

**DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER HOTEL SELECTION IN ENUGU STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined the determinants of consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed at exploring the effects of hotel attributes including hotel location, service quality, hotel facilities, price of hotel services, and guest security on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. The study was quantitative in nature and correlational design. The population size was unknown while the sample size was 384. The study used a quota sampling technique in reaching the respondents. The instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was tested using expert opinion while the reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Multiple regression statistical analysis method was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that hotel location, service quality, hotel facilities, price of hotel services, and guest security have significant effect on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. The study recommended that hotel managers in Enugu state Nigeria should consider building hotels in convenient locations, offering quality hotel services, utilizing quality hotel facilities, offering services at competitive prices and ensuring provision of adequate security infrastructure in order to improve consumer's selection of their hotels. The implication of this is that management of hotels in Enugu state, Nigeria should effectively coordinate all hotel attributes especially those under study for effective customer services delivery to ensure consumer selection of their hotels.

Keywords: Location, service quality, facilities, price, security, hotel selection

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Nigeria's business landscape has experienced a significant change with a noticeable rise in the number of hotel establishments emerging in numerous towns and cities. This indicates that the hotel sector within the hospitality industry is becoming more popular among consumers (Chu & Choi, 2012). Factors contributing to this notable growth include the introduction of business opportunities under the country's democratic government, favorable government policies towards foreign investment, support for local entrepreneurs to access affordable business funding, and the entry of international participants.

This shift has intensified competition among hotel owners in the country (Eze & Ezeoke, 2013), leading to significant effects for consumers, such as more options, a higher demand for value, and improved service quality. Given these circumstances, it's become critical for hotel businesses to pursue competitive advantage to sustain and thrive in their business. According to Dube and Renaghan (2014), understanding internal factors like hotel attributes are essential in creating competitive advantage that supports performance and growth. Ignoring these attributes in hotel selection could diminish the opportunity for repeat business. Therefore, in accordance with Chu and Choi (2012), it is important to investigate attributes like hotel location, service quality, room comfort, hotel facilities, guest security, service pricing, and overall cleanliness to help hotel operators better understand customers' hotel selection behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Quantum of studies have explored hotel selection criteria from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints (Lowenstein, 2012; Chu & Choi, 2012), each outlining distinct factors that influence customers' purchasing intentions (Ahmad, Ghazali & Othman, 2013; Akbar & Alaudeen, 2012). These factors include favorable location, quality of service, cleanliness, pricing, security, amenities (Akbar & Alaudeen, 2012; Tabassum & Rahman, 2012), and the hotel's image (Chu & Choi, 2012), all of which have been considered influential in customers' hotel choices across regions with varying cultural, environmental, and socioeconomic characteristics.

However, the majority of these studies have been concentrated in advanced and industrialized countries (Mathew & Oliver, 2014). There are few context specific empirical investigations regarding the determinants of hotel selection. Notably, there is limited understanding of Nigerian consumers and the attributes that affect their decision-making process for hotels. Due to environmental variations, dynamics, and shifts, research on hotel selection criteria conducted from Western or Asian perspectives seems insufficient for explaining the factors that influence hotel selection by consumers in Nigeria. Also, there is disparity in the results of many of these studies. Thus, research focusing on Nigerian consumers and their hotel selection attributes is necessary. Hence, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing debate, clarifying points of conflict, and enhancing understanding of the determinants of consumers' hotel selection in

Nigeria, particularly in Enugu State. Consequently, the objective of this study is to examine the determinants of consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Consumer Choice

Brand choice is one of the unique features for the customer before purchasing any product (Kwok, Uncles, & Huang, 2016). If the overall functional value of a brand is excellent, then it could satisfy a customer's needs. However, if it fails to maintain quality and sustainably, then customers will not want to continue with the same brand for a long time. Consumer brand choice is an essential element for competitive business. Due to this, customers mainly switch to another business organization which creates competition (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2013). When the mindset for brand choice is set up by customers, it reduces the complexity of purchase decisions (Gensch, 2014). At the very beginning customers are exposed to many other brands and follow the complex decision-making process (Cătălin & Andreea, 2014) but later customers delete some of the brands from their memory and leave only the favourite one for the future purchase (Roberts & Lattin, 2011). On the other hand, the customer looks for the brand based on the product attributes of interest. Understanding consumer brand choice is an essential factor that helps to identify the impact on the appropriate outcome (Isik & Yasar, 2015). Thus, consumer brand choice shows the level of interest by the consumers that involves high cost and makes a massive impact on consumer life (Rijnsoever, Farlia & Dijst, 2019).

Determinants of Consumer Hotel Selection

Customers are influenced by certain key aspects of a hotel's attributes and therefore choose hotels that meet their needs and preferences. These hotel attributes can be either tangible or intangible, which constitute the two primary categories of hotel features (Chang & Wong, 2005). Tangible attributes include aspects that are visible, such as service pricing, hotel facilities, hotel location, overall cleanliness, and hotel ambiance. Intangible attributes of a hotel include elements such as security, reliability, service quality, reputation, and staff behavior (Chang & Wong, 2015). Hence, this study is based on the following factors considered crucial as determinants of hotel

selection by consumers in Enugu State, Nigeria: hotel location, service quality, hotel facilities, price of hotel services, and guest security.

Hotel Location and Consumer Hotel Selection

The ease of access and security of a hotel's environment or location have been recognized as crucial determinants and key factors in the hotel experience and selection process. Lewis (1984) conducted a survey on the criteria for hotel selection among business travelers and found that the foremost feature was the hotel's location. Yavas and Babakus (2015) revealed that business guests prioritize convenience hotel location and the availability of general amenities. Convenience location pertains to the hotel's accessibility from various parts of the city and whether it allows easy reach to the outside world. It also covers ease of access to services like internet facilities, transportation to and from the hotel, among others. Based on the above review, it is hypothesized that:

H₁: Hotel location has a positive and significant effect on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria.

Service Quality and Consumer Hotel Selection

Service quality is often described as the customers' assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the services provided by an organization (Zeithaml, 1988). Service quality is considered the outcome of the comparison that customers make between their expectations of a service and their perception of how the service was executed (Gronroos, 2015; Parasuraman *et al.*, 2014). When consumers receive services from hotel staff, it is logical for them to compare these services with their expectations to form a judgment about their experiences. Ananth *et al.* (1992) conducted a survey of 510 travelers regarding the factors influencing hotel selection and discovered that service quality was rated as the most significant attribute by the travelers. Service quality results from the comparison of customers' expectations with the perceived performance of services. It is widely recognized as a vital prerequisite and determinant of competitiveness for building and maintaining satisfying relationships with customers. In line with the above review, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria.

Hotel Facilities and Consumer Hotel Selection

This pertains to the nature of the amenities available in hotel rooms and how guests feel comfortable and secure using them. This specifically relates to the tangible aspects of hotel features, ranging from kitchen amenities and bedroom furnishings to other facilities in the lounge and other areas of the hotel (Chu & Choi, 2000). Hotel facilities have been identified as the primary factor influencing customer patronage. A study by McCleary, Weaver, and Lan (1994) found that the top five attributes that business travelers consider when selecting hotels include business facilities, basic amenities, personal services, complimentary extras, and convenient dining options. Based on the above review, it is hypothesized that:

H₃: Hotel Facility has a positive and significant effect on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria.

Price of hotel services and Consumer Hotel Selection

The cost and worth of hotel amenities remain among the most pivotal factors in choosing a hotel. Kashyap and Bojanic (2000) highlighted that the perceived cost and standard of public areas were significant in influencing business guests' ratings and their willingness to return. Furthermore, Locker (2002), discovered that business guests prioritized cost-effectiveness and service value over room and front desk services and security when selecting a hotel. He found that business guests valued cost-effectiveness more highly than bathroom and shower quality, bedroom maintenance standard, and the comfort of the mattress and pillow. Thus, it was hypothesized that:

H₄: Price of hotel services has a positive and significant effect on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria

Guest Security and consumer hotel selection

The security and safety conditions of a hotel environment have been identified as vital indicators and essential factors in the hotel experience and selection process. Security and safety are recognized as key elements in guests' choice of hotels, significantly influencing their perceptions and decisions (Kapiki, 2012). Due to the current global insecurity, security and safety

have transitioned from being relatively passive factors to active criteria in hotel selection (Kovari & Zimanyi, 2010). Hotel security amenities have been identified as the primary determinant of customer patronage in hotels. Research by McCleary, Weaver, and Lan (1994) found that the top five attributes for business travelers selecting hotels include business facilities, security amenities, personal services, complimentary extras, and convenient dining options. In line with the review, it is hypothesized that:

H₅: Guest security has a positive and significant effect on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria

The framework for this research was designed based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). The theory of reasoned action was derived from previous research that started out as the theory of attitude, which led to the study of attitude and behaviour. The theory was "born largely out of frustration with traditional attitude-behaviour research, much of which found weak correlations between attitude measures and performance of volitional behaviours" (Hale, Householder & Greene, 2002) The theory of reasoned action has received considerable and, for the most part, justifiable attention within the field of consumer behaviour. The model does not only appear to predict consumer intentions and behaviour quite well, it also provides a relatively simple basis for identifying where and how to target consumers' behavioural change attempts" (Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 1988). Ibrahim and Vignali (2005) noted that consumer researchers have applied the theory of reasoned action to a wide variety of behaviours over the years, including consumer behaviour towards automobiles, banking services, computer software, coupons, detergents, food choice, fast food restaurant choice and hotel choice. The TRA model has however proved its efficacy by exuding a strong predictive utility, even when utilized to investigate situations and activities that do not fall within the boundary conditions originally specified for the model". Ibrahim and Vignali (2005) noted that the extent to which the theory succeeds in predicting behavioural intention is usually evaluated by means of linear multiple regression analysis. This study is anchored on the theory of reasoned action because the theory is widely viewed as one of the most influential conceptual paradigms in consumer behavior (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005; Friman *et al.* 2002).

The theory of reasoned action is a model for the prediction of behavioral intention, spanning predictions of attitude and predictions of behaviour. According to the theory, behaviour is determined by the behavioural intention to emit the behaviour.

Enemu, Ijoma, and Mgborogwu (2021) investigated the determinants that impact guests' selection of leisure hotels in Calabar, Cross River State. A descriptive survey approach with a sample size of 259 participants was employed in the study. Information was collected through questionnaires and oral interviews from 259 respondents comprising employees and patrons of two leisure hotels in Calabar. The data gathered were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with an average mean of 2.50 and above considered acceptable and significant, while responses with a mean below 2.50 were deemed insignificant. The findings indicated that, among other factors, hotel image, service quality, security conditions, and location are the primary factors influencing leisure seekers' hotel selection in Calabar. The study recommends that leisure hotel management should concentrate on factors that boost the patronage of leisure hotels.

Obeke and Abugu (2021) conducted a study on hotel patronage in Enugu, Nigeria, aiming to identify factors influencing guests' hotel preferences. Hotels from the three senatorial zones of Enugu State were selected for participation in the study. The respondents comprised staff and guests from these selected hotels, with a total sample size of 312 participants. The study employed a survey design, utilizing questionnaires to collect data, and consent was obtained from all participants prior to administration. The survey inquired whether convenience, brand reputation, and service reliability significantly and positively impacted guests' hotel preferences in Enugu State. The results confirmed that these factors indeed significantly and positively influence guests' hotel choices. The study concluded that guests typically prefer hotels offering optimal convenience, a strong brand image, and trustworthy service when selecting accommodations. Hotel owners and management are advised to enhance these aspects to gain a competitive advantage.

Wilson (2018) investigated the factors determining customers' hotel choices in Holland. A descriptive research design was used for data collection, and questionnaires were administered to gather relevant information. Linear regression analysis was employed to determine the relationship

between hotel attributes and customers' selection decisions. The findings revealed that both leisure and business travellers considered general amenities as the most significant factors influencing their hotel choices. It was recommended that hotel organizations strive to provide all necessary amenities to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Mohsin and Lockyer (2017) conducted a study to examine the primary factors influencing hotel selection by business travellers in Peru. They employed a cross-sectional survey approach and used a structured questionnaire for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using linear regression. The study found that hotel customers place high importance on location, service quality, guest security, pricing of hotel services, staff responsiveness, reliability of hotel facilities, and cleanliness. These factors are critical in their selection decision and have a significant relationship with their hotel selection behavior. It was recommended that hotel management and employees ensure the provision of these desired attributes, such as convenient hotel location, quality services, guest security, fair pricing, staff responsiveness, facility reliability, and cleanliness of the hotel environment.

Chu and Choi (2015) conducted research to identify the predictors of hotel selection by business and leisure guests in Hong Kong. A descriptive research method using a cross-sectional survey was applied. Data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The study identified that both business and leisure guests in Hong Kong perceive the importance of six hotel selection factors: value for money, quality of facilities, safety of the location, hygiene, room comfort, and prompt response to reservations. These factors have a significant relationship with consumers' hotel selection. Hotel management was advised to ensure the provision of adequate amenities and a hygienic environment to enhance customer satisfaction.

Methods

The study utilized a correlational research design. This was selected due to the need to determine the respondents' opinions. The study population was hotel guests who patronize hotels in Enugu state. A sample size of 384 hotel guests was determined using Cochran's formula and quota sampling was used for their selection. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. All the items were adequately assessed on a five-point balanced Likert scale ranging

from strongly agree represented by 5, to strongly disagree represented by 1. For instrument validation, content validity approach was applied wherein selected respondents were asked about the structure and content of the questionnaire to eliminate any ambiguity or misunderstandings. The questionnaire was subsequently revised slightly. Additionally, expert opinions from a few research specialists were gathered, and discriminant analysis was conducted using correlation to verify construct validity. Reliability was confirmed by evaluating the internal consistency of the items representing each construct, using the Cronbach alpha index. All items yielded reliable scores, exceeding the recommended and acceptable minimum coefficient value of 0.6. Data analysis was carried out using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to outline the respondents' characteristics aided by SPSS (version 22.0), while multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses' significance.

Results

Respondents' Demographic Data

Out of the 384 questionnaires produced and distributed to the hotel guests, 277 were properly filled and returned while 107 were not. Out of the 277 participants who participated in the survey, 154 (55.6%) were male and 123 (44.4%) were female while 122 (44.0%) were married and 155 (56.0%) were single. Regarding their ages, 33 (11.9%) are below 25 years, 99 (35.7%) are between 25 and 34 years, 82 (29.6%) are between 35 and 44 years, 46 (16.6%) are between 45 and 54 years, and 17 (6.1%) are 55 years or older. In terms of education level, 26 (9.4%) have WAEC/GCE, 88 (31.8%) hold OND/NCE, 100 (36.1%) have BSc/HND, 54 (19.5%) have Postgraduate qualifications, and 9 (3.2%) are Professionals. The table below shows the demographic data of the respondents.

Table .1: Respondents' Demographic Data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Male	154	55.6	Married	122	44.0
Female	123	44.4	Single	155	56.0
Total	277	100.0	Total	277	100.0

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Education	Frequency	Percentage
< 25yrs	33	11.9	WAEC/GCE	26	9.4
25 – 34yrs	99	35.7	OND/NCE	88	31.8
35 – 44yrs	82	29.6	BSc/HND	100	36.1
45 – 54yrs	46	16.6	Postgraduate	54	19.5
≥ 55yrs	17	6.1	Professionals	9	3.20
Total	277	100.0	Total	277	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Reliability Analysis

The calculated test of reliability as shows that, hotel location has a coefficient of 0.856, service quality a coefficient of 0.905, hotel facilities a coefficient of 0.851, price of services a coefficient of 0.795, guest security a coefficient of 0.846, and consumer hotel selection a coefficient of 0.823. All the variables have Cronbach Alpha Coefficients higher than the recommended and accepted 0.6.

Table2: Reliability Statistics of the constructs

ITEM	NO OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Hotel Location	5	.856
Service quality	5	.905
Hotel facilities	5	.851
Price of Services	5	.795
Guest Security	5	.846
Consumer Hotel Selection	5	.823

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Validity Analysis

After content validity, correlation analysis was utilized to determine the discriminate validity of the constructs. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level. Table 4 below shows all correlations and their level of significance. As depicted in Table 4 below, all the items representing theoretical constructs demonstrated a sufficiently positive and significant level of correlation, with hotel location and service quality showing the highest correlation at 0.683. Hotel location showed a positive and significant correlation with consumers' hotel choice ($r=0.597$ **

P<.01); service quality also showed a positive and significant correlation with consumers' hotel choice (r = 0.536** P<.01); Hotel facilities showed a positive and significant correlation with consumers' hotel choice (r = 0.483** P<.01); The price of services showed a positive and significant correlation with consumers' hotel choice (r=0.511** P<.01); and guest security showed a positive and significant correlation with consumers' hotel choice (r=0.586** P<.01).

Table 4: Correlations and Test of discriminant validity

Variable	HL	SQ	HF	PS	GS	CHS
Hotel Location-HL	1	.683**	.546**	.501**	.511**	.597**
Service quality -SQ	.683**	1	.521**	.446**	.498**	.536**
Hotel Facilities-HF	.546**	.521**	1	.521**	.509**	.483**
Price of services-PS	.501**	.446**	.521**	1	.534**	.511**
Guest Security-GS	.511**	.498**	.509**	.534**	1	.586**
Consumer Hotel Selection-CHS	.597**	.536**	.483**	.511**	.586**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Regression Analysis and Test of Hypotheses

To ascertain the determinants of consumer hotel selection, regression was used to determine the influence of the independent variable which comprises the hotel attributes including Hotel Location, service quality, Hotel Facilities, Price and guest security on consumer hotel selection. This also assisted in testing the hypotheses of the study.

Table 5: Coefficients ^a

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	-	-
Constants	8.255	1.497	-	5.515	.000
Hotel Location	.225	.081	.348	1.546	.124
Service quality	.203	.018	.216	2.510	.013
Hotel facilities	.147	.081	.180	1.809	.073
Price of services	.198	.087	.217	2.425	.017
Guest security	.206	.019	.221	2.385	.018

a. Dependent variable: Consumers' hotel selection

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.788 ^a	.679	.615	.726

a. Predictors: (constant), hotel location, service quality, hotel facilities, price of services, and guest security

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the determinants of consumers' hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria and guests of selected hotels in Enugu state were the respondents of the study. The results of the correlation analysis relating to all the five hotel attributes understudy revealed positive correlation coefficient values among the measures which show that the variables are appropriate determinant variables. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated a positive and significant effect of the hotel attributes on consumer hotel selection. The five independent variables (hotel attributes) understudy exhibited statistically positive and significant effect on consumer hotel selection. According to the regression table; the Beta value of 0.348, indicates that hotel location contributed to consumer hotel selection decision by 34.8%. Therefore, null hypothesis one (H_{01}) is rejected which shows that there is a significant strong, and positive effect of hotel location on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with findings of Laetitia and Yi Wang (2013) which revealed that location of the hotel was a very important determinant of selection of a hotel by consumers in South Africa.

Similarly, the regression table shows the Beta value of 0.216 for service quality which indicates that service quality contributed to consumer hotel selection decision by 21.6%. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected which shows that there is a significant and positive effect of service quality on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of Mohsin and Lockyer (2017) which revealed that business guests rated service quality as one of the important attributes in hotel choice. Also, the regression table; showed the Beta value of 0.180 for hotel facilities which indicates that hotel facilities contributed to consumer hotel selection decision by 18.0%. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected

which shows that there is a significant strong, and positive effect of hotel facilities on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state Nigeria. The finding is consistent with the findings of Chu and Choi (2015) which found that business guests stressed their sophistication of the hotel basic facilities in making their hotel choices.

Likewise, the regression table shows Beta value of 0.217 for prices of hotel services which indicates that it contributed to consumer hotel selection decision by 21.7%. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H04) is rejected which shows that there is a significant and positive effect of prices of hotel services on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kwenga (2012) which revealed that prices and value for money are necessary cue in guest selection of hotel. Finally, the regression table shows Beta value of 0.221 for guest security which indicates that it contributed to consumer hotel selection decision by 22.1%. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected which shows that there is a significant and positive effect of guest security on consumer hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings Longart (2012) which revealed that business guests rated their security as well as the general security of hotel environment as one of the important attributes in hotel choice.

Conclusion

The study investigated the determinants of consumers' hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria. The results of the study indicated that there is a positive and significant effect of the studied hotel attributes (hotel location, service quality, hotel facilities, prices of hotel services and guest security) on consumer hotel selection. The results also revealed that hotel location and guest security have major positive and significant effect on consumer selection of hotels in Enugu state, Nigeria. There is enough statistical evidence to show that there is a positive and significant effect of the studied hotel attributes on consumer hotel selection. Therefore, the researcher concluded that hotel attributes such as (hotel location, service quality, hotel facilities, prices of hotel services and guest security) significantly determine consumers' hotel selection in Enugu state, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that management of hotels in Enugu state, Nigeria should aim to situate their hotels in strategic locations which meet guest

expectations in order to achieve customer satisfaction that will result to customer retention. Hotel managers should provide quality hotel services that will positively influence consumer choice, patronage and satisfaction. Also, hotel operators in Enugu state Nigeria should create an environment with modern aesthetics, and recreational facilities to attract the patronage of customers especially families with children. Moreover, hotel organizations in Nigeria should endeavour to offer competitive prices for their hotel services so as to attract more patronage. Also, guest security and the overall security of the hotel environment should also be considered by hotel operators before setting up hotels.

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