleté Ilorin, Landmark University, Omu-Aran consequently attracting educational visitors (non-resident students of all the institutions mentioned) and visits from their family and relatives. Another reason is the proximity of the state to both the North and West Nigeria, thus making it an ideal meeting point for business visitors from across the country. Many business owners are opening more branches in the state capital, Ilorin and this as furthermore encouraged the inflow of visitors. However, the increasing inflow of visitors requires an improvement in the provision of accommodation and hospitality services that are needed for a concurrent increase in visitors' arrivals.

A visitor (traveller) is someone who is taking a trip to any destination outside his/her usual environment (UNWTO, 2012). Fundamentally, there are two types of visitors, namely domestic and international (Bennett, 2000). While domestic visitors are local inhabitants who travel within a country, international visitors are those who travel to destinations other than their countries of residence or origin for the purpose of exercising tourism activities, and within the accepted time frame (Saayman, 2002). Tourism acknowledges that anyone who is away from his usual environment for a period not less than 24 hours but less than a year as a visitor. Given the above, a visitor would most likely need accommodation for at least one night, likewise, food and other services that will respond to his immediate needs whilst away from home.

Given the many reasons people travel (Hall, 2008), visitors that embark on travels differ in terms of needs and preferences. While citing Lamb et al., Baruca and Čivre (2012) stated that travellers' socio-demographic variables may influence their decision-making process. These dimensions include behavioural characteristic, motivation and geographical factors. Consequently, factors influencing visitors' hotel selection may also dictate their expectation; however, visitors expectations are reference points against which the service received will be compared (Wilson et al., 2008). Consequently, hoteliers need to be aware of some reasons motivating visitors travel and the effect these might be having on their selection of hotels and service expectation therein. Dominici and Guzzo (2010) concur to the above; authors describe the hotel as an industry with the ability to identify, anticipate and respond to guests' expectation. Authors further stated that hoteliers need to fully acknowledge which service attributes are most likely influencing customers' hotel selections.

2. Statement of the Problem

One of the ways of achieving customers' loyalty in the service industry is making sure that the basic things hotels are providing match customers' expectation. This includes being able to create an environment that meets customers' service expectations on safety, security, support, competence, physical comfort and psychological comfort (Fottler et al., 2000). Especially in this era of competition in the service industry, hotels lacking quality services can cause unbearable loss due to drops in customer patronage. Therefore, satisfying customers is more than ever important to encourage repeat business and foster word-of-mouth advertising (Spienlli & Canavos, 2000). As more hotels continue to spring up in the study area, it has been observed through a one-on-one interaction with some of the front office staff of these hotels that the rate of occupancy (the number of occupied rental rooms at a given time, compared to the total number of available rental rooms at a given time) is declining in some of these hotels. This means that there is stiff competition to attract potential travellers for these hotels. Also, if the construction of more hotels is not matched with corresponding increase patronage from users, it could be a precursor for hotel downsizing, consequently, loss of jobs for those working in the hotels especially when hotels could no longer afford to pay salary. Customers may stop patronising if they are not getting the expected service quality. Especially given that, habitual delivery of actual services that meet guests' expectation remains a herculean task for the service industry (Adeniyi & Oluseye (2013), this study is required to establish the actual attributes that influenced travellers' choice for better service delivery in that regard. Already, meagre staff remuneration, poor motivation in terms of compensation and inadequate recognition of staff for hard work among other poor working conditions have been linked with the hotel industry in the study area (Adediran, 2019). One wonders how these hotels will be able to adequately remunerate their employees if the currently observed low occupancy continues.

More so, an average Nigerian traveller is habitually fond of staying with friends and relatives when away from their usual environment. It is an opinionated view that having Nigerian travellers willfully paying for accommodation services is an imported orientation. This act is not originally part of our culture, especially as there are always friends and relatives to reside with whenever Nigerians are out of the usual environment. Now that the hotel industry has achieved so much, the willingness by Nigerians to pay for lodging and other hotel services must be sustained to keep the accommodation business functioning and to sustain the source of livelihood of hotel employees along with other financial

benefits that come from hotel operations. For this reason, hoteliers need to understand what and why travellers lodge in a particular hotel to keep the fortune of the hotel business activities alive. Hoteliers' knowledge of key factors influencing guests' choice would furthermore assist in providing fitted/customised services. Consequently, attaining customer satisfaction in this regard would, in turn, translate to a quality guests' experience, return visit (guest loyalty) and guaranteed customers value for money. And given the huge amount of money spent by hotel guests on hotel services, ownership of hotels goes beyond mere show-off of affluence. There is a need to respond to travellers' expectations and match these with adequate service experience in relation to hotel attributes that influence travellers' hotel selection. This may help prevent a looming crisis where an increase in the number of hotels in the study area may not translate to an economic boom for the hotel industry and stakeholders therein.

In spite of the plethora of studies that have offered recommendations on this issue, hotels are still struggling to keep their customers due to the inability to provide tailor-made services amongst other reasons. Additionally, there is a lack of academic studies on this issue in Nigeria and in the study area to be precise. Also previous studies failed to examine the relationship between travellers' socio-demographic characteristics and decision on the hotel selection. This study recognises that there are possibilities that travellers' socio-demographic characteristics could influence hotel selection as it did in Saha *et al.*'s (2010) amongst many studies. Authors established that respondents' age, gender and education, lifestyle, personality and income influenced buying behaviour of shoes in Kolkata, India. As a result, this study hypothesised that diversity of travellers' socio-demographic characteristics would play a role in the hotel selection in the study area. In light of above, this empirical investigation on the influence of hotel attributes and travellers' socio-demographic characteristics on hotel selection in Ilorin metropolis was conceptualised via the following objectives: (i) to conduct an assessment of travellers' socio-demographic characteristics (ii) to evaluate the hotel attributes influencing travellers' selection of hotels and, (iii) to determine if travellers' socio-demographic characteristics influence their decision on the hotel attributes considered in hotel selection.

3. Factors Influencing Travellers Selection of Hotel

Travellers' preference for hotel choice is influenced by several diverse factors. Predicting these factors without embracing a scientific study is a tough task. Therefore, a thorough understanding of both tangible (physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials) and the intangible (employees' skills and knowledge of the service, security level, materials that can attract visitors' features that influence hotel guests' selection) is a salient parameter that can be used to understand the areas that hoteliers need to focus more attention on when working towards quality service attainment. From previous studies, Wilson *et al.*, (2008) stated that hotels use the physical attribute - which includes both the interior and exterior components to communicate the services that guests can get when they visit. Parasuraman *et al.*, (1998) assert that the quality of service being offered can be measured using the physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. Meaning, some of the attributes that hotels can use to attract consumers are the physical components such as the architectural design of the hotel, location, scenery, in-room facilities, landscape and other physically related elements.

On travellers' purchase of accommodation as a service in the hotel industry, studies indicated that most travellers consider the hotel attributes such as cleanliness, location, room rate, security, service quality, and the reputation of the hotel (Knutson, 1988; Choi & Chu, 2000; Ndhlovu & Senguder, 2002) when choosing a hotel. In another study on students' decision on hotel selection in the United States of America, Liu and He (2013) stated that the room costs, service amenities availability, and proximity to tourist destinations are important attributes in customers' hotel selections found in previous studies. By implication, therefore, hotels' survival in this current intense competitive environment requires consciousness on knowing and how to provide and continue to inquire from their guest on how to do better.

On hotel attributes that guests can see, feel and touch (tangibles), Yang *et al.*, (2017) stated that facilities and amenities are very important in this regard. Authors confirm Wilson *et al.* (2008) position that hotels exploit the physical attribute to attract travellers inward. On what can be termed non-physical (intangibles) factors influencing travellers' hotel selection, attributes such as the hotel location, price and most importantly, customers past experience at a particular hotel is essential. Barsky (2012) affirm all these factors in his study as influential to guests' hotel selection. The author remarked that the vitality of guests past experience remains relevant in many past studies that were reviewed. This indicates that customer experience throughout the hotel stay is an extremely important factor, and, hoteliers are enjoined to deliver exceptional service in order to stay competitive. Additionally, this could indicate as well that guest has become more demanding due to the increase in hotels choices available. In Dube and Renaghan (2000) study, five most influential attributes that influenced travellers decision are the hotel brand name, hotel reputation, physical/outward look of the hotel property, getting value for money and guest- room design. Other intangible factors influencing travellers hotel selection are level of service, food and beverage quality and cleanliness of the hotel (Lewis, 1984), customised service, availability of in-house activities such as computer games, water balloons fun and a variety of fun and leisure activities (Hilbreth *et al.*, 2008) and, availability of WiFi.

According to Baruca and Čivre (2013), hotel product, information from friends, family -recommendation and personal preferences are significant in this regard. Authors also stated in their literature that some of the important attributes which create the competitive advantage of the hotel are: product, location, product offers and services, quality, price and reputation. Literature has also shown that hotel location is an influential factor in travellers' selection criteria. In terms of proximity to the primary place of function, travellers consider hotel location for economical reasons, it saves travellers cost of having to transport themselves from hotel to places of interest. Other factors in their study include recommendation of friend/relatives or travel agency, price, personal experience with the hotel, promotion and the hotel facilities.

4. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive approach to examining the hotel attributes (factors) influencing travellers' hotel selection in Ilorin. According to Jennings (2010), the main focus of a descriptive approach is to unveil the 'who' and 'what' of a research study. In this case, this study examined the attributes of hotels that influenced travellers' selection as stated in the research question. Primary data were collected from randomly selected respondents from seven of the eleven hotels within Ilorin Government Reserved Area (G.R.A), Fate and Tanke axis. Prior to the explanation on the population, sample size and sampling technique, below is a synopsis on the study area and, how hotels were selected.

Ilorin is the seat of power, the capital of Kwara State and the most visited by travellers. Apart from being a stopover for travellers who are going and coming from the Northern states, Ilorin has quite a number of institutions that would make average travellers to Kwara State to visit either directly or indirectly. There were 2,682,963 people in Kwara State in 2006; this according to projection based on the 1991 census outcome at the rate of 2.6% growth will go up to 3,518,771 (Babatunde et al., 2014). According to City population (2017), Ilorin accounted for 30% of the total human population of Kwara State. Ilorin is also the site of University of Ilorin, Kwara State Polytechnic, Kwara State College of education and Al-Hikmah University. Ilorin South houses Kwara State secretariat, Kwara State Revenue Building, Ministry of Finance, Kwara State Court of Appeal and so on. More so, there are numerous Bank offices, businesses and residential buildings in the study area. Similarly, the study area also boasts of a lot of hotels for visitors lodging and entertainment, especially in view of the continuous development and the ever-increasing population in terms of residents and visitors. Narrowing down on Ilorin to the actual study location-Fate, Tanke and Government Reserved Area (GRA) are among few places that Ilorin boasts of. These three locations shared similar characteristics such as sparsely populated, beautiful and adequate access to location of government building and privately-owned companies, banks offices, shopping malls and recreation/leisure centres. Remarkably, the Tanke route is home to the prestigious University of Ilorin –with students' population that already exceeded 50,000. All these attributes make the study area attractive and highly visited by Ilorin bound travellers. All the eleven registered hotels in the study area were approached for permission to use their guests and information on weekend occupancy rate for this study. However, seven of these hotels granted the request on a stringent condition that their names would not be mentioned. Discussion on how the population - sample size, and sampling of the respondents were carried out is next.

4.1. Population and Sample Size

Starting with the hotels in the study area, the entire eleven hotels in the study area were approached. Of this, only seven agreed to participate. On respondents' population, given that the data collection exercise was done on a weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), the population size of this study comprises all the guests that lodged at the selected hotels on a weekend basis. According to information obtained from the management of these hotels, there is no definite figure regarding the population of travelers that patronise them –meaning that the number of patronages varies and cannot be determined until it happened. For this reason, the information on the lodging capacity (occupancy) for the last three weekends in each hotel was requested, received and calculated. A total of 402 was realised as the average total population of guests in all the hotels. This (402) was adopted as the working population for this study. Based on a total population size of 402 therefore, a collective sample size of 196 is adequate on a confidence level of 95% as stated by Jennings (2010). However, two factors were further considered in arriving at the sample size in this regard. Firstly, there was an opportunity to get more than 196 participants because of the support received from the management of the selected hotels. Secondly, in order to be rational in administering the questionnaires for the various hotels, a breakdown of the population and sample sizes for each hotel shows that about 396 respondents will be required in total as depicted in Table 1. In real time, a total of 355 copies of respondents-completed questionnaire were administered rationally –see Table 1. Out of the 355 questionnaires administered, 322 were retrieved. Below is the distribution table (Table 1) for the population, sample sizes and questionnaire administration for the selected hotels

S/N	Hotels	Number of Rooms Available for Customers	Average Hotel Occupancy For Previous Weekends)	Sample Size At 95% Confidence Level)	Number Of Questionnaire Administered	Number Of Questionnaire Retrieved
1	Hotel A	98	73	60	65	53
2	Hotel B	75	55	48	45	39
3	Hotel C	45	37	40	35	31
4	Hotel D	78	69	65	60	58
5	Hotel E	63	48	54	45	41
6	Hotel F	108	89	85	75	71
7	Hotel G	49	31	44	30	29
	TOTAL	504	402	396	355	322

Table 1: Population and Sample Size, Questionnaire Administered and Collected from Selected Hotels

4.2. Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire comprises of structured questions on a five-point Likert-scale. According to Hassan and Shahnewaz, (2014), Likert scale query is very useful in collecting respondent perceptions on service-related matters and

when determining visitors' agreement level of service received. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one contains socio-demographic information of the respondents. This is required for adequate knowledge of travellers' socio-demographic characteristics, and, to anticipate their expectations and plan on possible market segmentation in terms of service offering among other things. Section two contains queries on respondents' perception of the influence of hotel attributes on their decision to choose a particular hotel. The pilot study exercise was carried out with a questionnaire that contains 25 variables adopted from related studies (Choosrichom, 2011; Baruca & Civre, 2012; Sohrabi et al., 2012; Liu & He, 2013) and modified variables to suit the current situation. After a successful pilot survey exercise that recorded a reliability coefficient score of 0.952, the questionnaire was revised and a final questionnaire was produced using 21 most influential variables (hotel attributes) that received improved responses during the pilot study.

4.3. Data Collection

The completion of the pilot study paves the way for the actual data collection as questionnaires were administered via non-random sampling. With the support of the management of the selected hotels, questionnaires were administered to respondents upon arrival and were put on the table inside guests' rooms. The receptionist at each hotel informed travelers that it is voluntary to take the survey. This gesture yielded a total of 322 valid responses.

4.4. Results and Discussion

Discussion of the findings on the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics is a response to the research question one.

- Research Question 1: What are the socioeconomic profiles of travellers at selected hotels in Ilorin metropolis?

Accordingly, of 322 respondents who took part in the study, the majority 170 (52.8%) of them were male; while 152 (47.2%) were female. The age of the respondents are varied, 24 (7.5%) were less than or equal to 20 years, 127 (39.4%) were between 21-25 years, 109 (33.9%) were between 26-30 years, 25 (7.8%) were between 31-35 years, 26 (8.1%) were between 36-40 years; while 11 (3.4%) of the respondents were 41 years and above. On the basis of marital status, 176 (54.7%) of the respondents were singles and represent the majority, 120 (37.3%) were married, 8 (2.5%) were divorced, 2 (0.6%) were separated; while 16 (5.0%) of the respondents were engaged. The respondents were occupation shows that 102 (31.7%) of them were students, 107 (33.2%) were working in the accounting/administrative related office, 14 (4.3%) were engineers, 20 (6.2%) were medical practitioners, 12 (3.7%) were in a teaching job, 42 (13.0%) were traders; while 25 (7.8%) were in other forms of occupation. With respect to nationality, 312 (96.9%) of the respondents were Nigerians, 6 (1.9%) were from other African countries; while 4 (1.2%) were Non-Africans.

Regarding respondents' religion, 186 (57.8%) of the respondents were Christians, 128 (39.8%) were Muslims; while 8 (2.5%) were traditional religion adherents. In terms of education, 12 (3.7%) of the respondents have primary school certificate, 34 (10.6%) were secondary school certificate holders, 108 (33.5%) possessed NCE/OND certificate, 126 (39.1%) HND/B.Sc holders, 26 (8.1%) have Master Degree, 14 (4.3%) owned Doctorate Degree; while 2 (0.6%) have other type of educational qualification. Based on residence, 254 (78.9%) of the respondents were living in Ilorin, 20 (6.2%) were living in outside Ilorin but from Kwara State, 40 (12.4%) were from outside Kwara State; 8 (2.5%) were from other residential status. Regarding the respondents' monthly income, 211 (65.5%) of the respondents earned 50,000 and below, 31 (9.6%) earned between 50,001-75,000, 18 (5.6%) earned between 75,001-100,000, 18 (5.6%) earned between 100,001-125,000, 8 (2.5%) earned between 125,001-150,000, 10 (3.1%) earned between 150,001-175,000, 10 (3.1%) earned between 175,001-200,000; while 16 (5.0%) earned 200,001 and above.

- Research Question 2: What are the topmost hotels attributes influencing respondents' hotel selection in Ilorin metropolis?

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	Remarks
8	Safety and security issues within the hotel surroundings	3.41	1.44	1 st	Very significant
21	Specially organised activities such as live music/other forms of live entertainment	3.35	1.39	2 nd	Very significant
20	Uninterrupted power supply	3.21	1.60	2 nd	Very significant
6	Cleanliness of the hotel surroundings	3.17	1.59	3 rd	Very significant
15	The quality of in-room amenities (in terms room, fridge, television, air-condition, bedding and so on)	3.16	1.61	4 th	Very significant
14	Availability of free internet services	3.11	1.57	5 th	Very significant
19	Competent/well-behaved/disciplined employees	3.10	1.60	6 th	Very significant
7	Hotel's reputation (in terms of name, brand and previous experience from friends and/or relatives)	3.10	1.55	6 th	Very significant
18	Sincere concern towards visitors (empathy)	3.09	1.49	8 th	Very significant
13	Reward (discount) for frequent patronage/loyalty	3.08	1.60	9 th	Very significant
16	Fast, friendly first contact	3.06	1.62	10 th	Very significant
10	Loyalty to a particular hotel based on previous patronage	3.03	1.43	11 th	Very significant
17	The quality of food and beverage offered	3.02	1.55	12 th	Very significant
9	Hotel rating/brand name	3.00	1.58	13 th	Very significant
4	Scenery (outlook of the hotel in terms of attractiveness)	2.96	1.60	14 th	Mildly significant
5	Proximity of the hotel to offices/homes/place of primary assignment in Ilorin	2.89	1.56	15 th	Mildly significant

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	Remarks
12	On-site service such as special recognition, VIP treatment and consideration for special treatment based on your frequent patronage	2.86	1.58	16 th	Mildly significant
3	Location (area in terms of distance and popularity)	2.86	1.52	16 th	Mildly significant
2	Accessibility of the hotel (movement of persons and cars in and out of hotels)	2.76	1.48	18 th	Mildly significant
11	Advertisement of the hotel on media (print/electronic/ social media and so on)	2.64	1.37	19 th	Mildly significant
1	Prices of hotel services such as food and beverages	2.55	1.45	20 th	Mildly significant

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order on Hotels' Attributes Influencing Respondents' Hotel Selection

Table 2 shows that 14 out of the 21 items on travellers' perceptions of hotel attributes influencing their selection had mean scores that are more the average (benchmark) mean value of 3.00 for determining the main influential attributes. Using the SN and items columns to depict the position the examined variables and their contents as they appeared on the questionnaire, the first to seven most significant items to respondents hotel selection are 8 ($\bar{x} = 3.41$ & $\sigma = 1.44$), 21 ($\bar{x} = 3.35$ & $\sigma = 1.39$), 20 ($\bar{x} = 3.21$ & $\sigma = 1.60$), 6 ($\bar{x} = 3.17$ & $\sigma = 1.59$), 15 ($\bar{x} = 3.16$ & $\sigma = 1.61$), 14 ($\bar{x} = 3.11$ & $\sigma = 1.57$) and 14 ($\bar{x} = 3.11$ & $\sigma = 1.60$) took precedence over others and were ranked between 1st and 7th respectively. This means that the topmost hotel attributes influencing travellers' selection of hotels in Ilorin metropolis as perceived by the respondents is the safety of lives and properties within the hotel surroundings, availability of special activities such as live music/other forms of live entertainment, uninterrupted power supply, cleanliness of the hotel surroundings, the quality of in-room amenities, availability of free internet services and competent/well behaved and disciplined employees.

- Research question 3: Do respondents' socio-demographic characteristics influence the decision on hotel attributes considered in hotel selection?

To answer this research question, a null hypothesis was formulated and tested using a Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) at 0.05 level of significance was formulated as follows:

- H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between the visitors' socioeconomic characteristics and perceived hotel attributes influencing hotel selection in Ilorin metropolis.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.500 ^a	.250	.228	22.231

Table 3: Model Summary

a. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Marital Status, Gender, Religion, Occupation, Nationality, Education, Residence, Age

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51395.233	9	5710.581	11.55*
	Residual	154200.67	312	494.233	
	Total	205595.9	321		

Table 4: ANOVA

a. Dependent Variable: Factors Influencing Choice of Hotel

b. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Marital Status, Gender, Religion, Occupation, Nationality, Education, Residence, Age

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	56.929	3.749		15.184	.000
	Gender	5.517	2.535	.109	2.177	.030
	Age	2.340	1.381	.108	1.694	.091
	Marital Status	.071	1.416	.003	.050	.960
	Occupation	-1.150	.659	-.093	-1.747	.082
	Nationality	-.315	5.340	-.003	-.059	.953
	Religion	-16.518	2.347	-.356	-7.037	.000
	Education	.083	1.414	.004	.059	.953
	Residence	4.246	1.798	.134	2.362	.019
	Income	3.439	.742	.279	4.632	.000

Table 5: Coefficients

a. Dependent Variable: Factors Influencing Choice of Hotel

The model summary Table 3 provides the R values of 0.500, which indicates a high degree of correlation. The R^2 value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (hotel attributes that are influencing the selection of hotels), is explained by the independent variables (demographic profiles of the respondents). In this case, 25% can be explained, which is high enough. The Table 4 is the ANOVA table, which presents how well the regression equation fits the data (that is, predicts the dependent variable). The table indicates that the regression model significantly predict

the dependent variable ($F_{\{9, 312\}} = 11.55, p < 0.000$). That is, the regression model is a good fit for the data. The coefficients Table 5 indicates that it is not all of the respondents' demographic profiles that contribute significantly to the model, $B = 5.51, 2.34, 0.07, -1.15, 0.31$ and 0.08 ; $p > 0.05$ for gender, age, marital status, occupation, nationality and education respectively did not contribute; while $B = 16.51, 4.24$ and 3.43 ; $p < 0.05$ did contribute to the model. Hence, the hypothesis is retained based on gender, age, marital status, occupation, nationality and education; while it is rejected based on religion, residence and income. Therefore, no significant relationship exists between respondents' gender, age, marital status, occupation, nationality and education and factors influencing respondents' hotel selection. On the other hand, there was a significant relationship between respondents' religion, residence and income and factors influencing their selection of hotels in Ilorin metropolis.

5. Conclusions and recommendation

In view of the observed decline in occupancy rate in hotels in the study area, there was a thought on whether hoteliers in the study area are aware of the hotel attributes that attract guests to them. This study was conceived to examine the influence of hotel attributes and travelers' socio-demographic characteristics in hotel selection. This study achieves all it sets out to do and findings from the data collected from travellers at selected hotels resulted in the under listed major conclusions that:

- Out of twenty-one hotel attributes examined, fourteen of those recorded above 3.0 cut-off marks for the effectiveness of the average mean for each item. The topmost hotel attributes influencing travellers hotel selection in Ilorin metropolis as perceived by the respondents are adequate safety, availability of special activities such as live music/other forms of live entertainment, uninterrupted power supply, cleanliness of the hotel surroundings, the quality of in-room amenities, availability of free internet services and competent/well-behaved and disciplined employees. The remaining seven items didn't do badly as indicated under the remarks column in Table 1. Hoteliers can use the findings herein to improve in planning, infrastructure development in order to attract the best of patronage from travellers.
- There was no significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles (gender, age, marital status, occupation, nationality and education) and factors influencing their selection of hotels. On the other hand, there was a significant relationship between respondents' demographic profiles (religion, residence and income) and factors influencing their selection of hotels in Ilorin metropolis.

A major recommendation of this study is that hoteliers should carry out a periodic assessment of travellers' perception of hotel attributes that attract them. This is important so as to sustain customer satisfaction and achieve high level of loyalty especially in this highly competitive market with numerous alternatives for customers. An appeal should be made to hotels to encourage researcher to use their properties. Not granting of access to researchers will continue to create research vacuum at the domestic front. This will mean that stakeholders in the industry will continue to rely a great deal on international findings which might not be the exact viewpoint of travellers and other stakeholders in the hotel industry back home.

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