

Leisure Guests' Perceptions of Price and Security: The Case of Awka, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *Despite general security concerns, particularly security issues prevalent in the Nigerian hotel industry, guests have to contend with the room rate or price of staying in hotels considering the spiraling inflation in the country. Nevertheless, it is not empirically established if price and security influence leisure guests' choice of hotels in Nigeria. To achieve these objectives and establish a framework of leisure guests' choice of hotels, this study used multiple regression analysis to test the formulated hypotheses with the aid of SPSS Version 20.0 software at 5% level of significance. Findings from a convenience sample of 246 respondents who lodge in hotels in Awka metropolis, Anambra State, Nigeria show that the two factors investigated namely price and security influence leisure guests' choice of hotels. More importantly, security has more influence than price. To sum up, the study concludes that the basis of hotel accommodation is security and affordability. Therefore, the study recommends that hotel owners and managers should definitely be security-conscious in the management of their hotels and always strive to give consumers more for less.*

KEYWORDS: price, security, leisure guests, choice, hotel

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry has risen to the centre stage of most governments' plans. Interestingly, the industry continues to occupy an important position in world affairs because of the

humongous growth in recent years. Moreover, there are four segments of the hospitality industry which include food and beverage, accommodation (also referred to as lodging), travel and tourism, and entertainment and recreation (McCain, 2022). To be more precise, the accommodation or lodging sector includes hotels, campgrounds, rental homes, resorts, motels, hostels and any other facility that gives people a place to sleep (McCain, 2022). Among the aforementioned facilities in the accommodation sector, the hotel industry appears unique in every aspect particularly the enormous growth and inherent employment generation opportunities. For instance, the modern hotel industry in 1960 was valued around \$3billion and crossed the mark of \$25billion in the year 1990 (Russell & Dawson, 2022). Recently, the hotel industry is worth more than \$500billion providing jobs to 4.5 million people globally (Russell & Dawson, 2022). Also, the industry is projected to see a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7% from 2021 – 2025 (McCain, 2022).

In Nigeria alone, the growth rate of the hotels and motels industry had total revenues of \$1.5billion in 2020, representing a compound annual rate of change (CARC) of 12.3% between 2016 and 2020 (Research and Markets, 2021). More importantly, the number of establishments increased with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.6% between 2016 and 2020, to reach a total of 3,061.0 in 2020 (Research and Markets, 2021). In consequence, the hotel industry continues to be a major player in both global and Nigerian economies considering these official and vital statistics.

Statement of the Problem

Presently, Nigeria is faced with a myriad of security challenges. The variety include banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, assassination, farmer-herder clashes, armed robbery, inter-communal violence, militancy, crude oil theft, cultism, separatist violence and other sundry crimes that dominate the landscape. Despite these security concerns in Nigeria, the number of international tourists has continued to grow (Research and Markets, 2021). More importantly, these international tourists and other leisure guests continue to patronize hotels in contemporary Nigeria. Nevertheless, cybercrime, stealing, fraud, fire outbreak, bickering among staff, criminal minded guests, kidnapping, poison from food and beverages, sexual harassment and indiscriminate clusters of building to the hotel environment have been identified as threats to security and safety in Nigerian hotels (Agbasiere, 2018). Besides general security concerns, especially security issues prevalent in the hotel industry, guests have to contend with the room rate or price of staying in hotels considering the spiraling inflation in the country. Accordingly, it is not empirically established if price and security influence leisure guests' choice of hotels in Nigeria.

Definitely, hospitality and tourism scholars in Europe, Asia, North America and New Zealand have executed studies in the hotel sector to understand consumer choice in hotel selection in three segmented markets: leisure guests, business travellers and meeting and convention customers (e.g., Weaver & Oh, 1993; Tsaur & Gwo-Hsiung, 1995; Callan, 1996; Dube & Ranaghan, 1999; Lockyer, 2000; Sohrabi, Vanani, Tahmasebipur & Fazli, 2011; Kucukusta, 2017; Soulidou, Karavisilis, Vrana, Kehris, Theochardis & Alberto, 2018). On the contrary, most Nigerian studies carried out in this domain were not focused on specific target markets in the hotel industry (e.g., Nduka, Okocha & Chris-Nnamchi, 2017; Oladele, Yakibi, Akinruwa & Ajayi, 2019; Anetoh, Ndubuisi, Okeke, Ogbunuju, Oranye & Eboh, 2022). The very few indigenous studies carried out specifically in the leisure guests' market (e.g., Ogbunankwor, Chendo & Nwangene, 2022; Ogbunankwor, Nwangene & Chendo, 2023) were limited to investigating the influence of cleanliness and location on consumer choice of hotels on the one hand, and investigating the influence of facilities and customer service on consumer choice of hotels on the other hand, thereby leaving out additional factors such as price and security. As a result, this study attempts to bridge this gap in the literature.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to establish a framework of the determinants of consumer choice of hotels in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Accordingly, this objective can be broken down into the following specific objectives:

- To ascertain the level to which price contribute to consumer choice of hotels.
- To determine the extent to which security predicts consumer choice of hotels.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many ways. To begin with, the study is considerable owing to the fact that there is relatively a dearth of empirical studies that examined the determinants of consumer choice of hotels in any of the different segments of the hotel industry in the Nigerian context. At the same time, the study will add to the stock of existing knowledge and provide a base for further studies in this area of hospitality and tourism research. The study will also be beneficial to hotel owners, hotel managers and members of the Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN) who operate hotel businesses in Nigeria. Additionally, the regulatory authority in the industry, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) will equally benefit from the results of this study as it will aid the knowledge of what determines consumer choice of hotels, hence they will regulate better on hotel lodging and accommodation issues. The study will be beneficial to hotel guests, hotel consultants, other hospitality and tourism industry consultants, marketing consultants, and hospitality and tourism industry practitioners. Finally, it will also be beneficial to researchers and academicians in the

course of their professions as it will not only add to the stock of existing literature but will also act as a springboard for future research in this area of hospitality and tourism research.

Scope of the Study

The present study is domiciled within the domain of consumer behaviour. In terms of geographical scope, the study covers Awka metropolis. This is because Awka is the administrative capital of Anambra State, Nigeria and is a cosmopolitan city containing people with different demographic background. Moreover, the major entity that is being analyzed in this study is hotel leisure guests.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework: Stimulus- Response Model

The theoretical framework of the present study is developed based on the adaptation of the Stimulus-Response (S-R) model (Kotler, 1997). To begin with, Mehrabian and Russel (1974) originally proposed Stimulus-Organism-Response(S-O-R) model from environmental psychology (see Figure I). The basic premise underlying the S-O-R model is a three-step process that encompasses the stimulus, organism and response reaction (de Villiers, Visenza and Phiri, (2017). In other words, the environmental stimuli trigger internal processes and structures (organism) which lead to a behavioral response of an individual (such as approach or avoidance).

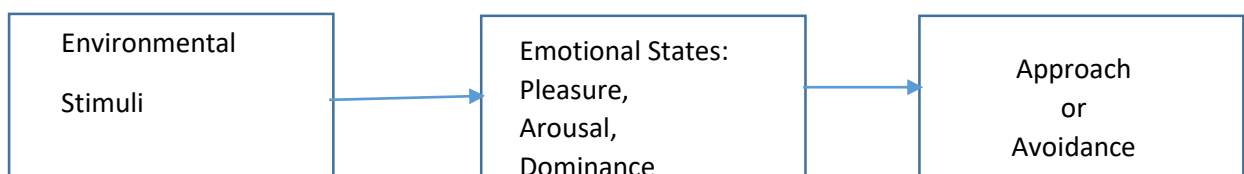


Fig.1 The stimulus – Organism-Response Model (Mehrabian and Russel, 1974)

In contrast, according to Kotler (1997), the S-R model is a two-step overt process that contains four marketing stimuli dimensions, namely, product, price, place and promotion and that consumers are also exposed to environmental stimuli that include economic, political, technological and cultural dimensions. The buyer's mental processes are visualized as a black box that is unseen and the responses are of buyer decisions that include product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase quantity, and purchase timing (Kotler, 1997). In other words, the S-R model is an abridged version of the S-O-R model.

Moreover, the S-R model or its extensions has been applied in different industries by several studies. These include the mobile telecom industry (Kim & Rha, 2016; Alsaggaf & Althonayan, 2018; Cheng, Chung and Tsai, 2019), retail industry (Chang, Eckman & Yan, 2011; Graa & Dani-elkemir, 2012; Goi, Kalidas & Zeeshan, 2014) and restaurant industry (Segson & Tan,

2018). Others include the online shopping industry (Peng & Kim, 2014) and flea market industry (de Villiers et al, 2017). More importantly, several researchers have applied the S-R model or its extensions in their studies carried out in the hospitality and tourism industry (e.g., Nunthiphatprueksa, 2017; Saengchai, Thaiprayoon & Jermstiparsert, 2019; Chen, So & Hu, 2021) and particularly the hotel industry (Jani & Han, 2015; Njegus, Zivkovic & Llijevski, 2016; Alipour, Amelshahbaz, Safaeimanesh, Peyravi & Salavati, 2021; Chen, Wang, Lyu & Zhang, 2022; Ogbunankwor et al, 2022; Ogbunankwor et al, 2023). Nevertheless, Kanagal (2016) proposed an extended stimulus-response model of behavioural processes in consumer decision making.

For the purpose of the present study, the application of the Stimulus–Response model is as follows: firstly, the ‘stimulus’ is represented by the price and security variables. To be more precise, security attribute is a variant of product, whereas the price variable is a variant of price as a marketing stimulus. Secondly, the ‘response’ is represented by choice of hotels. Moreover, this study does not introduce ‘organism’ as the internal processes and structures intervening between the stimuli and the responses emitted as obtained in the S-O-R system because the consumers’ mental processes are unseen.

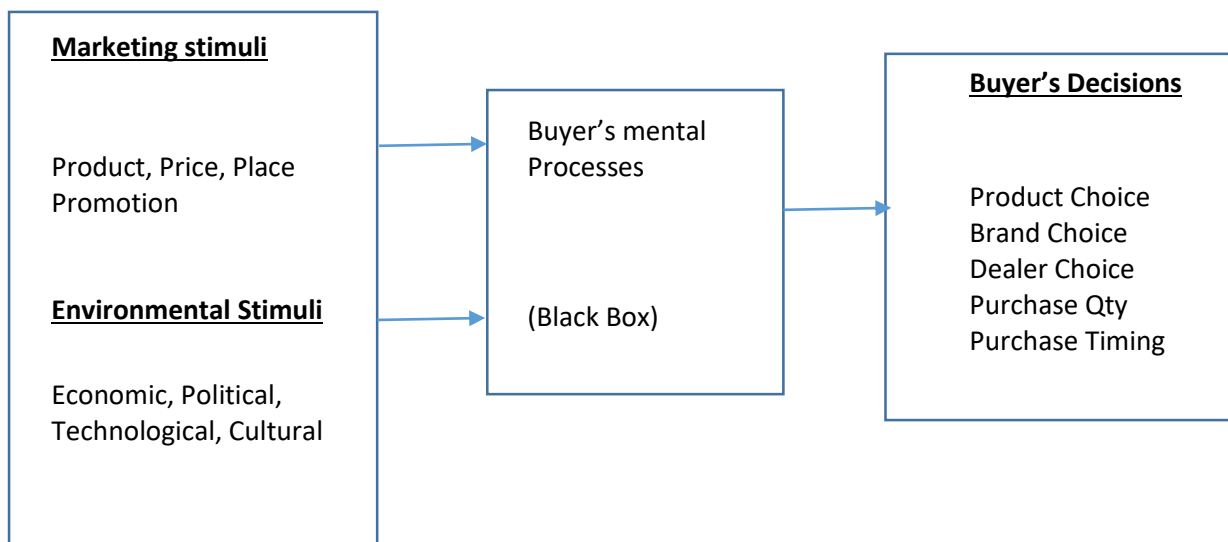


Fig. 2 The basic stimulus-response model (Kotler, 1997)

Interestingly, the S-R model as shown in Figure 2 is arguably the most common model in consumer behaviour used to understand the buying behaviour of individuals buying consumer product (Kotler, 1997; Kanagal, 2016).

Empirical Review

The main thrust of this section is to review empirical studies conducted in the area of determinants of consumer choice of hotels. Since avalanche of studies have been conducted in different countries of the world dominated by Asian, European and North American studies, and even across continents, there is every need to review these studies.

Studies on Determinants of Consumer Choice of Hotels

Many academic studies have been conducted to understand the determinants of consumer choice of hotels in North America (e.g., Saleh & Ryan, 1992. Weaver & Oh, 1993; Dube & Renaghan, 1999; Dube & Renaghan, 2000), Western Europe (e.g., Callan, 1996; Callan, 1998), Asia (e.g., Sohrabi et al, 2011; Baniya & Thapa, 2017; Yang et al, 2017), New Zealand, Ghana and Greece (e.g., Lockyer, 2000; Richard & Masud, 2016; Souldidou et al, 2018) respectively. Likewise, similar researches have been conducted across continents (e.g., Barsky, 2012) and even on a global scale (e.g., Barsky & Nash, 2010). Many of these studies were undertaken in segmented markets in order to contribute in ensuring maximal satisfaction of the consumers and the creation of more attractive offerings for each target market. On the contrary, researches carried out on the determinants of consumer choice in hotel selection and related topics in the Nigerian context were not focused on specific target markets and fewer scholars published internationally (e.g., Gbenga & Osotimehin, 2015; Nduka et al, 2017; Otegbulu & Tenigbade, 2011, Oladele et al, 2019).

As has been said previously, hospitality and tourism researchers have segmented the hotel market into three homogenous groups or segments namely leisure guests, business travellers, and meeting and convention customers (Dube & Renaghan, 1999). This development encouraged several empirical studies within and across countries on determinants of consumer choice in hotel selection.

A plethora of studies have sought to establish the perceptions of leisure guests with reference to hotel selection. For example, a study conducted in Taipei, Taiwan categorized hotel service attributes into seven hierarchies which include business image, hotel location, service attitude, room service, beverage and food service, hotel facilities, and hotel environment (Tsaur & Gwo-Hshiang, 1995). In the same way, promenade and comfort, security and protection, network services, pleasure, staff and their services, news and recreational information, cleanliness and room comfort, expenditure, room facilities and car parking were identified as the main hotel selection factors of Tehran hotels in Iran by Sohrabi et al. (2011). In a similar study, Kucukusta (2017) investigated how Chinese leisure travelers value hotel amenities when they book hotel rooms in Hong Kong and found that price had the highest average important value, followed by airport/local area shuttles, wireless internet, breakfast and quality of coffee/tea. A fourth study in this category by Baniya and Thapa (2017) executed in Nepal found that service quality

and room and front desks play significant role in satisfaction of international tourists whereas security, business facility, value, food and recreation were found to be insignificant. Finally, a Greek study by Soulidou et al. (2018) found cleanliness as the most important factor in the selection of accommodation, followed by price and staff.

Nevertheless, several studies have examined the perceptions of business travellers with regards to hotel selection. First, Weaver and Oh (1993) categorized American business travellers into the frequent business traveller and infrequent business traveller and gave a demographic profile of these categories. Second, a United Kingdom study by Callan (1996) summarized a number of research projects that had been conducted and of particular interest is the finding that within many of those, the standard of housekeeping and cleanliness was rated as the most important in the selection of accommodation by guests. Third, Lockyer (2000) conducted a study in New Zealand and found cleanliness of hotel, bath and shower, standard of bedroom maintenance, and comfortable mattress and pillow as the four most important criteria out of the forty-seven factors rated by participants. Fourth, Dube and Renaghan (2000) discovered the top five hotel selection attributes for business travellers in the United States to include location, brand name and reputation, physical property, value for money, and guest-room design. Fifth, Barsky (2012) conducted a study among American, European and Asian consumers and discovered that location, price and past experience influence hotel selection in that order. Lastly, a Chinese study by Yang et al (2017) revealed that location, price and business functions were factors influencing guest choice of hotel.

Studies have also been executed to ascertain meeting and convention customers perceptions with regards to hotel selection attributes. One of such studies carried out in South Korea by Upchurch, Jeong, Clements and Jung (2000) reported that when selecting a hotel, customers look for quality service, meeting room facilities/quality, inventory, and hotel personnel. Another study by Jahenbani (2018) executed in the United States found longevity of staff, quality service, and the creation of an experience as key factors prioritized by meeting customers when choosing a luxury hotel for a meeting.

Moreover, studies on determinants of consumer choice in hotel selection can also involve the total, heterogeneous market. To begin with a study conducted by Saleh and Ryan (1992) in a Western Canadian city indicated that the availability of a restaurant, convenient parking, interior decor and exterior aesthetics were factors that led to hotel selection by guests. At the same time, a study carried out in the United Kingdom by Callan (1998) identified 166 attributes related to hotel selection process to include location, price, image, security and staff competence. A study conducted in the United States by Dube and Renaghan (1999) identified constant and easy accessibility of rooms and services with which they become familiar as factors that contribute to guests' hotel selection. The study described the variance in response according to leisure, transient business, and meeting and convention guests. Later, a study

conducted in New Zealand by Lockyer (2005) initially showed that cleanliness was rated the most important factor, and price rated a lot less important. During the next stage of the research, price emerged as the most important factor with cleanliness rated the lowest ranking of the five emergent categories which include facilities, location and staff service. Also, a global study by Barsky and Nash (2010) found that guest experience has the most influence on hotel selection and is more important to guests than either location or price. Finally, a Ghanaian study by Richard and Masud (2016) found that consumers' patronage of hotel services is influenced largely by religion and to some extent traditional beliefs of consumers in Ghana.

Nevertheless, comparative studies also exist in the context of choice in hotel selection. For example, a New Zealand study by Lockyer (2002) conducted a comparative study to analyse what accommodation managers and business guests believe were the factors influencing accommodation selection. The study revealed that accommodation guests gauge cleanliness and related items as the most important whereas industry indicates almost uniformly that price is the most influential factor in guest selection. An earlier study by Chu and Choi (2000) compared business and leisure travellers in Hong Kong hotel industry and found that both parties held the same perceptions towards all the six hotel selection factors. These factors include service quality, business facilities, value, room and front desk, food and recreation, and security. Certainly, room and front desk, and security were found to be the determining factors for business and leisure travellers respectively in their hotel choice selection (Chu & Choi, 2000).

Studies on hotel choice selection are not restricted to empirical studies. Interestingly, conceptual studies also exist in this domain. For instance, Dolnicar and Otter (2003) reviewed 21 studies undertaken over the period of 1984-2000 and extracted 173 attributes influencing occupancy. These include such factors as image, service, price/value, hotel room, food and beverage, security and others.

Previous Studies on Determinants of Consumer Choice of Hotels in Nigeria

Interestingly, Nigerian scholars have conducted related empirical researches on the determinants of consumer choice in hotel selection especially in recent years. One of such studies by Otegbulu and Tenigbade (2011) investigated attributes that affect hotel customers' perception. The findings show that regular power and water supply, closeness to the city centre and good room service are some of the attributes that lodgers find most important in a hotel accommodation. Another study (Akaegbu, 2013), reported that the availability of regular electricity and water supply, among other factors were perceived highly by customers in their decisions about hotel offerings. A third study by Gbenga and Osotimehin (2015) found that service of the hotel, friendly staff, food quality and price had significant impact on repeat buy. A fourth study, Kukoyi and Iwuagwu (2015) revealed that service delivery and customer

satisfaction are significantly related and could increase the patronage in a hotel. Furthermore, Nduka et al (2017) identified cost, hotel environment, hotel facilities, income and staff performance as key factors that have strong influence on the customers in the hospitality industry. A sixth study, Oladele et al. (2019) found that customer patronage of hotels is a function of the good access road, constant electricity, constant water supply, basic security facilities and convenient parking space in that order. In addition, Anetoh et al (2022) found security, location, physical facility, rooms quality, electricity, service delivery and accommodation as crucial factors influencing consumer choice of hotels. An eighth study (Ogbunankwor et al, 2022) found that cleanliness and location influence consumer choice of hotels. Finally, Ogbunankwor et al (2023) found that facilities and customer service influence leisure guests' choice of hotels.

Apparently, apart from Ogbunankwor et al (2022) and Ogbunankwor et al (2023), most studies on hotel choice selection in Nigeria were not carried out according to market segments (leisure guests, transient business travellers, meeting and convention customers). Moreover, the current literature suggests that price and security are one of the most highlighted factors influencing consumer choice of hotels. Thus, these factors are suitable for helping us provide an empirically uncontroversial evidence of what works in Nigeria with respect to leisure guests' hotel choice selection.

Hypotheses Development

The two factors identified were reviewed in this research. The proposed hypotheses to be tested in the empirical study are explained below.

Price

The ability of price (room rate or cost) to determine consumer choice in hotel selection has been confirmed in Nigeria and beyond (e.g., Callan, 1998; Lockyer, 2002; Lockyer, 2005; Barsky & Nash, 2010; Barsky, 2012; Gbenga & Osotimehin, 2015; Nduka et al, 2017; Yang et al, 2017; Kucukusta, 2017; Soulidou et al, 2018). In contrast, in Baniya and Thapa's (2017) study, price had no influence on consumer choice of hotels. Therefore, we posit the following:

H₁: H₀₁: Price does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels

H_{A1}: Price significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels

Security

Security (activities involved in protecting a hotel against attack or danger) influences consumers' willingness to choose a hotel as suggested by extant literature in Nigeria and abroad (e.g, Callan, 1998; Chu & Choi, 2000; Sohrabi, 2011; Oladele et al, 2019; Anetoh et al, 2022).

Moreover, Baniya and Thapa's (2017) study showed a different finding. In consequence, we put forward the second hypothesis:

H₂: H₀₂: Security does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.

H_{A2}:Security significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

Conceptual Model

The research model is formulated based on the foregoing discussion and hypotheses (see Figure 3 below). In consequence, this model is the most suitable for helping us confirm whether these distilled factors are at work in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

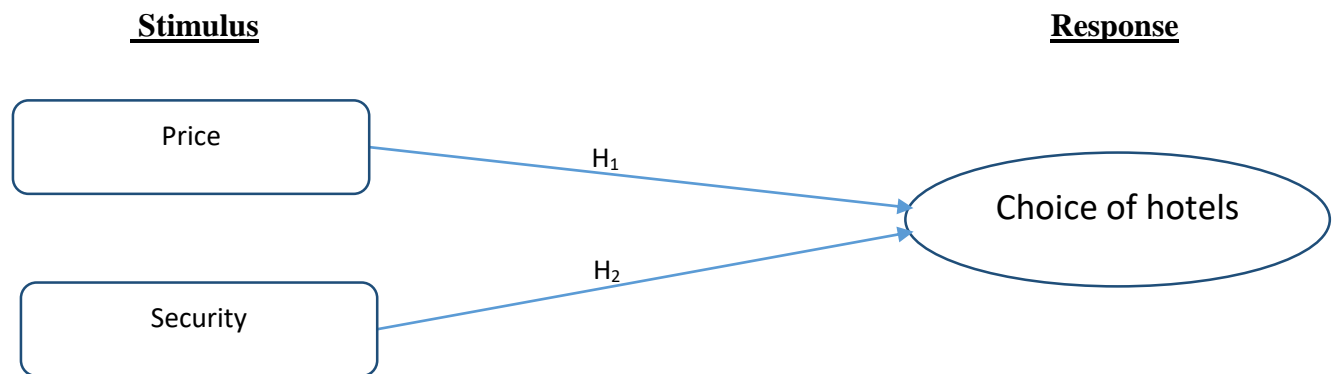


Fig.3 Proposed Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study and cross-sectional survey which is the predominant method of executing this type of research design is also adopted.

Area of Study

The area of study is Awka metropolis, South-east of Nigeria, famous for the proliferation of hotels thereby attracting many visitors. Moreover, Awka is the administrative capital of Anambra state, South East, Nigeria and exhibits a cosmopolitan atmosphere and contain people of different demographic, socio-cultural, psychographic and psychographic background who patronize hotels.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises leisure guests who lodge in hotels in Awka metropolis of Anambra state, Nigeria. Since there is no accurate statistics on the number of leisure guests who lodge in hotels in Awka metropolis, at any given time, the population is not known.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

As the population could not be ascertained, the sample size was determined by estimating the sample based on a proportion. According to Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2014), the sample size estimate can be obtained by the formula:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n = sample size

d = degree of precision or the margin of error that is acceptable.

p = proportion of the population having the characteristic.

q = proportion of the population not having the characteristic.

However, because the population is not known, then for a degree of precision (d) of 5%, and a proportion of the population having the characteristic (p) of 80% and a proportion of the population not having the characteristic (q) of 20%, the sample size required for the study is calculated as

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.80)(0.20)}{0.05^2} = 245.86 \text{ respondents}$$

The sample size here is 245.86, rounded up to 246 respondents since population is a discrete variable.

Leisure guests at five hotels in Awka namely, Adig Suites, CIHCOHOTEL Classique Hotel, Cosmila Suites & Hotel, Parktonian Hotels and Tracy Hotels were judgmentally selected for the study. They are judgmentally sampled because of their closeness to the city centre. On the other hand, convenience sampling technique was used to administer the survey instrument to holidaymakers lodging at the hotels especially during weekends.

Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaire is the survey instrument of data collection. Moreover, the questionnaire had two major parts. The first part comprised the introductory letter, instructions for completing the questionnaire and the respondent's demographic data. The demographic variables were sought using closed-ended, multiple-choice or dichotomous questions. Also, questions regarding the usage of hotels by participants were asked.

The second part of the questionnaire contains the core subject-matter section and was developed based on the proposed research model (see Figure 3). This part of the questionnaire contain questions to enable the researcher meet the objectives of the study, and also test the formulated hypotheses. In other words, they contain the independent and dependent variables of interest in the study. This second part consisted of 11 questions concerning leisure guests' perceptions in hotel selection. These questions used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-extremely unimportant to 5-extremely important, in addition to 3-have no option/ don't know/not applicable. See Table 1 for the constructs, their sources and the corresponding adapted items that make up the survey questions.

Table 1. The Development of Survey Instrument

Construct	Source(s)	Adapted Item
Price	Lockyer (2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Room rate price. (x₁) 2. Special rates or inclusive package available. (x₂) 3. Room rate inclusive of breakfast. (x₃) 4. Free newspaper. (x₄)
Security	Lockyer (2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective room locking systems. (x₅) 2. Safety and security of hotel and surrounding area. (x₆) 3. Staff recognizes returning guests. (x₇)
Choice of hotel	Clemes et al (2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will choose a hotel if customers say positive things about the hotel to other people. (x₈) 2. I will choose a hotel if there is likelihood of coming back to the hotel again. (x₉) 3. I will choose a hotel if I consider the hotel as first one on the list when searching for accommodation. (x₁₀) 4. I will choose a hotel if I can recommend the hotel to other people. (x₁₁)

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validation of the instrument was conducted by using face validity method sometimes referred to as content validity (Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2000). This was done by having a panel involving three experts: one from the academia and two from the hotel industry independently judge how well the constructs' measurable components represent the constructs.

Due to the nature of the instrument, Cronbach alpha on all the variables in the study was computed to ascertain the internal consistency of the research instrument. In consequence, the Cronbach alpha values were considered high enough and it is believed that the instrument is reliable. This is because the Cronbach alpha coefficients are greater than the 0.7 benchmark recommended by Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins and Kuppelwieser (2014). As presented in Table 2,

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the Cronbach's coefficient alphas for price, security and choice of hotels are 0.983, 0.995 and 0.992 respectively. The results of this analysis done using SPSS are shown in Table 2 below

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's alpha value
Price	0.983
Security	0.995
Choice of hotels	0.992

Administration of the Instrument

The copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher himself with the help of other research assistants mostly front desk staff at the hotels. To ensure that the distribution and collection processes were systematic and objective, the drop-off and pick-up method (Ibeh, 2004) was adopted in administering the questionnaire. More importantly, the researcher and his assistants made sure the copies of the questionnaire were not administered to meeting and convention guests, and business travelers.

Method of Data Analysis

To test the significant effect and the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables, multiple regression analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses with the aid of SPSS Version 20.0 software at 5% level of significance. The decision rule for the hypotheses is to accept the alternative hypotheses if the p-value (the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis) of the test statistic is less or equal to the alpha (α) at 5% (0.05) and to reject the alternative hypothesis if the p-value of the test statistic is greater than significance level (α) at 5% (0.05) significance level. Moreover, multiple regression analysis was used because the model encompasses one dependent variable (choice of hotels) with linear relationship with other independent variables. Multiple regression analysis is a statistical technique which analyzes the linear relationship between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables by estimating coefficients for the equation for a straight line (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2000). All the items in the dimension of each variable were used to test each hypothesis.

Instrument Administration and Collection

The number of copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents tallied with the already determined sample size of the study. Table 3 below shows the distribution and collection statistics of the research instrument.

Table 3: Distribution and Collection of Copies of Research Instrument

Returned and Usable Copies Analysis			Copies/Rate Usable to Total Copies Produced	
Copies produced and distributed	Copies returned and usable	Copies not returned/not collected and unusable	Copies usable to total copies produced	Percentage of copies usable to copies produced
246(100%)	205(83.3%)	41(16.7%)	205/246	83.3%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 is broken down into two major parts. The first parts, *Returned and Usable Copies Analysis*, shows that the total copies of the questionnaire produced and distributed to the respondents in accordance with the sample size were 246, which is 100%. Out of this figure, 205 were returned and usable representing an 83.3% response rate. Nevertheless, copies of the questionnaire not returned and unusable were 41, which represent 16.7% of the total copies produced and distributed. As a result, following the 70% minimum return rate suggested by scholars like Kothari (2011), the 83.3% response rate in the study is considered sufficiently high.

The second part of Table 3 which is the *Rate Usable to Total Copies Produced* compares the usable copies with the total copies produced. As shown, 205 returned usable copies represents 83.3% of the 246 total copies of the questionnaire produced and distributed. This rate as previously stated is once again considered sufficiently high to proceed with the study.

Data Presentation

In the section, the data is presented using a frequency table and simple percentages.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Table 4 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample which is validly 205 hotel leisure guests. This is shown hereunder.

Table 4: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Items	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	93	45.4
	Female	112	54.6
Age	18-29	110	53.6
	30-39	50	24.4
	40-49	27	13.2
	50-59	12	5.9
	60 and above	6	2.9
Occupation	Civil/Public Servant		
	Student	67	32.7
	Business/Trading	80	39.0
	Farming	45	22.0
	Others	4	1.9
		9	4.4
Income per month	Below ₦30,000	86	41.9
	₦30,000-₦50,000	49	23.9
	₦50,001-₦70,000	29	14.2
	₦70,001 and above	41	20.0
Educational Attainment	Non-Formal/Primary	3	1.5
	Secondary	23	11.2
	Tertiary	122	59.5
	Postgraduate	57	27.8
Numbers of Times Respondents Stayed in hotel in the past three years	Once	38	18.5
	Twice	35	17.1
	Thrice	36	17.6
	Four times	25	12.2
	Five times and above	71	34.6

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Data Analysis**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
COH	5	2.00	395.00	164.0000	207.80399	.604	.913
PRC	5	3.00	417.00	164.0000	215.79852	.622	.913
SCR	5	2.00	303.00	123.0000	157.60235	.611	.913

From the descriptive statistics of the variables as shown in Table 5, the mean value of 164.0 for choice of hotel (COH) also shows maximum and minimum values of 395.0 and 2.0 respectively for the same attribute. The standard deviation stood at 207.8. The price (PRC) variable has a mean value of 164.0 with maximum and minimum values of 417.0 and 3.0 respectively while the standard deviation is 215.8. The security (SCR) variable has a mean value of 123.0, with maximum and minimum values of 303.0 and 2.0 respectively. The standard deviation stood at 157.6.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this section are tested one after the other. Data from Table 5 above were subjected to regression analysis using SPSS Version 20.0 software.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

	R	Adjusted R			
	Square	Square	Coefficients	t	p-value
COH	0.994	0.993	0.997	23.262	0.000
PRC	0.999	0.999	1.000	67.125	0.000
SCR					

Hypothesis One

- i. **H₁: H₀₁:** Price does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.
H_{A1}: Price significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

In Table 6, a regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of price on choice of hotel. The Adjusted RSquare is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the findings, the value of Adjusted RSquare was 0.993; an indication that there was variation of 99.3% on choice of hotels due to changes in price. This implies that 99.3% changes in choice of hotels could be accounted for by changes in price, while 0.7% was explained by unknown variables that were not included in the model.

Again, from the table, it reveals that the ANOVA p-value is 0.000 and is less than our significance level of 0.05. The regressed result shows that an evaluation of the price as the explanatory variable shows positive statistical significance, hence coefficient value (beta value) = 0.997 and t-statistics is = 23.262, showing that price has a positive statistically significant influence on choice of hotels at 5% level of significance.

Decision:

Since p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha, we therefore, reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that price significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

Hypothesis Two

- ii. **H₂: H₀₂:** Security does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.

H_{A2}: Security significantly predicts consumers' choice of hotels

When security was regressed on choice of hotels, the parameters obtained are: $R^2 = 0.999$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.999$, coefficient value = 1.000, t-statistics = 67.125 with ANOVA p-value of 0.000 (from Table 6). From the findings, the value of the Adjusted RSquare was 0.999; an indication that there was variation of 99.9% on choice of hotels due to changes in security. This implies that 99.9% changes in choice of hotels could be accounted for by security, while only 0.1% was explained by unknown variables not included in the model.

From the table, the p-value of 0.000 indicates that the hypothesis is statistically significant at the level of significance (5% or 0.05); hence p-value of the test statistics is less than the alpha value ($0.000 < 0.05$). The regressed result shows that an evaluation of security as the explanatory variable shows positive statistical significance, hence coefficient value (beta value) = 1.000 and t-statistics is = 67.125. This shows that security has a positive statistical significance on choice of hotels at 5% level of significance.

Decision:

Since p-value of the test statistics is less than alpha, we therefore, reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that security significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

Below is a summary table for analysis of variable towards choice of hotels

Table 7: Results from Testing Influence of Independent Variables on Choice of hotels

Hypothesis	Variables Involved	t-statistics	ANOVA p-value	Remark
H ₁	Price Vs. Choice of hotel	23.262	0.000	Significant Relationship
H ₂	Security Vs. Choice of hotel	67.125	0.000	Significant Relationship

The result of the analysis including the variables involved, the estimated parameters, their t-statistics and ANOVA p-values are shown in Table 7. As shown in Table 7, the two hypothesized relationships (the relationship between choice of hotels and price, choice of hotels and security in the research model are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$. In addition, the results indicate that security has more influence than price on consumer choice of hotels with t-values of approximately 67.1%, and 23.3% respectively.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Interestingly, the present study supports prior studies conducted in different parts of the world as well as provides evidence of some contradictions. The critical determinants of consumer choice of hotels in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria are: price and security.

Price is a significant determinant of consumer choice of hotels. A plethora of scholarly works in different hotel contexts have confirmed price to influence consumer choice of hotels (e.g., Callan,1998; Lockyer, 2002, Lockyer, 2005; Barsky & Nash, 2010; Barsky, 2012; Gbenga & Osotimehin, 2015; Nduka et al, 2017; Yang et al, 2017; Kucukusta, 2017; Soulidou et al, 2018). In contrast, the present finding is inconsistent with the findings by Baniya and Thapa (2017). Concomitantly, the present study's finding has its policy and strategy implications that hoteliers should set room rate or cost in a manner that will be affordable to guests to ensure patronage.

Similarly, security is a significant determinant of consumer choice of hotels. More importantly, it has a more significant influence than price on consumer choice of hotels. In existing studies conducted in Nigeria and other countries of the world like Callan (1998), Chu and Choi (2000), Sohrabi et al (2011), Oladele et al (2020) and Anetoh et al (2022), the effect of security on consumer choice hotels was significant. Nevertheless, few studies carried out on consumer choice of hotels (e.g., Baniya & Thapa, 2017) had shown that security did not influence consumer choice of hotels. The finding of the present study and many other studies on security-choice of hotel relationship could be because of the problem of insecurity that is ravaging the world, particularly the developing countries. However, the present study was conducted in a period of high level of insecurity in Nigeria, thereby making people to be more security-conscious.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude, the basis of hotel accommodation is security and affordability. That is to say, it is irrational to lodge in a hotel that is unsafe, insecure or unaffordable. More importantly, price and security play significant roles in influencing leisure guests' choice of hotels. Therefore, hoteliers should definitely be security-conscious in the management of their hotels and always strive to give consumers more for less. For example, the price charged guests should be

affordable with special rates, inclusive packages and at times free services. Furthermore, as security has become a big issue in Nigeria, hotel owners and managers should install functional close circuit television (CCTV) cameras in their hotel rooms and surrounding areas to ensure safety and security of hotel and surrounding areas. In addition, there should be effective room locking systems and staff should easily recognize their returning guests. The presence of security guards at the hotel and their constant surveillance of the surrounding area can increase consumer patronage. Also, the Nigeria Tourism Development Commission (NTDC) should mandate hotel owners and managers to provide security gadgets and personnel in their hotels and also ensure that hoteliers are not exploited in the form of multiple taxation that has a spillover effect on the price of services provided.

Suggestions for Future Research

Firstly, our study is restricted to Awka metropolis, Nigeria only. Future research can be replicated in other cities in Nigeria or cities outside the country to see what the result will look like. Secondly, this study was executed in the leisure guests' market. Future studies using the proposed research model should be replicated in the other specific target markets in the hotel industry like business travellers' or meeting and convention customers' market. Thirdly, this study focused on leisure guests' viewpoint. In contrast, future research should validate the model by ascertaining the views of hotel managers regarding the influence of price and security on leisure guests' choice of hotels to find out their expert perspectives. Finally, the present study examined only two determinants of leisure guests' choice of hotels. In consequence, future studies should include other important factors influencing consumer choice of hotels such as perception of past experience (Barsky, 2012), image (Callan, 1998), staff competence (Callan, 1998), religion (Richard & Masud, 2016), traditional beliefs (Richard & Masud, 2016), cleanliness (soulidou et al, 2018), location (Ogbunankwor et al, 2022) and facilities (Oladele et al, 2020) to gain more comprehensive insight.

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