The Influence of Cleanliness and Location on Consumer Choice of Hotels: A Nigerian Study

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ABSTRACT: *This study was conducted to establish a framework of the determinants of leisure guests' choice of hotels in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The study became necessary owing to the fact that there is a dearth of empirical studies that examined the determinants of customer choice of hotels in any of the different segments of the hotel industry in the Nigerian context. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of SPSS Version 20.0 software at 5% level of significance. The result from a convenience sample of 246 respondents who lodge in hotels in Awka metropolis show that the two factors investigated namely cleanliness and location influence consumer choice of hotels. More importantly, cleanliness has more influence than location. A key recommendation is that the regulator in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria should liaise with health authorities to carry out periodic hygiene inspection on cleanliness and hygiene practices of hoteliers.*

KEYWORDS: cleanliness, location, leisure guests, hotel, consumer, choice

INTRODUCTION

The idea of hospitality which means taking care of the travelers is what lies at the center of the tourism industry (Russel& Dawson, 2022). Likewise, tourism is synonymous with the activities of persons traveling to and staying in different places for not more than a consecutive year for leisure, business or traveling purpose (United Nations World Tourism Organization as cited in Russel& Dawson, 2022). The tourism industry that we see today is the product of evolution in the hospitality

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sector, innovations in transportations, advancements in communication technology, e.t.c. (Russel& Dawson, 2022). There is no doubt that there is enormous growth in the hospitality and tourism industry especially in recent years.

Interestingly, the hospitality and tourism industry is growing rapidly in Africa, including Nigeria. According to the BrookingsInstitution, consumer spending on tourism, hospitality, and recreation in Africa is projected to reach about $261.77 billion in 2030 and Nigeria will no doubt be a beneficiary of this spend (African Travel and Tourism Association, 2020). Similarly, as reported by the 2019 Jumia Hospitality Report Africa, the growth record in the industry placed the continent as the second fastest growing region in the world, with a growth rate of 5.6 percent after Asia-Pacific and against a 3.9 percent global average growth rate (Nwanne, 2020a).

Of course, hotel revenue accounts for a significant proportion of hospitality and tourism industry revenue. Presently, Nigeria can boast of various hotels of different starites spread across the six geo-political regions of the country and in different states and local governments. This is because of the realization of the importance of the hotel industry to the economic development of the country. For instance, hotels pay tax to the government according to their ratings, employ labour, contribute to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and carry out Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, due to the global spread of Covid-19 in 2020, the world's leading provider of industry research 1B1S World predicted that the hospitality and tourism industry revenue is expected to decline 8.9 percent over the year (IBIS World, 2020). The industry in Nigeria is so badly hit that operators were seeking for palliatives from government (Chiedu, 2020; Nwanne, 2020b). More importantly, the impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's hospitality and tourism industry and particularly the hotel industry will negatively influence consumers' perceptions of hotel services and threaten the industry's contribution to the GDP of the nation.

In fact, research shows that the perception of salient factors by Nigerian consumers has a positive significant relationship on repeat buy of hotel services (Gbenga&Osotimehin, 2015). Thus far, only a few Nigerian hospitality and tourism scholars have published empirical studies on the determinants of consumer choice in hotel selection and related topics to guide Nigeria's and global hospitality and tourism industry (e.g.,Nduka, Okocha, & Chris-Nnamchi, 2017;Oladele,Yakibi, Akinruwa, &Ajayi, 2019;Anetoh, Ndubuisi, Okeke, Ogbunuju, Oranye, &Eboh, 2022). These Nigerian studies were not focused on specific target markets in the hotel industry. On the contrary, 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 the three segmented markets: leisure guests, business travelers, and meeting and convention customers (e.g., Callan, 1996; Soulidou, Karavisilis, Vrana, Kehris, Theochardis& Alberto, 2018; Sohrabi,Vanani, Tahmasebipur, &Fazli, 2011; Kucukusta, 2017; Baniya&Thapa, 2017; Tsaur&Gwo-Hshiung, 1995; Yang, Hueng, &Shen, 2017; Weaver & Oh, 1993; Dube&Renaghan, 1999; Lockyer, 2000). Therefore, there is the need for context specific empirical studies on different segments of the hotel sector in Nigeria to address this gap in the literature.

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This study is considerable owing to the fact that there is 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. Interestingly, the study will provide an empirical uncontroversial evidence of what works in Nigeria with regards to the determinants of consumer choice in hotel selection in a segmented market, in this case, the leisure guests' market. This study examined the individual influence of two of the most highlighted factors, that is, cleanliness and location on consumer choice of hotels to bridge this gap in the literature. To help Nigeria's and global hospitality and tourism industry better understand leisure guests' choice in hotel selection, it is worthwhile to examine the determinants of Nigerian leisure guests' choice in hotel selection.

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 determine the extent to which cleanliness influences consumer choice of hotels.
- To establish the extent to which location influences 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.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, Visnenza and Phiri, (2017). In other words, the environmental stimulus trigger internal processes and structures (organism) which leads to a behavioural response of an individual (such as approach or
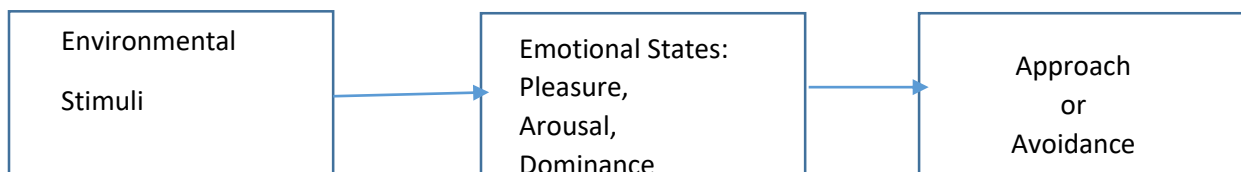
avoidance).

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&Jermsittiparsert, 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). 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 cleanliness and location variables. To be more precise, cleanlinessis a variant of product whereas location variable is a variant of place 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.

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).
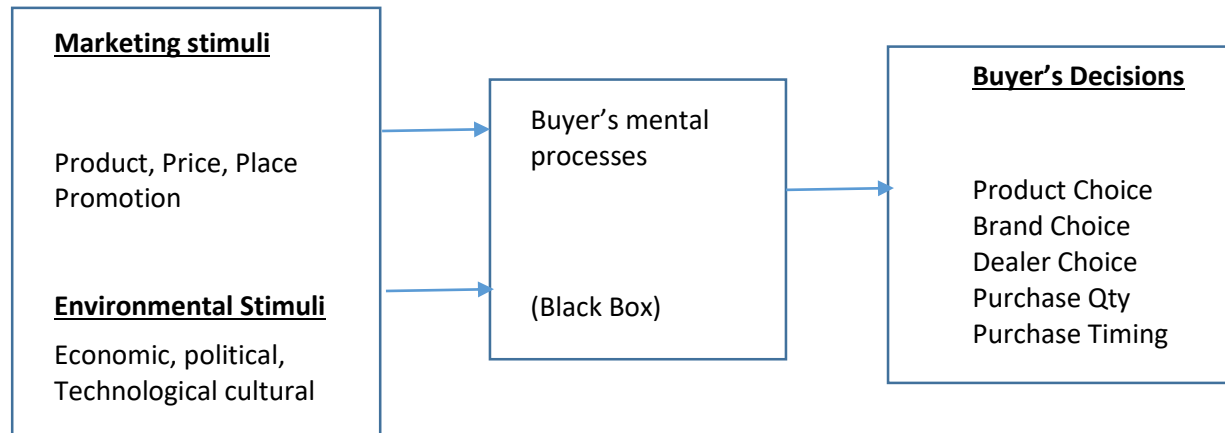
Marketing stimuli	Buyer's mental processes	Buyer's Decisions
Product, Price, Place Promotion		Product Choice Brand Choice Dealer Choice Purchase Qty Purchase Timing
Environmental Stimuli Economic, political, Technological cultural	(Black Box)	

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

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; Soulidouet 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-Hshiung, 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 Sohrabiet 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 travellersinto 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, heerogeneous market. To begin with a study conducted by Saleh and Ryan (1992) in a Western Canadian city indicated that the availability of a restuarant, convenient parking, interior decor and esterior 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 Baksy 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 guage cleanliness and related items as the most important whereas industry indicates almost uniformly that price is the most influential factors 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.

From the foregoing, the literature suggests that cleanliness and location are relevant to consumer choice in hotel selection.

Previous Studies on Determinants of Consumer Choice of Hotels in Nigeria

Interestingly, Nigerian scholars have conducted related empirical researches on the determinants 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 customers 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. Finally, Anetoh et al. (2022) found security, location,physical facility, roomsquality, electricity, service delivery and accommodation as crucial factors influencing consumer choice of hotels.

Apparently, 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 cleanliness and location are blanket factors worth investigating. This is because they are two of the most highlighted factors influencing consumer choice of hotels. Thus, these factors are the most 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.

Cleanliness

Many previous studies indicate that cleanliness can greatly influence consumers' choice in hotel selection (e.g.Callan, 1996; Lockyer, 2000; Lockyer, 2002; Lockyer, 2005; Sohrabi et al, 2011; Soulidou et al, 2018). Nevertheless, some previous studies found guests not satisfied with cleanliness of hotels to influence their choice of hotels (e.g. Lockyer, 2003; Alananzeh, 2017).Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H_1: H_{01}: Cleanliness does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.

H_{A1}: Cleanliness significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

Location

Similarly, location has a significant influence on guests' choice in hotel selection as shown by previous literature (e.g., Tsaur&Gwo-Hshiung, 1995; Callan, 1998; Dube&Renaghan, 2000; Lockyer, 2005; Barsky& Nash, 2010, Barky, 2012; Yang et al., 2017, Anetoh et al, 2022). Hence, we suggest the following:

H_1: H_{01}: Location does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.

H_{A1}: Location 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.

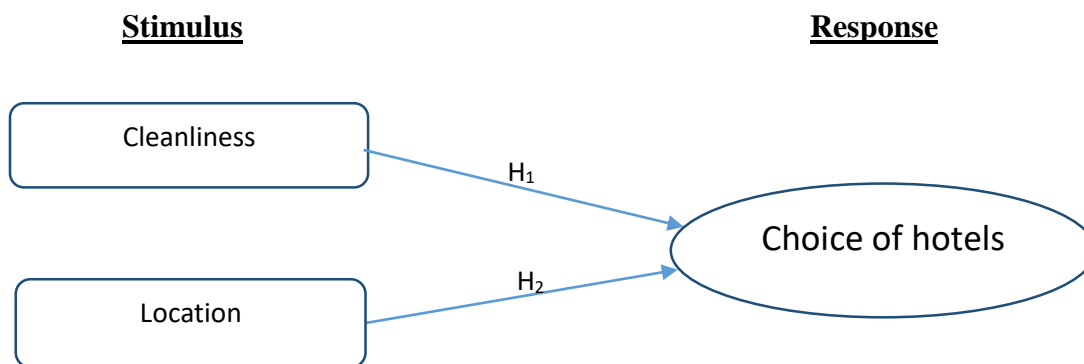**Fig.3** Proposed Research Model

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. It also contains people of different demographic, socio-cultural andpsychographic background who patronize hotels.

Populationof 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

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

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

Leisure guests at five hotels in Awka namely, CIHCOHTEL Classique Hotel, Tracy Hotels,Cosmila Suites & Hotel,Parktonian Hotels andAdig Suiteswere 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
Cleanliness	Lockyer (2005)	1. Clean hotel surroundings, neat staff and tidy rooms. (x_1) 2. Non-smoking rooms. (x_2) 3. Attractiveness of bedrooms.(x_3)
Location	Puciato et al.(2017) Otegbulu&Tenigbade (2011) Lockyer (2005)	1. Distance from the nearest motorway/expressway. (x_4) 2. Existence via densely populated area. (x_5) 3. Closeness to the city centre. (x_6) 4. Convenient to tourist destination. (x_7)
Choice of hotel	Clemes et al (2009)	1. I will choose a hotel if customers say positive things about the hotel to other people. (x_8) 2. I will choose a hotel if there is likelihood of coming back to the hotel again. (x_9) 3. I will choose a hotel if I consider the hotel as first one on the list when searching for accommodation. (x_{10}) 4. I will choose a hotel if I can recommend the hotel to other people. (x_{11})

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, the Cronbach's coefficient alphas for cleanliness, location and choice of hotels are 0.996, 0.996 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
Cleanliness	0.996
Location	0.996
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 ($\propto$) at 5% (0.05) and to reject the alternative hypothesis if the p-value of the test statistic is greater than significance level ($\propto$) 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 ofTable 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. Effort was also made to analyze the presented data by giving meaning to them.

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
	₦70,001and 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.

With respect to gender distribution of the respondents, female respondents dominated the sample by 112, accounting for 54.6%. Male respondents were 93, representing 45.4%. Similarly, the percentage difference between the two genders is 9.2 percent.

As shown in Table 4 above, the age distribution of the respondents shows that those within the range of 18-29 were more by 110, accounting for 53.6%. Coming next were those within the age range of 30-39. They were 50 or 24.4 percent. The age range of 40-49 years accounted for 27 respondents or 13.2 percent, while that of 50-59 years accounted for 12 respondents or 5.9 percent. Those 60 years and above were only 6, representing 2.9percent. Of course, young adult fun-seekers dominate the age distribution of this study. This is likely to make some degree of research sense for this study because adults have a lot of fun, go for pleasure, have good time and get a lot of enjoyment when they put up in hotels. As such, they are frequently targeted by hoteliers in their

campaigns. Therefore, their responses which serve as input 'raw data' is likely to increase the quality and dependability of the output 'processed' data.

The occupational distribution of the respondents reveals that many of the respondents were students, (see Table 4). Those in this cohort were 80 or 39.0 percent. Sixty-seven (32.7%) respondents said they were civil/public servants. Forty-five (22%) said they were in business/trading. Four (1.9%) said they were farmers, and 9 (4.4%) said they belonged to other occupations. This distribution is not surprising since Awka and neighbouring towns have tertiary institutions of learning and Awka is also the administrative capital of Anambra State making it possible for civil/public service and business to thrive. Nevertheless, what is most important to the present study is to capture hotel leisure guests of different occupational background. In consequence, the spread in occupation of respondents is likely to increase the quality and reliability of the responses.

Table 4 also captures the income distribution of the respondents. The data shows that out of the 205 respondents, 86 (41.9%) earned below ₦30,000 per month. Forty-nine (23.9%) respondents earned between ₦30,000 per month to ₦50,000. Forty-one (20%) earned ₦70,001 and above; and 29 (14.2%) earned between₦50,001 to ₦70,000. Evidently, the large number of respondents who earn below ₦30,000 is a confirmation of the fact that most of the respondents were students who basically earn no meaningful income but will always request their higher income friends and/or relatives to take them to hotels for leisure.

The distribution of the respondents' educational attainment is also shown in Table 4. This table shows that many of the students had acquired up to tertiary education. One hundred and twenty-two (59.5%) of them made up this category. Fifty-seven (27.8%) respondents acquired postgraduate level education; 23 (11.2%), secondly school education; and 3 (1.5%) had either not acquired any formal education or had acquired primary level education. Given these statistics, this reflects the different social and economic groups in the Nigerian society that patronize hotels for fun, pleasure, enjoyment or good time. As a result, all the respondents are sufficiently needed to be included in the study's sample.

The respondents also expressed views on the numbers of times they stayed in hotel in the past three years. A good number of the respondents, 71 of them, representing 34.6 percent said they have stayed in hotel five times and above. Another 38 (18.5%) said they have stayed in hotel once; and 36 (17.6%) said they have stayed three times. Similarly, 35 (17.1%) indicated they have put up in hotels twice. Twenty-five (12.2%) stated that they have stayed in hotel four times. In consequence, this shows that 64.4% of the respondents have stayed in hotel three or more times. In other words, this is a good and valuable experience that can aid the respondents in this study. By this token, the rich experience already gained by the respondents is likely to increase the reliability of the responses.

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
CLN	5	.00	309.00	123.0000	161.33351	.612	.913
LCT	5	2.00	423.00	164.0000	217.77971	.629	.913

From the descriptive statistics of the variables as shown that the mean value of 164.0, Choice of hotel (COH) shows maximum and minimum values of 395.0 and 2.0 respectively. The standard deviation stood at 207.8. The mean value for CLN is 123.0 with maximum and minimum values of 309.0 and 0.0 respectively while the standard deviation is 161.3. The LCT has a mean value of 164.0, with maximum and minimum values of 423.0 and 2.0 respectively, while the standard deviation is 217.8.

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

COH	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Coefficients	t	p-value
CLN	0.997	0.996	0.998	31.214	0.000
LCT	0.993	0.991	0.996	20.641	0.000

Hypothesis One

i. $H_1:H_{01}$: Cleanliness does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.

H_{A1}: Cleanliness significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

To test the effect of cleanliness on choice of hotel, a simple regression with cleanliness as independent variable and choice of hotel as dependent variable was run (see Table 6). Results obtained show that Adjusted RSquare that is, coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the independent variable due to changes in the independent variable is 0.996. This

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indicates that there was variation of 99.6% on choice of hotel due to changes in cleanliness. This implies that 99.6% changes in choice of hotel could be accounted for by cleanliness, while 0.4% was explained by unknown variables that were not included in the model.

On the ANOVA table (of Table 6) in this simple regression, the p-value (the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis) is 0.000. This value is less than the significance level (a) of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant effect of cleanliness on choice of hotel, indicating H_{A1} that a significant regression equation exists. It should be noted that p-values of less than 0.05 are regarded as statistically significant (see Johansson,2011). The regressed result shows that an evaluation of the explanatory variable, cleanliness, shows positive statistical significance, hence coefficient value (beta value) = 0.998 and t-statistics is =31.214, showing that cleanliness has a positive statistically significant influence on choice of hotel 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 alternative hypothesis which states that cleanliness significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

Hypothesis Two

ii.   **H_2: H_{02}:** Location does not significantly predict consumer choice of hotels.

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

In Table 6, regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of location on choice of hotels. The Adjusted RSquare is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From findings, the value of Adjusted RSquare was 0.991; an indication that there was variation of 99.1% on choice of hotels due to changes in location. This implies that 99.1% changes in choice of hotels could be accounted for by location, while 0.9% was explained by unknown variables that were not included in the model.

From the table (6), it reveals that the p-value is 0.000 indicating that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5% or 0.005); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value (0.000<0.005). The regressed result shows that an evaluation of location as the explanatory variable shows positive statistical significance, hence coefficient value (beta value) = 0.996 and t-statistics is = 20.641. This indicates that location 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 location significantly predicts consumer choice of hotels.

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

Table 7: Resultsfrom Testing Influence of Independent Variables on Choice of hotels

Hypothesis	Variables Involved	t-statistics	ANOVA p-value	Remark
H_1	Cleanliness Vs Choice of hotel	31.214	0.000	Significant Relationship
H_2	Location Vs Choice of hotel	20.641	0.000	Significant Relationship

The result of the analysisincluding 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 cleanliness, choice of hotels and location) in the research model are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$. in addition, the results indicate that cleanliness has more influence than location on consumer choice of hotels with t-values of 31.2% and 20.6% respectively.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

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: cleanliness and location.

The influence of cleanliness on consumer choice of hotel is significant among hotel leisure guests in Awka, Nigeria. This finding corroborates the findings of previous studies such as Callan (1996), Lockyer(2000), Lockyer(2002), Lockyer(2005), Sohrabi et al(2011) and more recently Soulidou et al(2018). Our finding contrasts those of Lockyer(2003) and Alananzeh (2017) on the relationship between cleanliness and choice of hotels although the possible departure from the present study on cleanliness-choice of hotels relationship could be that these studies were somehow satisfaction-based.

Location is significant in our study in accordance with Tsaur and Gwo- Hshiung's(1995) study on selection of tourist hotels, Callan's(1998) study on attributional analysis of customers' hotel selection criteria and Dube and Renaghan's (2000) survey of frequent customers of the overall

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best-practice champions. Similarly, the study is in accordance with Barsky(2010) study on consumer choice of hotels on a global scale and Barsky's and Nash's(2012) study on similar research across continents. One of these studies (Barsky&Nash, 2010) found location as the most important factor in choosing a hotel.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To sum up, cleanliness and location play significant roles in influencing consumer choice of hotels. Therefore, hoteliers in Nigeria need to segment their markets and target these markets according to consumer needs or wants which is the driving force behind any purchase decision. This will no doubt contribute in ensuring maximal satisfaction of the consumer and the creation of more attractive offerings for each target market.

Given that cleanliness is one of the important factors that influence consumer choice of hotels, hotel managers and owners need to constantly keep hotel surroundings and rooms clean and maintain neat staff in order to entice customers.The Nigeria Tourism Development Commission (NTDC) should mandate hotel owners and managers to always keep their hotels clean. They should liaise with health authorities to carry out periodic hygiene inspection on cleanliness and hygiene practices of hoteliers.

We reported in this study that location is a critical factor responsible for consumer choice of hotels. As a result, hotel managers and owners can ensure that the location of a hotel should be convenient to the consumer. Hotel location should not be too far from the nearest motorway, should exist in a populated area, close to the city centre and convenient to tourist destination.The NTDC should ensure that the location of a hotel should be convenient to the consumer.Given that our study incorporated two blanket factors identified in other countries in our model of consumer choice of hotels, this study recommends the conceptual framework to guide future research in other countries of the world. This will no doubt contribute to the existing literature on the factors influencing consumer choice of hotels.

Suggestions for Further Studies

First, our study is restricted to Awka metropolis only. Future research can be replicated in other cities in Nigeria or cities outside Nigeria to see what the result will look like.Second, future studies should examine additional factors such as facilities, customer service, price, security, past experience, image, staff competence and religion that may have influence on consumer choice of hotels.Thirdly, future studies should employ the structural equation modeling approach to test the formulated hypotheses as encapsulated in our proposed research model. Finally, this study focused on what leisure guests believe were the factors influencing consumer choice of hotels. Further studies should focus on what hotel managers believe are the factors determining consumer choice of hotels.

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