

The Effect of Socio-Economic Characteristics on Hotel Customers' Preference of Interior Decoration Materials in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated effect of socio-economic characteristics on Hotel customers' preference of interior decoration in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Out of six hotels, two were selected and ninety respondents were used for data. Questionnaire was used to solicit information. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentage. Chi-square used to test for the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents were male and also had tertiary education. It also revealed that majority of the respondents were married. The study also revealed that there was no significant difference between the utilization of quality materials used for interior decoration and customer's preference. The study concluded that important socio economic indicators were examined. Among recommendations made is good quality materials for interior decorations should be encouraged by the hotel keepers to facelift and maximize customers' preference.

Keywords: Socio economic, Customers, Preference, Materials, Interior Decoration.

Introduction

Hotel business is a unique industry that plays fundamental roles in the social and economic lives of travelers and host community where it is located. It has many units that performs various functions and services toward guest satisfaction, safety and decent environment. They include the following: the rooms, guest services departments for the rooms, guest services departments for the gaming, laundry and entertainment (Okhiria and Karim 2005), Joan and Sloughton (2007) and Flanner 2009). Despite the perceived acceptance of hotels in Nigeria, customers are beginning to be choosy in the aesthetics, product and service received from eateries (Olise, Okoli and Ekeke (2015) and Mustapha, Fakokunde and Awolusi 2014). Accordingly, Arnold Tae and Douglas (1983) asserted that location, price, assortment, fast checkout, friendly, courteous service and pleasant shopping environment were critical determinants of hotel customers' preference.

Review of Related Literature

Hotel industry is a competent unit within a bigger conglomerate called Hospitality. Other smaller units that are listed under the Hospitality industry include Restaurants, Motels, Guest House, Lodges, Resorts, Night clubs, Fast foods Outlets, Outdoor Catering and Institutionalized Welfare catering units. All the units under the umbrella of hospitality industry perform nearly similar services which are provisions of accommodations, foods, drinks and other essential services required by travelers, residents and visiting customers (Okhiria, *et al* 2005 & Eicher 1996).

In the ever fast moving world, travelers move all over the globe either as tourists or in the normal course of their business, these travelers normally require food, lodging hospitality and services for good standard (Pallet, Taylor and Iayawardena 2003). As such, these travelers usually make use of the hotel to satisfy their aforementioned needs, however, these customers (business men and travelers) always choose hotel on the basis of how their satisfaction can be ensured in terms of goods, services and aesthetic values (Olsen (2002), Soderlund and Ohman (2005).

In addition, hotel industry is also used as a place of relaxation and recreation after a day's work or for a change of environment. Relaxation is of the secondary needs of a man's needs although this may not be very important for the survival of the individual but it is necessary and varies from individual depending on their socio-economic status. Customer that requires hotel services will be willing to pay for the services and facilities provided. It can be seen that the whole aim of this establishment is to firstly provide satisfactory services which will bring about payment that will yield profit. Hoteliers' job is to provide the service and create superior value for their customers considering the fact that they are the main reason for hotel existence and preference for utilization (Mhianga, Hattingh and Moolman (2014).

Hotel industry is highly competitive, attract and retain customers, Hotel managers should have a deep understanding of the wants, needs and perceptions of customers who will be most likely to choose their establishments through the materials used for interior decoration. Tinnis and Aderian (2002) opined that satisfying the customers to attract patronage and convincing them that the hotels are capable of providing values for their intention and money to make them feel at home and spur them for high preference of the services rendered.

The principles of art and design are utilized in the careful selection of each item to the use of each area and overall mood desired. The hotel is the base of the hotelier or the customers, therefore this can be made as comfortable and attractive as possible for the proper development and relaxation of customers through utilization of materials like lighting, colour of paint, furniture, carpet, curtains, carpets, wall hangers, flowers, Beds, Blankets, and wooden crafts.

Ryu and Han (2010) see interior design as physical environment of the hotel that has a great influence on the image of the hotel and can act positively or negatively for the customer perception but the physical environment is not significant in the customers' perceived value. Joan and Lennox (2005) asserted that a physical surroundings has to be maintained through the time and changed or improved according to the customers wants. The hotel image to keep up with the trends of the current market to ensure more preference from the customers.

According to John (2002), Adebisi (2009) and Anyakoha (2015), interior decoration is an art of beautifying rooms and other areas of a house so that they become attractive, comfortable and useful. Floors, walls and ceilings are often decorated using furniture and fixtures, carpets and rugs, curtains, lighting, colour paintings wall coverings, hangings, flowers as well as other materials that contribute to the creation of an interior that makes it more beautiful.

The role of interior decorator through the years has been seen once adviser and in most cases confidant. As a result of the consultative nature of the work, it has been one of the professions in which both gender excelled in Nigeria. According to Gracelee (2008) and Pecotic, Bazdan and Samardzija (2014) opined that interior decoration is responsible for selecting suitable textiles, floor and walls coverings, furniture, lighting and overall colour scheme for rooms. The structural alteration in interior are preserve of the architect, there are lots of jobs for interior decorator. (Less-maffei 2008).

Anybody that wants to spend his/her money in the hotel, such hotel, it must be excellent in terms of foods, drinks, services and mostly aesthetic value of the interior value of the hotel. Most importantly, a worthy and satisfying hotel must be adequate in aesthetic value of its quality of interior decoration used. Furthermore, it has been observed that many hotels limit the utilization of interior decoration to few aspects, for example: bedding alone and the appropriate fabrics to be used for different forms

and styles of interior decorations are often neglected and not correctly used. The styles and forms to which decorative materials are used for interior part of decoration often affect the appearance of the interior part of the hotel and this has great influence on customer's preference. The positive preference expressed by the affective compatibility customers towards motivation expressed to product service in influence the trading form the quality of objects or services that aims to fulfill these needs. Preferences differ from one consumer to the other and can be triggered by features related to material substance (Novemsky, Dhar, Schwartz and Somonson 2007), Hansen (2005), and Catoi and Todorescu (2004). The study examined some of the socio-economic indicators such as: gender, educational level, marital status and income level. It is on this premise that the study investigated effect of socio economic characteristics of customers' preference of interior decoration materials.

Statement of the Problem

Many hotel industries in the study areas usually record high patronage when they were newly opened. As years rolled out, patronage falls even to the barest minimum. This resulted to low profit and consequent retrenchment of staff. In order to keep the flag of the hotel industries flying, good quality of interior decoration materials should be utilized to add to the aesthetic value.

Justification of the Study

The study created better awareness on the effect of utilization of quality materials for interior decoration in the hotel. It also enlightened hotel keepers on the available low, medium and high quality materials for interior decoration in the locality that can be used to upgrade the standard of the hotels to bring maximum preference, hence increase customers' patronage.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the effect of socio-economic characteristics on hotel customers' preference of interior materials in Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. Described the socio-economic characteristics of hotels' customers in Abeokuta metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria.
- ii. Examined the materials used for interior decoration in the Hotels

Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by two null hypotheses that were tested at 0.05 level of significance. They are:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between interior decoration materials and socio-economic characteristics of hotel customers' preference.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the utilization of good quality materials for decoration and customer's preference.

Research Methods

The study was carried out in Abeokuta metropolis Ogun State Nigeria. Abeokuta was chosen among other areas in the State due to the following results. It holds the seat of government of the State and it has a large spectrum of prominent hotels. The target population for the study was 354 regular hotel customers that patronized Dakted and Richton Hotels within one month. Convenient purposive random sampling of 118 Customers were made at the ratio 1:3.

The research instrument was validated by two lecturers in the department of Home Economic and Food Science, University of Ilorin, Ilorin. Kwara State, Nigeria. Specific objectives, and questionnaire were enclosed to guide the validators. The adequacy of the language, content relevance and item clarity as well as to ascertain if the items were related to the study. Pilot test method was carried out for the purpose of reliability determination. The instrument was administered to twenty customers. These were excluded from the final sample (98). The instrument was administered to respondents at an interval of one week. The two test scores were used, Cronbach Alpha statistical tool was used to ascertain the reliability co-efficient of $r=0.766$. This index of correlation was considered reasonably high for the instrument to be reliable. Gay and Airasian (2003) recommended that a coefficient of 0.70 and above is acceptable for a survey research.

The ninety-eight copies of questionnaire (sample) were distributed and only ninety copies were retrieved with information needed supplied adequately with two research assistants without mutilation. Secondary data were collected through; textbooks, journals and the internet. The data were analyzed using analytical tools like frequency counts, Percentages, Mean, Standard Deviation and Chi-square. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of respondents N=90

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender:		
	Male	*47	*52.2
	Female	43	47.8
2	Educational Level:		
	Tertiary	37	41.1
	Senior Secondary	24	26.7
	Pry Six	17	18.9
	Junior Secondary	12	13.3
3	Marital status:		
	Married	30	33.3
	Single	19	21.1
	Divorced	17	18.9
	Widow	17	18.9
	Separated	7	7.8
4	Income Level:		
	Middle Income	*49	*54.4
	High Income	29	32.2
	Low income	12	13.3

Source: Field Survey (2016).

Table 1 shows socio economic characteristics of hotel customers in the study area. The data revealed that 43 (47.8%) of the respondents are female while 47 (52.2%) of them are males. This implied that male patronized hotel more than the females in the study area. On educational level, majority 37(41.1%) respondents undergo tertiary education, 30 (33.3%) are married while 49 (54.4%) of the respondents are of middle income earners. This implied that educated, middle income earners and married respondents are the majority of respondents that had preference for interior decoration in the study area.

Table 2: Respondents' views regarding materials Used for Interior Decoration in the investigated Hotel
 N=90

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lighting		
	High	57	63.3
	Medium	31	34.4
	Low	2	2.22
2	Colour of Paint Used		
	High	55	61.1
	Medium	34	37.8
	Low	1	1.1
3	Furniture		
	High	52	57.8
	Medium	27	30.0
	Low	11	12.1
4	Carpet		
	High	41	45.6
	Medium	25	27.8
	Low	24	26.7
5	Curtains/blinds		
	High	50	55.6
	Medium	36	40
	High	4	4.4
6	Wall hangers		
	Medium	47	52.2
	Low	22	24.4
	High	21	23.3
7	Flowers		
	High	63	70
	Medium	26	28.9
	Low	1	1.1
8	Beds		
	High	63	70
	Medium	27	30
	Low	0	0
9	Blankets		
	High	54	60
	Medium	36	40
	Low	0	0
10	Wooden crafts		
	High	60	66.66
	Medium	26	28.88
	High	4	4.44

Source: Field Survey (2016).

Table 2 indicated quality of materials used for interior decoration in the selected hotels in the study area. The data showed that majority 57(63.3%) of the respondents agreed that lighting had high quality, colour of paints used 55 (61.1%), furniture: 52 (57.8%) Carpet 4 (45.6%) curtains 50 (55.6%) had high quality materials. In addition, flower: 63 (70%) beds 63 (70%), blankets 54 (60%) and indigenous wooden crafts 60 (66.6%) possessed high quality was revised for interior decoration of hotel.

Furthermore, only wall hangers 47 (52.2%) had medium quality of materials used. This implied that majority of the hotels possessed high quality of interior decoration.

Table 3: Chi square Utilization of Interior Decoration Materials and Socioeconomic Characteristics

S/N	Variables	X ²	Df	Contingency coefficient	Remark
1	Gender	0.178	1	0.673	S
2	Educational status	15.689	3	0.001	NS
3	Marital Status	14.889	4	0.005	NS
4	Economic Background	22.867	2	0.000	NS
5	Chandelier	50.467	2	0.000	NS
6	Colour	49.400	2	0.000	NS
7	Furniture	28.467	2	0.000	NS
8	Carpet	6.067	2	0.048	NS
9	Curtains/blinds	37.067	2	0.000	NS
10	Indigenous wooden crafts	24.267	2	0.000	NS
11	Wall Hanger	14.462	2	0.001	NS
12	Flowers	64.867	2	0.000	NS
13	Bed	14.400	1	0.000	NS
14	Blanket	56.067	2	0.000	NS
15	Flowers	45.867	2	0.000	NS

Source: Field Survey (2015)

The chi square analysis in table 4 showed the relationship between materials for interior decoration and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents. The results indicated that gender ($\chi^2=0.673$, $p<0.05$) have significant relationship with using of good materials for interior decoration. Whereas, Educational status, marital status, Economic background, Chandelier, Painting, Furniture, Carpet, Curtains/blinds, Slip covers, Wall hanger, Flower, Bed, bed spread and Pillow case have no significant relationship with using good interior decorations. This means that gender of the respondents have influence on the selection of good materials for the beautification of the inner part of the hotel.

Table 4: Chi square analysis on utilization of quality materials and consumer preference

S/N	Variable	X ²	df	Contingency Coefficient	Remark
1	Good quality fabrics	19.600	1	0.000	NS
2	Cotton fabrics	6.400	1	0.011	NS
3	Chandelier	78.867	2	0.000	NS
4	Curtains	35.422	3	0.000	NS
5	Comfort	24.044	3	0.000	NS
6	Carpet	40.200	2	0.000	NS
7	Wall paper	98.533	3	0.000	NS
8	Colour	10.000	1	0.002	NS
9	Blanket	69.911	3	0.000	NS
10	Flowers	51.800	2	0.000	NS
11	Hangers	32.400	1	0.000	NS

Source: Field Survey (2015)

The data in Table 5 shows that there was no significant relationships between utilization of good and quality materials and the customers' preference. Good quality fabrics Cotton fabrics, Silk fabrics, curtain, Comfort ability, carpet, Wall paper, Paint used, Cleaner, Colour, Quality materials have no significant relationship with utilization of good material and customers preferences.

Discussion

Hotel business is a unique that plays fundamentals roles in the social and economic lives of travelers and host community where it is located. Socio economic status of respondents was investigated in relation to customers preference on materials utilized for interior decoration. Socio economic variables examined are: gender, educational level, marital status and income level. The high level of interior decoration as the art of beautifying rooms and other indoor areas to become attractive, comfortable and useful. Ryu, lee & Kim (2010) asserted that interior design as physical environment of the hotel has great influence on the image and can act positively or negatively for the customer's preference. Adebisi (2009) identified materials that can be utilized to beautify rooms and other areas to become more attractive, comfortable and useful as: furniture, and fixtures, carpets and rugs, curtains, lighting, colour painting flowers etc. Hotel must be adequate in aesthetic value of its quality of interior decoration used. The study showed that educated, middle income earners, married and makes are the majority respondents that had high preferences for interior decoration utilized in the selected hotels studied. Also, the respondents affirmed that the materials utilized are of good quality. The preferences of the customers are positively expressed by the affective compatibility towards motivation expressed by the respondents (Novemsky et al (2007) and Hansen (2005).

Conclusion

Conclusively, the study examined some of the most important socio-economic indicators such as: gender, educational level, marital status and income level. In addition, lighting, colour of paint, furniture, carpet, curtains, blinds, wall hangers, flowers, beds, blankets and wooden crafts are the materials used for interior decoration in the investigated hotels. Hotel business is a unique industry that plays fundamental roles in the social and economic lives of travelers and most community where it is located.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Good quality materials for interior decorations should be encouraged by the hotel keepers to facelift and maximize customers' preference.
2. Good quality materials should be utilized to improve the aesthetic value of the hotel to increase customers' preference.

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