



Factors Affecting Consumer Choice in the Hotel Industry: A Case of Equatorial Guinea

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Abstract

The hotel industry in Equatorial Guinea operates in a highly competitive environment where understanding the key determinants of consumer choice is critical to success. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors influencing consumer choice in the hotel industry in Equatorial Guinea. The study was qualitative and used an exploratory research design that used online interviews to collect data from 100 hotel customers and guests in Equatorial Guinea. Using NVivo 12 software, data were analyzed using recurring themes. Consumer decisions are shaped by a number of factors, including price, location, brand reputation, online reviews, amenities, sustainability efforts and customer service. This article examines these elements and their interplay in influencing consumer behavior in the context of the hotel industry. Drawing on various academic studies and industry data, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of these factors and offers insights for hoteliers looking to optimize their offerings and increase customer satisfaction. The article concludes with a discussion of strategic recommendations for hotel operators to better align their services with consumer expectations.

Subject Areas

Behavioral Economics, Business Analysis, Business Management

Keywords

Consumer Choice, Hotel Industry, Equatorial Guinea

1. Introduction

The hotel industry plays a central role in the global tourism and hospitality sector, providing accommodation to millions of travelers each year. As the industry evolves, consumers are offered more and more options, from budget motels to

luxury resorts. With the advent of digital technologies and online booking platforms, the decision-making process for consumers has become more complex but also more transparent (Mohammed, 2019) [1]. Consumers can now easily compare hotels based on various factors such as price, location, amenities and reviews before making a final choice. According to Crosby (2021) [2], in such a competitive market, it is essential for hotel operators to understand the factors that drive consumer decision making. By identifying these influences, hotels can tailor their offer to attract a wider range of customers. Previous studies have found that customer hotel selection involves a decision-making process that consists of a number of separate criteria that are central to the process (Scott, 2020) [3]. The truth is that the psychological processes involved in an individual's decision to sponsor are difficult to understand and measure. This suggests that many psychological activities are involved when an individual tries to make a purchase decision. In short, these processes are complex and difficult to measure. It follows that a manager can observe the attitudes and behavior of customers without being able to predict their thinking (Watiki, 2019) [4]. When making purchase decisions, consumers are exposed to both marketing and environmental stimuli, which are essentially based on the economic, political and cultural circumstances prevailing in society.

Moreover, decision-making is usually considered a fundamental aspect of the consumer's personality. In most cases, consumers often evaluate the available alternatives based on the information received before reaching a final choice. However, the intangible nature of hotel services makes the final decision quite difficult. Perugini and Bagozzi (2020) [5] believe that motivational and emotional elements can be used to accurately predict customer intentions and behavior. As a result, most hospitality research relies on motivation or product attributes to reveal consumers' decision-making process. However, socio-demographic and geographic patterns have become traditional characteristics of surveyed consumers that are expected to potentially influence consumer purchase decisions (O'Neill, & Belfrage, 2018) [6]. In reality, consumers' hotel selection involves a series of decision-making activities that are intricately interconnected. It follows that choosing the most suitable hotel entails a rather complicated decision-making process.

Hotel purchasing behavior or in other words hotel booking, as well as overall purchasing behavior, includes five stages of the decision process, which include feeling the need for hotel accommodation, gathering information and evaluating the image, deciding to use hotel services, experience and satisfaction with hotel services, and finally the result and evaluation (Gilaninia, 2018) [7].

This article therefore aims to provide a thorough examination of the factors that influence consumer choice in the hotel industry in Equatorial Guinea, emphasizing the importance of price sensitivity, location, brand loyalty, online reputation, amenities, sustainability and customer service. The findings presented here are based on a synthesis of empirical research and industry insights and offer practical recommendations for hotel marketers and managers.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Decisive Factors of Consumer Choice

A review of the existing literature shows that several factors have been reported to influence consumers' hotel choices. Ironically, there is no universal set of criteria that guests and customers follow when choosing a hotel, rather it varies by country. However, some reasons may overlap on several occasions. Some of the common and more specific reasons are explored as follows.

2.1.1. Price Sensitivity

Price remains one of the most significant factors influencing consumer choice in the hotel industry. Consumers, regardless of the purpose of their trip, tend to operate within a budget and the cost of accommodation often plays a key role in their final decision. The price of a hotel stay does not only reflect the price of the room, but also the perceived value compared to other available options (Monica & Zhao, 2022) [8]. Consumers, especially those using online platforms, engage in price comparisons on various websites, including third-party aggregators such as Booking.com, Expedia and Google Hotels. Price-sensitive travelers such as budget travelers or tourists are particularly affected by room prices. With increased price transparency through online booking platforms, consumers are empowered to choose hotels that offer the best value for money. Therefore, it is imperative that hotels adopt competitive pricing strategies that appeal to their target market, whether through discounted rates, service packages, or loyalty programs.

On the other hand, dynamic pricing has become a common practice in the hotel industry. This pricing model adjusts room rates in real time based on demand, seasonality and occupancy levels. While dynamic pricing allows hotels to maximize revenue during peak times, it can also affect consumer perceptions of fairness. For example, Watiki (2019) [4] states that consumers may feel frustrated if they see a significant price increase for the same room on different dates. However, hotels that offer transparency in their pricing strategies are more likely to retain consumer trust. Discounts and promotions are effective ways to reach price-sensitive consumers. Offering last-minute deals or early discounts can incentivize bookings during periods of low demand, while promotions such as free breakfast or free Wi-Fi can increase the perceived value of a stay, thereby justifying a higher rate. A study by Abrate, Fraquelli, and Viglia (2017) [9] showed that hotels using clear and consistent pricing strategies are more likely to attract price-sensitive consumers. Their research found that consumers are more inclined to book when they feel they are getting a fair deal, especially when promotions or discounts are offered.

2.1.2. Location

Hotel location is another critical factor influencing consumer choice. Proximity to key attractions such as historic sites, beaches, shopping centers and entertainment venues is often a top priority for tourists. These travelers are looking for a convenient base from which to explore the surrounding area without incurring significant transportation costs. In contrast, business travelers tend to prefer

hotels near business districts, convention centers or airports, as convenience and shorter travel times are essential for them. The growing importance of location is also reflected in the search engine optimization (SEO) practices of hotel brands. Hotels that can effectively promote their proximity to major attractions or transport hubs often gain higher visibility in online searches, which can lead to increased bookings. For example, search terms such as “hotels near central park” or “hotels near the airport” generate specific results that favor properties located in desirable areas.

Consumers also consider the safety and attractiveness of the hotel’s surrounding environment when making a booking decision. Hotels located in well-maintained, well-lit and secure areas are generally more attractive to guests. Safety concerns are especially important for solo travelers, families and international visitors. Baide (2017) [10] is of the opinion that a hotel’s proximity to police stations, hospitals and safe transport options can further increase its appeal. On the other hand, hotels located in poorly maintained or dangerous neighborhoods may struggle to attract guests, even if they offer lower prices or better amenities. Travelers often use location as a proxy for safety and may avoid areas that are perceived as unsafe or inconvenient. For hotels, it is therefore necessary to emphasize not only the proximity to attractions or shopping centers, but also to emphasize the safety and accessibility of their location. According to Dolnicar and Vydra (2020) [11], location is one of the most important factors influencing consumer choice after price. Their study found that hotels located near tourist attractions or city centers tend to have higher occupancy rates, especially among international travelers.

2.1.3. Brand Reputation and Loyalty Programs

Brand reputation plays a critical role in consumer choice, especially in the hotel industry, where consumers often have limited first-hand knowledge of a property before booking. Established hotel brands such as Marriott, Hilton and Accor have built strong reputations for quality, consistency and reliability. These brands are often associated with specific standards of service and comfort, giving consumers confidence when making a reservation. Consumers who are loyal to a certain brand are likely to choose that brand over others, even if the price is slightly higher. This is because they trust the brand to deliver a consistent experience regardless of location. Brand awareness also plays a role in attracting international travelers who may not be familiar with local hotel chains but recognize global brands.

Loyalty programs are a key driver of repeat business in the hotel industry. These programs, which reward guests with points for every stay, allow consumers to collect benefits such as free nights, room upgrades and exclusive access to amenities. Loyalty programs not only motivate repeat stays, but also support long-term relationships between the hotel and the guest (Gilaninia, 2018) [7]. For frequent travelers, especially business travelers, the benefits of loyalty programs can be a deciding factor when choosing between hotels. The ability to earn and redeem points across a global network of properties adds significant value to consumers who

travel frequently. In addition, loyalty programs often offer personalized services such as VIP treatment, access to exclusive lounges and priority check-in, enhancing the overall guest experience. Research by So et al. (2021) [12] found that brand loyalty and consumer identification with a hotel brand significantly influence booking behavior. Consumers who identify with a brand are more likely to form an emotional connection with that brand, leading to repeat bookings and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

2.1.4. Online Reviews and Reputation Management

Previous studies show that online reviews have become one of the most influential factors in the hotel industry, with platforms such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com and Google Reviews allowing consumers to share their experiences and rate hotels based on various criteria. Mohammed (2019) [1] argues that these reviews provide valuable information about hotel service quality, cleanliness, amenities and overall guest experience. Consumers often rely on user-generated content to judge a hotel's reliability and reputation. Positive reviews can significantly boost a hotel's online presence and attract more guests, while negative reviews can turn potential customers away. In fact, many consumers prefer to read reviews over professional reviews because they perceive reviews from fellow travelers to be more authentic and trustworthy.

While online reviews are a powerful tool for both consumers and hotels, the credibility of those reviews is increasingly important. Fake reviews, whether positive or negative, can distort consumer perception and undermine trust in a platform or hotel. To mitigate this, some platforms have implemented measures to verify the authenticity of reviews, such as allowing only verified guests to leave feedback. For hotels, maintaining a strong online reputation requires active engagement with guest feedback (Scott, 2020) [3]. Responding to both positive and negative reviews demonstrates a commitment to customer service and can improve a hotel's standing in the eyes of potential guests. Hotels that handle complaints quickly and professionally are more likely to retain satisfied customers and mitigate the impact of negative reviews. Sparks and Browning (2018) [13] found that online reviews significantly influence consumer trust and booking intentions. Positive reviews increase the likelihood of a booking, while negative reviews can turn potential guests away, especially if they highlight recurring issues such as poor service or cleanliness.

2.1.5. Amenities and Services

Amenities are a key factor in consumer decision-making, especially for travelers looking for comfort and convenience. According to Watiki (2019) [4], different consumer segments prefer different amenities based on their travel needs. For example, business travelers tend to prefer amenities such as free Wi-Fi, business centers, meeting rooms, and 24-hour concierge services. The availability of these amenities can make or break a business traveler's decision to book a particular hotel. Leisure tourists often seek recreational facilities such as swimming pools,

gyms, spas and in-room entertainment options. Families can look for child-friendly facilities such as playgrounds or family suites. The availability of these amenities can significantly influence the guest's decision, especially when comparing hotels in the same price range. Offering unique or high-end amenities can also differentiate a hotel from its competitors and attract niche markets such as wellness travelers or environmentally conscious guests.

In addition to standard amenities, personalized service is increasingly important in the hotel industry. Crosby (2021) [2] states that guests appreciate when hotels cater to their individual preferences, whether through customized room settings, customized dining options, or personalized welcome gifts. These efforts can increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. Hotels that invest in technology to offer personalized experiences, such as mobile apps for room controls, personalized recommendations based on past stays, or even AI-powered concierge services, are likely to stand out in a crowded market. Personalization not only improves the guest experience, but also promotes brand loyalty by making guests feel valued and memorable. Research by Lockyer (2020) [14] found that the availability of key amenities such as free Wi-Fi and parking significantly influences consumer choice, especially among budget-conscious travelers. The study highlighted the importance of offering equipment that meets the specific needs of target markets.

2.1.6. Sustainability and Environmental Practices

With growing environmental awareness, sustainability is becoming an increasingly important factor in consumer decision-making. Many travelers, especially younger generations, prefer eco-friendly accommodations that implement sustainable practices. Hotels that reduce waste, conserve water and minimize energy use are seen as more responsible and attractive to environmentally conscious consumers. Green certifications such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or Green Key Global serve as a signal of the hotel's commitment to sustainability (Perugini & Bagozzi (2020) [5]. These certifications are increasingly valued by consumers who are willing to pay premiums for environmentally friendly accommodation. Hotels, that promote their environmental initiatives, such as reducing plastic use, offering recycling options or using energy-efficient appliances, are more likely to attract environmentally conscious guests. Tourists are increasingly willing to choose hotels that implement environmentally friendly practices, even if means paying a little more. Their research highlighted the importance of sustainability in the decision-making process of modern travellers.

2.1.7. Customer Service and Experience

Customer service is a cornerstone of the hospitality industry and plays a key role in consumer decision making. Guests expect a high standard of service and any negative interactions with hotel staff can lead to dissatisfaction and negative reviews. Research conducted by Monica & Zhao (2022) [8] showed that friendly, efficient and responsive customer service can significantly improve the guest

experience and increase the likelihood of repeat bookings. In today's competitive market, many hotels focus on personalized guest experiences to differentiate themselves from their competitors. From remembering guest preferences to offering tailored services, personalization can create an unforgettable stay and strengthen brand loyalty. Hotels that invest in training their staff to provide personalized and attentive service often experience higher levels of customer satisfaction. Torres and Kline (2021) [15] found that personalized service significantly increases guest satisfaction and can lead to delight, a concept that goes beyond mere satisfaction and creates an emotional connection with the brand.

3. Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative research approach using an exploratory design to gain in-depth insight into the factors influencing consumer choice in the hotel industry in Equatorial Guinea. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were hotel guests and customers. Online interviews were conducted with a total sample of 100 participants (hotel guests and potential customers) to gain detailed information about their experiences, preferences and decision-making processes. Interviews were conducted via telephone calls lasting approximately 10 - 15 minutes. Participants were selected based on their travel purpose, length of stay and their demographics such as age, gender, occupation and income. As such, Hotel guests include business travelers, tourists and local residents. Hotel employees included managers, receptionists and customer service representatives. Industry experts include representatives of hotel associations and representatives of the tourism industry.

Table 1. Demographics of the participants.

	Age range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	20 - 30 years	20	20%
2.	31 - 40 years	50	50%
3.	41 - 50 years	10	10%
4.	51+ years	20	20%
Sex			
1.	Male	40	40%
2.	Female	60	60%
Occupation			
1.	Hotel guests	30	30%
2.	Customers	70	70%
Income (USD)			
1.	Not working	10	10%
2.	<1000	20	20%
3.	1000 - 2000	30	30%
4.	2100 - 3000	40	40%

Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants which showcases their age ratio, sex ratio, occupation and also income ratio. The implication of age characteristics is that different age groups have unique travel experiences such as seniors preferring relaxation and younger adults seeking adventure. Targeted marketing efforts can be tailored to specific age groups thereby increasing effectiveness. The table also revealed that women are more likely to travel with family and friends and hence hotels can tailor marketing messages to resonate with women and men, addressing their specific needs. The table revealed that the customers were the targeted participants (70%) and also hotel guests (30%). On the income level, higher income customers (between US\$ 2100 and 3000) tend to spend more on luxury amenities which are associated with some brands. However, 10% of the participants was not working.

Analysis of Data

Data analysis involves the process of extracting meaningful insights and patterns from raw facts. It involves a chain of steps that transform raw information into actionable insights that could support decision-making and improve outcomes. Interview data was coded and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) [16] to help understand cross-cutting themes applicable to customer hotel selection. NVivo 12 software was used to ensure accurate coding, organization, and statistical evaluation. First, coding of records involved looking for recurring styles, then categories of key phrases and expressions were created to symbolize classes. In addition, the codes were combined to reflect the classes in a better order.

4. Findings

Several recurring themes with support rate emerged from the interview responses that influence consumer choice in the Equatorial Guinea hotel industry. These include location (20%), amenities (23%), safety (13%), customer service (15%), sustainability (12%), online reviews and word of mouth (4%), and price (13%). The support rate helped to understand the top factors affecting consumer choice of a hotel in Equatorial Guinea such as location and amenities, followed by customer service, safety, sustainability and others. This section therefore presents the findings derived from the questions asked during the study.

What factors do you consider when choosing a hotel in Equatorial Guinea for your business trips?

One participant responded to the above question: “As a business traveler, my priority is convenience, especially when it comes to location. I often visit Malabo or Bata for work, so I prefer hotels that are close to business districts or the airport. It saves me a lot of time, especially with the unpredictable traffic in the city.”

Another participant had to say, “For me, reliable internet is a non-negotiable because I need to stay in touch with my team and clients. I’ve stayed in a few places where the Wi-Fi was slow or unstable and that was a plus for future stays.” In

addition, another participant said, “I always check that the hotel has the right security measures in place, such as security cameras, a secure entrance, and 24-hour security. Equatorial Guinea can seem a little unpredictable at times, so I have to be sure that I will be safe wherever I go. The attitude of the staff is also important. If the customer service is poor or the staff are unhelpful, I’m unlikely to return, no matter how nice the hotel looks.”

What aspects are most important to you when choosing a hotel for leisure travel in Equatorial Guinea?

Participants reported that experience matters a lot when choosing a hotel for consumers. One participant stated that: “I love exploring new places, so I always look for hotels that are close to tourist attractions. For example, when I visited Malabo, I specifically chose a hotel near the city’s historical sites and the national park. It makes it easy to explore without spending too much time or money on transportation.”

The facilities offered by the hotel are also essential. A participant found that “I like places with a good pool, gym and ideally a spa. It is important that the hotel has facilities that allow me to relax after a day of exploring. I also appreciate ecological practices. I have noticed that some hotels in Equatorial Guinea are starting to adopt green initiatives such as using solar energy or reducing plastic waste. It’s not widespread yet, but I’m more inclined to support hotels that care about the environment.”

One participant also pointed out that “I always check online reviews before booking a hotel. I love hearing what other travelers have to say about their experiences, especially regarding cleanliness and service. Cleanliness is a big thing for me, I won’t stay anywhere that has bad reviews for hygiene or poor maintenance.”

What factors influence your decision when choosing a hotel for a long stay in Equatorial Guinea?

“I’ve been working in Equatorial Guinea for about two years and I’ve been in several hotels for a long time. Comfort is the most important thing for long stays. I’m not just looking for a place to sleep, I need a home away from home, so I always check if the hotel offers spacious rooms, kitchens and laundry when you stay somewhere for weeks or months”.

Again, another participant had to say; “When you’re staying long-term, you interact a lot with the staff, so it’s important that they’re friendly and professional. The hotel I am staying at now has excellent staff who remember my preferences and always greet me warmly. This makes the experience much more personal. Safety also comes first, especially when I’m away from my family. I need to feel safe in and around the hotel. I also appreciate hotels that offer reliable transportation services, as getting around the city can sometimes be a problem, especially if you don’t speak Spanish”.

Another participant said: “Long stays can be expensive, so I always compare prices and look for hotels that offer discounts for extended stays. It’s not just about the daily rate, but also what’s included in the price, like breakfast or airport

transfer”.

What are the key factors that influence your choice of hotel when traveling in Equatorial Guinea?

In response to this question, one participant stated that “when I travel within the country, I look for a hotel that offers the best value for money. I don’t mind paying a little more if I feel like I’m getting something extra, whether it’s great food, a great view, or unique amenities. For example, I recently stayed in a hotel in Bata that had both a pool and a rooftop bar. It was luxurious but not too expensive compared to other hotels in the area.

Another participant said, “I care about the cultural connection. I like hotels that incorporate local design or offer traditional food on their menu. This makes the experience more authentic. Some hotels in Equatorial Guinea have started to promote the local culture through art and music and I think it’s a great idea.

One participant said, “I always look at the reviews to see what others are saying about the cleanliness of the rooms and facilities. I’ve had a few bad experiences in the past, so I’m taking it a lot now.” Another participant stated that “I look for hotels that are suitable for families with children because I often travel with my younger siblings. This means that I need a hotel with larger rooms, possibly connecting rooms, and a staff that is attentive to the needs of families. We also prefer places where there are activities for children or at least a nice pool where they can play.”

What makes you choose a particular hotel when visiting Equatorial Guinea?

One participant said, “I travel to Equatorial Guinea for both business and pleasure, so my needs may vary depending on the type of trip. I’ve stayed in places where the power goes out often or the water pressure is inconsistent and that’s a big bummer. So now I always look for hotels that advertise stable electricity, air conditioning and hot water.

Another participant had to say, “Since I don’t know much about the local cuisine, I appreciate hotels that offer both international and local options. It is also important that they have a restaurant with high hygiene standards. I’m willing to pay extra for a hotel with a good reputation for food safety because I don’t want to risk getting sick during my stay.”

One customer said: “I also care about the hotel’s environmental practices. I have noticed that more and more hotels around the world are becoming environmentally friendly, and I prefer to support those that take real steps to reduce their environmental impact, such as using solar panels or minimizing plastic waste. In Equatorial Guinea it’s not that widespread yet, but I’ve noticed hotels mentioning their sustainability efforts. I also usually ask colleagues or local contacts for recommendations. I find that personal recommendations are often more reliable than online reviews, especially in a place like Equatorial Guinea where hospitality is still developing.”

What factors influence your choice of hotel when traveling for ecotourism in Equatorial Guinea?

When asked to select a hotel's defining factors, one participant said, "I'm an environmentally conscious traveler and my main concern is the hotel's sustainability practices. I am looking for hotels that are committed to protecting the environment. This includes things like using renewable energy, reducing plastic and supporting local conservation efforts. I was recently in Equatorial Guinea and stayed in a hotel that sourced all their food locally and had solar panels, it was amazing.

Another participant stated: "I prefer hotels near nature reserves or ecological attractions. I really care about places that protect local wildlife and try to stay at accommodations that support these initiatives. For example, when I visited Monte Alen National Park, I chose a hotel that was actively involved in protecting the park's biodiversity. Another visitor added: "I feel good supporting hotels that give back to the local community, whether through employment, education or other initiatives. I think tourism should benefit the local population, not just tourists. I have stayed in several places in Equatorial Guinea where all the locals were and the hotel was involved in local development projects and that made my experience even better."

A study participant stated that: "I'm vegan so finding a hotel that meets my dietary needs is sometimes a challenge, but I was pleasantly surprised at how accommodating some of the hotels in Equatorial Guinea were".

Thus, these findings provide a clearer understanding of the various factors influencing hotel selection in Equatorial Guinea, which can help hoteliers tailor their services to the needs of different types of travelers.

5. Discussion of Findings

A study of factors influencing consumer choice in the hotel industry in Equatorial Guinea reveals a complex interplay of influences shaping customer preferences. One significant finding is that as the nation continues to develop its tourism sector, understanding consumer preferences becomes critical for hoteliers looking to attract both international and domestic guests. One of the most important factors influencing hotel selection is price sensitivity. Consumers in Equatorial Guinea, as in many other regions, often base hotel selection on price. This is especially true for domestic travelers and budget tourists looking for affordable accommodation options. Hotels that are able to offer flexible rates, promotions or discounts are likely to attract a larger customer base. The price factor is not limited to room rates, but also refers to the perceived value for money related to ancillary services such as food, amenities and transport. Another critical factor influencing consumer choice is location. In the hotel industry, location has always played a key role in decision-making. In Equatorial Guinea, hotels located near major tourist attractions, business centers or convenient transportation routes tend to be more attractive to consumers. For international travelers, proximity to an airport, popular beach or cultural attractions can be decisive in choosing one hotel over another. Likewise, business travelers often prefer hotels that are close to business

centers or conference venues. This geographic advantage can significantly affect a hotel's competitiveness.

Consumers increasingly prioritize convenience, and hotels that can offer strategic locations are more likely to secure bookings from both leisure and business travelers. Service quality is also a determining factor in consumer choice. The level of customer service provided by hotels in Equatorial Guinea can significantly influence whether a guest decides to return or recommend the establishment to others. Guests expect a high standard of service, including friendly and efficient staff, quick response to requests and attention to detail. In an increasingly competitive market, the ability of hotels to differentiate themselves through excellent customer service is essential. This includes offering personalized experiences, such as catering to specific guest needs or providing customized recommendations for local experiences. In an industry where online reviews and ratings can directly affect customer satisfaction, service quality is becoming a cornerstone of hotel selection.

Online presence and reputation are increasingly important in today's digital age. With the rise of travel review platforms like TripAdvisor and booking sites like Booking.com and Expedia, consumers can easily compare hotels based on ratings and reviews. In Equatorial Guinea, where the hotel industry is still growing, online reputation can make or break a hotel's success. Potential guests rely heavily on the experiences shared by previous customers to make their choices. Positive reviews highlighting cleanliness, service, or unique offerings can increase bookings, while negative reviews can turn potential guests away. Hotels that invest in maintaining a strong online presence, with high-quality photos, accurate descriptions, and regular engagement with customer feedback, are more likely to be chosen by discerning travelers.

The availability of modern equipment is another important factor influencing the consumer's choice. As global travelers become increasingly accustomed to a certain level of comfort, they expect hotels to provide amenities that enhance their stay. These amenities can range from reliable Wi-Fi and air conditioning to fitness centers and swimming pools. In Equatorial Guinea, where the climate can be quite hot and humid, amenities such as air conditioning and clean, well-maintained rooms are especially important. Hotels that can offer these amenities are better positioned to attract guests who prefer comfort and modernity. In addition, amenities such as conference rooms, business centers and high-speed internet are essential for business travelers. As the country continues to attract foreign investment, hotels that cater to these needs are likely to see an increase in demand from the business segment. Finally, cultural and environmental factors also play a role in shaping consumer choices.

Equatorial Guinea is rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage, and travelers who visit the country are often looking for an authentic experience that connects them with the local environment and traditions. Hotels that incorporate local culture into their design, services or activities can appeal to these consumers. For example, environmentally friendly hotels or those that offer cultural tours

or experiences are likely to attract guests who are aware of sustainability or want to immerse themselves in the local way of life. In this sense, a hotel's ability to provide an experience that goes beyond basic accommodation and connects guests to the destination itself can be a powerful factor in consumer decision making. Thus, the study showed that the factors influencing consumer choice in the hotel industry in Equatorial Guinea are multifaceted, with price, location, service quality, online reputation, amenities and cultural experiences playing a decisive role. Hoteliers who can strike the right balance between these elements are more likely to succeed in attracting and retaining guests in this emerging market. As the country's tourism infrastructure grows, understanding and adapting to these consumer preferences will be critical to the long-term success of the hotel industry.

6. Conclusion

The success of the hospitality industry depends, to a large extent, on the satisfaction of customers who use the services of hotels in Equatorial Guinea. Thus, the factors influencing consumer choice in the hotel industry are multifaceted and complex. The study found that price, location, brand reputation, online reviews, amenities, sustainability and customer service all play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. To remain competitive and attract a diverse range of guests, hotels must constantly adapt to changing consumer preferences and expectations. By understanding and addressing the key factors that drive consumer decision-making, hotels can increase customer satisfaction, foster loyalty and ultimately increase profitability.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, this article recommends the following:

- 1) Hotel managers should continue to emphasize those services that have become the most common source of information about hotel availability through word of mouth. This means that hotel management should develop customer retention strategies to encourage continued patronage. This strategy could include the introduction of a raffle. The hotel management could offer the prize winner a family dinner and free accommodation for one or more days.
- 2) Every hotel manager should be aware of all the problems associated with pricing and pricing strategy. Adequate knowledge of this would prevent the situation of overpricing of services and things, otherwise guests could perceive the hotel as unattractive. It is therefore necessary for hotel managers to adopt the practice of price discrimination as it would attract the lower income segment.
- 3) In future studies, the influence of other variables on influencing consumer choice of hotels should be investigated. In this regard, this article recommends that religion, culture, occupation, and marital status be incorporated as research variables in further studies. Adding these variables would, among other things, help explain their role in customer hotel selection.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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