

UNPACKING THE DRIVERS OF HOTEL CHOICE: AN IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF PERSONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN HOTEL SELECTION

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Abstract: Consumer buying behaviour plays a pivotal role in achieving organizational goals. Understanding this behaviour is a crucial aspect of marketing, as it sheds light on consumers' purchasing patterns. To effectively target specific markets, marketers need to grasp the various factors and characteristics that influence consumer behaviour. These factors include cultural, social, personal, and psychological elements. This research study explores the impact of individual and psychological factors on consumer behaviour. 130 respondents participated in the survey via an open-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The data collected from the questionnaire were evaluated using Likert scale ratings for each question. Subsequently, the aggregate ratings for each question group were analyzed using IBM SPSS 21 software, employing descriptive statistics. The objective was to gain insights into the significant factors influencing consumer behaviour concerning personal and psychological aspects when choosing a hotel. The study reveals that both personal & psychological factors exert a considerable influence on consumers when choosing a hotel for their stay.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour; Buying Behaviour; Hotel, Hospitality; Personal, Psychological.

DESEMBALANDO OS MOTORIZADORES DA ESCOLHA DE HOTEL: UMA EXPLORAÇÃO APROFUNDADA DAS INFLUÊNCIAS PESSOAIS E PSICOLÓGICAS NO COMPORTAMENTO DO CONSUMIDOR NA SELEÇÃO DE HOTEL

Resumo: O comportamento de compra do consumidor desempenha um papel fundamental no alcance dos objetivos organizacionais. Compreender esse comportamento é um aspecto crucial do marketing, pois esclarece os padrões de compra dos consumidores. Para atingir eficazmente mercados específicos, os profissionais de marketing precisam compreender os diversos fatores e características que influenciam o comportamento do consumidor. Esses fatores incluem elementos culturais, sociais, pessoais e psicológicos. Este estudo de pesquisa concentra-se na exploração do impacto de fatores pessoais e psicológicos no comportamento do consumidor. Por meio de questionário aberto distribuído via Google Form, 130 entrevistados participaram do estudo. Os dados coletados no questionário foram avaliados por meio de classificações em escala Likert para cada questão. Posteriormente, as classificações agregadas para cada grupo de questões foram analisadas no software IBM SPSS-21, por meio de estatística descritiva. O objetivo foi obter insights sobre os fatores significativos que influenciam o comportamento do consumidor, em relação aos aspectos pessoais e psicológicos, na escolha de um hotel. O estudo revela que fatores pessoais e psicológicos exercem uma influência considerável nos consumidores na escolha de um hotel para a sua estadia.

Palavras-chave: Comportamento do Consumidor, Comportamento de Compra, Hotelaria, Hospitalidade, Pessoal, Psicológico.

DESEMPACANDO LOS IMPULSORES DE LA ELECCIÓN DE HOTEL: UNA EXPLORACIÓN EN PROFUNDIDAD DE LAS INFLUENCIAS PERSONALES Y PSICOLÓGICAS EN EL COMPORTAMIENTO DEL CONSUMIDOR EN LA SELECCIÓN DE HOTEL

Abstract: El comportamiento de compra del consumidor juega un papel fundamental en el logro de los objetivos organizacionales. Comprender este comportamiento es un aspecto crucial del marketing, ya que arroja luz sobre los patrones de compra de los consumidores. Para dirigirse eficazmente a mercados específicos, los especialistas en marketing deben comprender los diversos factores y características que influyen en el comportamiento del consumidor. Estos factores incluyen elementos culturales, sociales, personales y psicológicos. Este estudio de investigación se centra en explorar el impacto de los factores personales y psicológicos en el comportamiento del consumidor. A través de un cuestionario abierto distribuido a través de Google Form, 130 encuestados participaron en el estudio. Los datos recopilados del cuestionario se evaluaron mediante calificaciones en la escala de Likert para cada pregunta. Posteriormente, las calificaciones agregadas de cada grupo de preguntas se analizaron con el software IBM SPSS-21 mediante estadística descriptiva. El objetivo era conocer los factores importantes que influyen en el comportamiento del consumidor en lo que respecta a aspectos personales y psicológicos al elegir un hotel. El estudio revela que factores personales y psicológicos ejercen una influencia considerable en los consumidores al elegir un hotel para su estancia.

Palabras clave: Comportamiento del consumidor, Comportamiento de compra, Hotel, Hospitalidad, Personal, Psicológico.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive business environment, companies must continually adapt their strategies to meet consumers' evolving preferences and behaviour. The growing complexity of consumer behaviour, driven by advancements in technology, social media and globalization, has made it imperative for marketers to gain a deeper understanding of their target customers. This understanding enables the marketer to create more personalized and effective marketing strategies, improve product offerings, and enhance customer experiences.

Consumer behaviour is an essential aspect of marketing that shapes how consumers buy. Marketers must understand the characteristics and various factors that define a specific target market. Marketers study consumer behaviour to understand what, where, and why consumers buy products or services.

Narayana, C. L., & Markin, R. J. (1975) have defined consumer behaviour as "Consumer Behaviour is the study of how, why and what people do when they buy products or avail services. It attempts to understand the buyer decision-making process, both individually and in groups." Hence, it reflects the totality of a consumer's decision-making and the dynamic process influenced by multiple factors.

Schiffman & Kanuk (2007) stated that consumer behaviour is defined as "the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs." Thus, consumer behaviour concerns the different stages a customer goes through before purchasing products or services for their end use.

Each individual has their own needs and wants. After fulfilling their needs and wants, people tend to meet additional requirements that change with customer consumption and product development. It is because different factors influence their purchasing behaviour. According to Kotler (2006), four factors influence the buying decision: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. Marketers study consumer behaviour to estimate how consumers might behave in the future when making purchase decisions.

Consumer behaviour involves more than just buying a product or availing of a service. It takes into account ideas, execution, product development, services, time, and, more importantly, allows marketers to conduct in-depth research on their customers (Wulansari, 2020). Hence, consumer behaviour reflects the actions of many people. In the hotel industry, it is essential to study consumer behaviour to identify a specific target market.

The hotel industry, being highly service-oriented, relies heavily on understanding consumer behaviour to deliver exceptional service and maintain a competitive edge. Modern consumers have elevated expectations, and if their stay does not meet them, dissatisfaction is likely. Additionally, with a plethora of options available, consumers exhibit lower brand loyalty and are more prone to switching based on factors such as price and convenience. Hence, it is essential for hotels to examine

the factors that influence consumer behaviour continually.

Several factors that influence consumer buying decisions include cultural, social, psychological, and personal aspects. Among these, addressing psychological and individual factors is particularly vital for the hotel industry to meet and exceed guest expectations. By addressing the aforementioned factors, hotels can create personalized, emotionally engaging experiences that cultivate guest loyalty and positive perceptions. This proactive strategy not only enhances guest satisfaction but also drives sustained success in a highly competitive market.

In the hotel industry, understanding consumer behaviour is crucial to defining and targeting specific market segments. However, previous studies have focused primarily on cultural and social factors influencing consumer behaviour (Saxena, S. K., 2022) and have not fully explored the intricate relationship between psychological and personal factors in hotel selection, which highlights a gap in the existing literature. Addressing psychological and individual factors is particularly vital for the hotel industry to deliver personalized, emotionally engaging experiences that cultivate guest loyalty.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct an in-depth exploration of whether personal factors (age, occupation, gender, education, economic circumstances, and lifestyle preferences) and psychological factors (motivation, learning, attitude, brand perception, and emotional appeal) affect consumer decision-making when selecting a hotel.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study meticulously synthesizes existing research, offering a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between personal and psychological determinants.

In terms of personal influences, the review highlights demographic factors as pivotal components affecting hotel preferences. It examines how variables such as age, income, and cultural background influence individuals' choices, illuminating the diverse needs and expectations of various consumer segments. (Rehman, et al. 2019) Furthermore, the study delves into the role of individual preferences, examining how factors such as travel experience, lifestyle, and personal values shape decision-making.

This comprehensive review not only identifies key themes within the literature but also contributes to the field by offering a holistic perspective on the various elements influencing hotel choice. The insights from this exploration are invaluable to hoteliers and marketers, offering a nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour (Wang et al., 2020). Consequently, this knowledge can be strategically leveraged to tailor marketing approaches and enhance service offerings, ultimately fostering a more competitive, consumer-centric hotel industry.

Within the realm of personal influences, the review delves into demographic factors, recognizing the diverse nature of consumers and their varied needs. (It explores how age, income levels, and cultural

backgrounds shape preferences, shedding light on the evolving expectations of different market segments. Additionally, the study scrutinizes individual preferences, recognizing that consumers bring unique perspectives influenced by factors such as travel experience, lifestyle choices, and personal values. This nuanced exploration allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic nature of individual influences on hotel selection.

The review's emphasis on psychological influences is a notable strength, as it unravels the intricacies of perception, emotion, and motivation. It examines how elements such as brand image, service quality, and the overall guest experience shape consumer perceptions, ultimately influencing decision-making. By acknowledging the role of emotions and motivations, the study captures the subjective aspects of hotel choice, recognizing that intangible factors beyond mere practical considerations often guide consumer decisions.

This comprehensive review not only synthesizes existing literature but also contributes to the academic field by offering a holistic perspective on the myriad elements influencing hotel choice. The synthesized insights are not only valuable for academia but also provide practical implications for industry professionals. Hoteliers and marketers can leverage this knowledge to design more targeted, useful strategies, ensuring their offerings align with consumers' nuanced, evolving needs. Ultimately, this contributes to a more adaptive, competitive, and consumer-centric landscape in the hotel industry.

Based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), San Martín and Herrero (2012) developed a theoretical model that includes five explanatory variables of online purchase intention, among which personal and physiological influences are important factors affecting consumer behaviour. Also in the latest study of (Saxena, S. K., 2022) "Understanding consumer behaviour by the marketer is an invaluable tool for the marketer to devise a future buying pattern for their product and services and to maintain a good long-term customer relationship". (Chang, 2008) in his study explains "emotional value found to be affected mainly by empathy of service quality, whereas tangible cues of service quality influence social value."

Understanding the personal and psychological influences on hotel selection enables marketers to tailor their services, amenities, and marketing strategies to different consumer segments. By recognizing the role of individual preferences, motivations, and emotional states, hotels can position themselves to better meet the needs and desires of their target customers.

Mr Walls, in his study (Walls et al., 2011), concluded that particular ramifications exist for hotel managers who wish to utilise experiential marketing techniques to differentiate themselves from the competition. Specifically, the study's suggested framework can assist managers in practice by illuminating the various factors that influence customer experiences. By shedding light on customers' experiences in the luxury hotel market, this paper advances our understanding of consumer experience as a whole.

There is a deficiency of knowledge on customer experience management. This circumstance falls short of extending earlier research and bridging the gap between theory and practice. Regarding which aspects of the customer experience significantly influence customers' emotions and purchasing behaviour, there is also a lack of consistency. Because of this, most hotels end up focusing on aspects of the guest experience that may not have a significant impact on purchasing behaviour. Further research is required to understand the structural elements of customer experiences and the relationship between customer experience and purchasing behaviour, despite many companies investing heavily in experience design to promote repeat purchases (Zeng et al., 2024).

2.1 Individual and Personal Influences

These refer to the unique characteristics of an individual that shape their preferences and decisions.

- *Demographics:* Age, gender, income, education level, and family size significantly impact hotel selection. For example, younger travellers may prefer budget accommodations or trendy boutique hotels, while families may prioritize spacious rooms and family-friendly amenities.

- *Lifestyle:* A person's lifestyle, encompassing their hobbies, values, and activities, influences their choice. Luxury travelers may look for high-end hotels with premium services, while adventure seekers might opt for eco-friendly or niche accommodations.
- *Occupation and Status:* Business travellers often prioritise convenience, location (proximity to business hubs), and amenities like Wi-Fi and meeting rooms. On the other hand, leisure travellers might focus on comfort, relaxation, and recreational services.
- *Life Stage:* Whether someone is single, married, travelling with children, or retired can shape hotel choices. For example, retirees may prefer quiet, comfortable stays with good health and wellness amenities.

Despite being one of the most explored topics in the tourism industry, there are few thorough assessments of the body of knowledge in consumer behaviour (CB). The review paper by Cohen et al. (2014) examines the key concepts, external factors, and suitable study settings that we believe are crucial in current tourism CB research. We analyze the CB literature published in three major travel journals between 2000 and 2012 using a narrative review. 191 of the 519 articles that were found and examined are included in this article.

The experiential consumption of tourism has received greater attention in the travel literature. The lack of attention in previous studies to the experiential nature of accommodation products, especially in boutique or specialist accommodation. Determining visitor satisfaction and the personal advantages visitors gain from their stay requires careful consideration of the experiences tourists have with their accommodations (McIntosh et al., 2005).

Drawing on the expected quality of the customer experience and anticipated emotions, this study aimed

to investigate the unique characteristics of a smart hotel – the concept of a future hotel – and their impact on the formation of consumers' visit intentions. The defining characteristics of a smart hotel were identified through a qualitative research method involving several in-depth interviews (Kim & Han, 2020).

Marketing theorists have long argued that culture is a fundamental factor influencing customer behaviour. There are still a few empirical studies in the realm of tourism, especially when it comes to understanding how it affects behaviour.

The article from Li & Cai (2012) reports on a study that attempts to close this gap by examining how cultural values affect behavioural intention and travel incentives. Travel motivation is strongly influenced by both internal and external values, according to an analysis of survey data from Chinese visitors departing the country. The sole factors influencing behavioural intention are internal values. The novelty component of travel motivation directly impacts behavioural intention. The results are discussed in light of the growing importance and distinctiveness of Chinese outbound travel. Theoretical and practical consequences are examined.

2.2 Objective of the study

1. To analyze whether the personal factors (age, occupation, gender, education, economic circumstance, and lifestyle preferences) have any impact on consumer decision-making when choosing a hotel.

2. To examine the impact of psychological factors (motivation, learning, attitude, brand perception, and emotional appeal) on consumer buying behaviour when selecting a hotel.

2.3 Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant correlation between personal factors (such as age, occupation, gender, education, economic circumstances, and lifestyle preferences) and consumer behaviour in the hotel selection process, as personal factors have a substantial impact on shaping the individual's need, preferences and priorities.

H2: Psychological factors (such as motivation, learning, attitude, brand perception, and emotional appeal) have a significant impact on consumers' decisions when choosing a hotel. These factors influence the underlying decision-making process in a consumer's buying behaviour.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING DESIGN

This research employs a variety of approaches, drawing significantly on established theoretical backgrounds that enable us to understand consumer behaviour from multiple angles. We have two main frameworks for our methodology: behavioural theories of consumer decision-making, which highlight how individual attitudes and social influences shape purchase decisions, and demographic theories, which explore how age, gender, income, and employment status affect people's consumption behaviours. These

theories are the basis upon which we build out research design and key categories for analysis.

To collect data, an open-ended, structured questionnaire was designed and distributed through Google Forms to consumers with diverse demographic characteristics who had recently booked hotels for leisure or business travel. The questionnaire used Likert-scale questions and was divided into three sections, beginning with the collection of respondents' demographic information. The second section focused on the personal factors that influence consumer decision-making when choosing a hotel. In contrast, the third and final section examined the psychological factors underlying a consumer's decision-making process.

The survey questionnaire was distributed to 225 potential respondents, of whom 130 participated. Collected responses were analyzed using various statistical tools, including frequencies, cross-tabulation, and correlation, with IBM SPSS 21. The qualitative part also had open-ended questions within the same survey aimed at providing deeper insights into participants' sentiments and conduct. These responses were subjected to thematic analysis, revealing recurring patterns and deeper insights into consumer preferences.

3.1 Survey Instrument Validation

The exhaustive questionnaire thus developed underwent a pilot test to assess its validity. The questionnaire was submitted to a group of experts comprising academics, consumers, and fellow researchers to evaluate the accuracy of the items and the overall construct. Additionally, the instrument was distributed to researchers with prior experience in hotel stays to assess the clarity of the questions, the readability and representativeness of the items, thereby ensuring examination of face validity, construct validity, and content validity.

3.2 Sample Design Selections and Techniques

The study's database is built on the foundation of two types of data: primary and secondary. Non-random sampling and random sampling are the sampling approaches used in research methodology. Nonrandom sampling is defined as sampling that does not provide any foundation for calculating the probability that each item in the population will be deliberately included in the sample, leaving the decision to the individual.

3.3 Data analysis and assigning code

For data analysis, each variable is assigned a numeric code to better understand the outcomes and their interpretation. The code (Table 1) is the output from IBM SPSS, which assigned codes to different independent variables such as age, gender, and income.

Table 1. Code Value.

Age Group	Code Value	Gender Group	Code Value	Employment Group	Code Value
21-30	2	Female	2	Government Service	2
31-40	3	Male	3	Private Organization	3
40-60	4			Business	4
Above 40	5			Not Employed	5
Above 60	6				
Under 20	7				

Source: own elaboration

3.4 Sample Size and Respondent Profile

The minimum sample size was expected to be 130. The survey questions are based on indicators of human behaviour influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and consumer buying behaviour. Table 2 presents the frequency of responses, along with demographic details such as age, gender, and employment status, which underwent questionnaire validity and reliability tests before distribution.

Table 2. Response Statistics.

Statistics				
	Gender		Employment	Age
Valid	130		130	130
Missing	0		0	0
Age				
	S1**	S2**	S3**	S4**
21-30	23	17.2	17.2	17.9
31-40	24	17.9	17.9	35.8
40-60	70	55.2	55.2	91
Above 40	2	0.7	0.7	91.8
Above 60	8	6	6	97.8
Under 20	3	2.2	2.2	100
Total	130	100	100	
Gender				
	S1**	S2**	S3**	S4**
Female	29	22.3	22.3	23
Male	102	77.69	77.69	100
Total	130	100	100	
Employment				
	S1**	S2**	S3**	S4**
(a) Government Service	29	21.6	21.6	22.4
(b) Private Organization	65	50	50	72.4
(c) Business	17	12.3	12.3	84.7
(d) Not Employed	19	14.9	14.9	100
Total	130	100	100	

**S1: frequency, S2, S4: Cumulative Percent Percent, S3: Valid Percent.

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3: Personal Factor Gender * Crosstabulation.

			1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Undecided 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree)					Total
			1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	
Gender	Female	Count	0	1	5	13	12	31
		% of Total	0.0%	0.8%	3.9%	10.1%	9.3%	24.0%
	Male	Count	3	6	8	46	35	98
		% of Total	2.3%	4.7%	6.2%	35.7%	27.1%	76.0%
Total		Count	3	7	13	59	48	130
		% of Total	2.3%	5.4%	10.1%	45.7%	36.4%	100.0 %

Source: own elaboration.

4. DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

4.1 Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is influenced by four main factors: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. Marketers use these factors to identify their target customers, understand purchase frequency, and assess the likelihood of repurchase. Having a deep understanding of these factors enables marketers to establish lasting connections with consumers.

Consequently, each factor can be leveraged by marketers and hoteliers to boost sales and increase profitability. This study explicitly explores the impact of personal and psychological factors on consumer behaviour when selecting a hotel for their stay.

4.2 Individual and Personal Factor

Consumers' purchase decisions involve several steps, starting from defining a product's need or want, collecting information about the product, comparing different brands or reviews, and even post-purchase evaluation. And this entire decision is influenced by several factors, including personal factors. Products' needs and interests vary from individual to individual. Each individual has their own wants and desires.

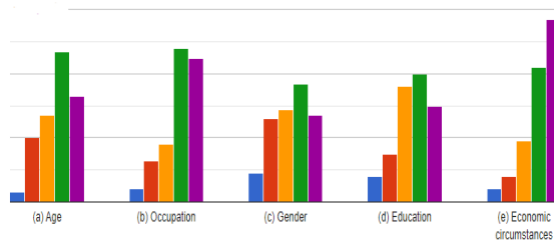
Personal factors are characteristics that vary from one person to another. These characteristics define how an individual will perform their decision-making process. Factors such as age, gender, lifestyle, and income are some personal characteristics that influence consumers' choices when selecting a hotel for their stay. For example, an older person is likely to seek comfort and safety, whereas a younger person's interests are more adventure-oriented.

People make different choices throughout their lifetime, and at various life stages, they encounter different personal circumstances, which can lead to varying priorities. The purchase decisions of consumers differ significantly from their priorities. Therefore, marketers/ hoteliers must differentiate their products or services while considering personal factors. In doing so, the hoteliers will be able to deliver their services to each individual hailing from different personal circumstances.

Henceforth, an attempt was made to understand the respondent's view on whether personal factors influence consumer behaviour when selecting a hotel for their stay.

Figure 1: Personal factors x influence in consumer behaviour.

In context of Personal factors which of the following factors influence the consumer behaviour in deciding the hotel. Degree of Agreement (1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Undecided 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree)



Source: own elaboration.

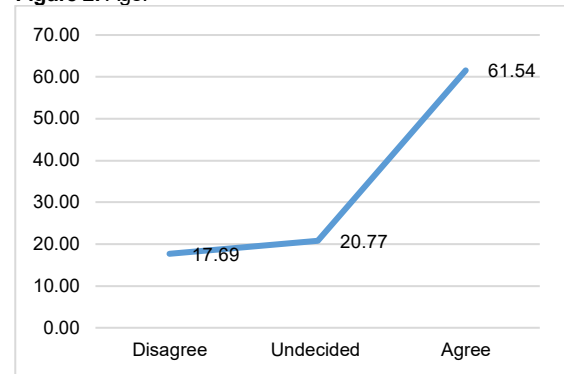
The analysis of the data above (Figure 1) suggests that personal factors play a significant role in determining consumer behaviour and buying patterns. Thus, from the above cross-tabulation of gender with individual factors, it can be interpreted that 35.7% of males and 10.1% of females always consider personal factors as their preferred choice when booking a hotel. As personal characteristics vary from one individual to another, it became obvious that consumers have different buying interests. Meanwhile, 2.3% of the respondents strongly disagree, and 5.4% disagree respectively. Otherwise, 10.1% of respondents are undecided about whether the personal factor influences consumer behaviour.

Their personal characteristics shape a person's consumption behaviour. Individual factors are yet divided into various sub-factors, such as age, gender, education, economic circumstances, lifestyle and self-concept. Each sub-factor has its own characteristics that influence the consumer's decision-making process. The researcher aimed to determine the impact of sub-factors related to personal actors on consumers' hotel selection process. Factors such as age, occupation, gender, education, economic circumstances, lifestyle, and self-concept were examined to understand their influence on consumer behaviour while selecting the hotel for their stay. The study aimed to gain insights that would help hotel marketers tailor their offerings and strategies to meet the diverse needs of their target audience.

4.2.1 Age

People avail of different kinds of services in different age groups. There is a distinct variation in the consumption patterns across age groups. For example, most of the time, younger consumers tend to gravitate toward budget-oriented or adventurous accommodation options, while older consumers prefer comfort and safety when selecting a hotel. Therefore, the researcher aims to investigate the impact of age on hotel choice.

Figure 2: Age.



Source: own elaboration.

The data (Figure 2) presented indicates that age is a significant factor influencing consumers' hotel choices. Among respondents, 61.54% feel that age plays a role in deciding which hotel to stay in, while 20.77% hold a neutral view. Younger populations tend to gravitate towards budget-oriented or adventurous accommodation options, while older age groups prefer hotels that offer comfort and safety. Hence, for marketers and hoteliers, understanding consumer behaviour by age group becomes essential. By recognizing the preferences and needs of different age groups, they can tailor their marketing strategies and services to reach specific target markets effectively. For example, a youth hostel is a prime example of accommodation that targets young individuals who prioritize budget-friendly options, often travelling in backpacking style.

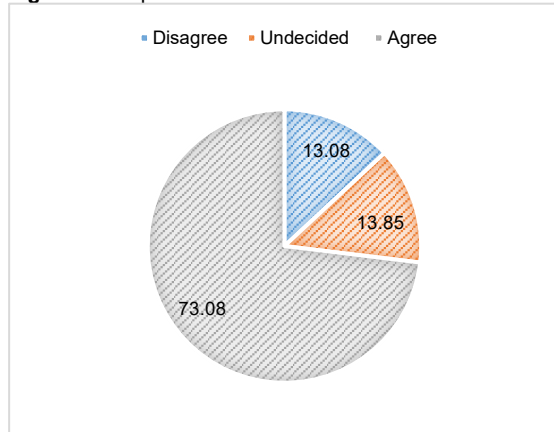
4.2.2 Occupation

Occupation is a significant factor that fosters a sense of differentiation among individuals. It contributes to shaping the individual's identity in their respective living community. Occupation allows individuals to express themselves mentally, physically and socially.

Occupation has long been an essential aspect for marketers while framing their market. It is widely accepted as a significant factor, as it reflects a person's social status. Consequently, the researcher has attempted to ascertain the respondents' views on how their occupation influences their hotel choices.

The data above (Figure 3) shows that a large majority (73.08%) of respondents believe their occupation has a significant impact on their consumer behaviour. This suggests that people recognize the role of their occupation in shaping their preferences and choices when selecting products or services. Therefore, considering occupation as a key factor for marketers while defining their target market. Different occupational groups are likely to have unique needs, values, and preferences, which can affect their brand and product choices. For example, the students might prioritize self-presentation through their brand choices, while a CEO may be more concerned about social approval and image.

Figure 3:Occupation.



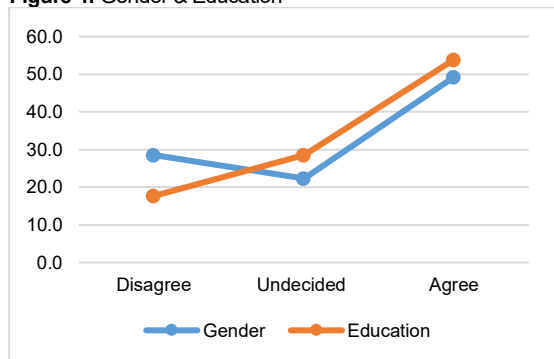
Source: own elaboration

4.2.3 Gender& Education

The impact of gender and education on consumers' decisions in the hotel industry is a significant consideration for hoteliers and marketers. Both gender and education play crucial roles in shaping individuals' preferences and behaviours when selecting hotels and services.

Segmenting markets by gender is common and profitable because it is accessible and easy to identify. Moreover, consumers with higher levels of education make more informed choices and have clearer expectations regarding their hotel preferences. Therefore, understanding these influences, researcher tries to find out the impact of gender and education on consumers when making the choice of a hotel for their stay.

Figure 4: Gender & Education



Source: own elaboration

The analysis (Figure 4) reveals that a significant proportion of respondents agree that both gender (49.2%) and education (53.8%) play a role in influencing their decisions in the hotel industry. This suggests that gender and education are essential factors to consider when catering to consumers' preferences. However, there is some uncertainty among respondents, with notable percentages undecided about the impact of gender (22.3%) and education (28.5%) on their decision-making. Additionally, a smaller portion disagrees with the influence of gender (28.5%) and education (17.7%).

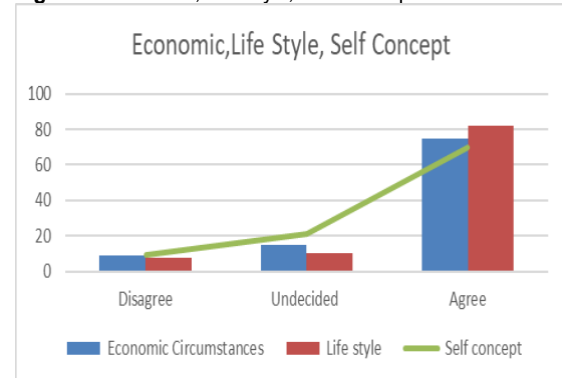
Understanding the specific preferences and thought processes of different gender segments can help hoteliers tailor their offerings and marketing

strategies effectively. Furthermore, educated consumers tend to make more informed choices and have higher expectations, making it essential for hotels to consider these factors when designing their products, services, and promotional campaigns. By doing so, hotels can better meet the diverse needs and preferences of their target audience.

4.2.4 Economic circumstances, Lifestyle& Self-concept

Personal factors, such as economic circumstances, lifestyle, and self-concept, significantly influence consumers' decisions in the hotel industry. Economic conditions impact hotel choices, with higher-income individuals favouring luxury hotels. Lifestyle segmentation allows marketers to cater to specific interest groups, providing personalised experiences. Self-concept influences product choices, as individuals tend to select products that align with their identities. Hence, the researcher sought to examine the influence of economic circumstances, lifestyle, and self-concept on consumers' decision-making processes when selecting hotels for their stays.

Figure 5: Economic, Life Style, Self-Concept



Source: own elaboration

The data (Figure 5) analysis reveals that a significant proportion of respondents agree that economic circumstances have a strong impact, with 74.6% acknowledging its influence. Economic conditions, including disposable income and financial stability, play a crucial role in shaping hotel choices, with higher-income individuals often preferring luxury accommodations. On the other hand, those with limited disposable income may opt for more budget-friendly options.

Moreover, lifestyle is another influential factor, with 82.3% of respondents agreeing that it significantly affects their decision-making process. Consumers' unique lifestyles, shaped by their cultural backgrounds, social class, and income levels, result in distinct preferences for hotel amenities, locations, and overall experiences. Understanding and catering to these lifestyle preferences can lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Additionally, 70% of respondents believe that self-concept influences their hotel selection. The concept of self-concept refers to individuals' perceptions of themselves and their desire to align their choices with their self-identity. Consumers tend to choose hotels that they believe mirror their personalities and values, making it essential for hoteliers to create brand identities

and offerings that resonate with consumers' self-concept.

The data provides valuable insights into how personal factors, specifically economic circumstances, lifestyle, and self-concept, influence consumers' decisions in the hotel industry. Hotel marketers can leverage this understanding to tailor their offerings, marketing strategies, and brand messaging to better meet the diverse needs and preferences of their target audience. By aligning their offerings with substantial consumers' financial situations, lifestyle choices, and self-concept, hotels can enhance customer satisfaction, foster brand loyalty, and ultimately gain a competitive edge in the market.

The data analysis reveals a significant correlation between various personal factors and their influence on consumers' decision-making processes when selecting hotels for their stay, thereby supporting hypothesis H1. Age, occupation, gender, education, economic circumstances, lifestyle, and self-concept all play vital roles in shaping consumer preferences and behaviours in the hotel industry. For marketers and hoteliers, understanding consumers' behavioural patterns based on these personal factors is essential. Tailoring marketing strategies and services to cater to specific target markets effectively can lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

By recognizing the preferences and needs of different age groups, occupational segments, gender, and educational backgrounds, hotels can offer personalized experiences and create lasting connections with their diverse customer base. Ultimately, embracing and adapting to the diverse influences of these personal factors empowers hotel businesses to thrive in a competitive industry and enhance overall customer experiences.

4.3 Psychological Factors

The psychological factor refers to the psychological characteristics of an individual that drive their actions in seeking satisfaction. Several psychological factors, such as motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes, influence consumer buying behaviour. These factors help explain the buying process. Measuring the impact of psychological factors can be challenging, as they are internal, yet they are significantly more powerful in influencing people's buying decisions. Marketers must try to understand the probable role the factors play in customers' product purchase decisions.

In the hotel industry, consumption of hotel services varies across market segments, driven by psychological factors. Guests meet their own psychological needs in the hotel. Additionally, because they are away from their home, they tend to have additional needs, wants, and desires. As they stay in a hotel for a specific period, their choices are based on assessments of their psychological characteristics, as they are likely to fulfil their expectations during their stay.

Customer satisfaction is crucial for the survival of businesses in the service industry. To satisfy customers, it is essential to understand their needs, wants, and desires. Therefore, an attempt was made to determine from the respondent whether psychological

factors influence consumers when selecting a hotel for their stay.

The cross-tabulation presented in (table 4), which examines the relationship between gender, employment, and various factors influencing hotel choices, indicates that psychological factors play a significant role in decision-making. According to the survey, 33.6% of males and 8.6% of females across different employment backgrounds consider psychological factors crucial when deciding on hotel bookings. This suggests a notable inclination among some consumers toward psychological factors in their decision-making process. These psychological factors encompass diverse characteristics that guide individuals' product choices, serving as external variables that influence decisions through factors such as motivation and perceptions of others. On the other hand, 5.5% and 8.6 % of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree with the given statement, indicating that not all respondents believe in the influence of psychological factors on their hotel selection process.

Table 4: Psychological Factors Gender * Crosstabulation

			1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Undecided 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree)					Total
			1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	
Gender	Female	Count	2	2	6	11	10	31
		% of Total	1.6 %	1.6 %	4.7 %	8.6 %	7.8 %	24.2%
	Male	Count	5	9	20	43	20	97
		% of Total	3.9 %	7.0 %	15.6 %	33.6 %	15.6 %	75.8%
Total		Count	7	11	26	54	32	130
		% of Total	5.5 %	8.6 %	20.3 %	42.2 %	24.61 %	100.0 %

Source: own elaboration.

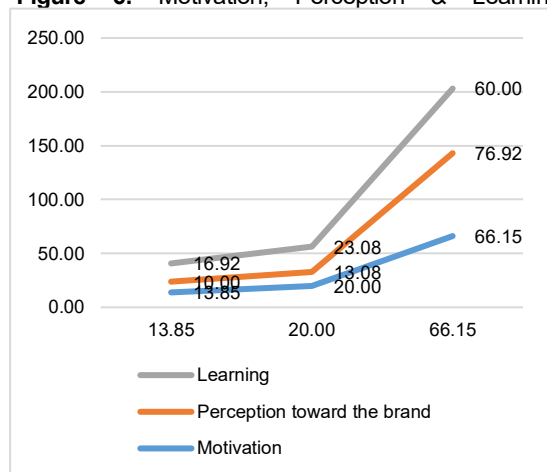
Additionally, 20.3% (15.6% male and 4.7% female) of the respondents remain undecided about whether psychological factors influence consumer behaviour or not. From the above analysis, we can say that to maximize the number of bookings, hotel marketers need to employ various tactics that can create a lasting impact on customers' minds. For instance, using psychological techniques, such as rewarding customers during or after their stay, can significantly increase hotel bookings. Understanding and effectively utilizing these psychological factors can be a valuable strategy for hotel marketers to attract and retain customers.

Like any other factor, psychological factors also have several sub-factors, such as motivation, perception of the brand, learning, attitude, and belief, that influence consumer behaviour when selecting a hotel for their stay. Since each one has its characteristics which set them different from the other ones. The researcher tries to find out from the respondent about the impact of psychological sub-factors on the consumer behaviour while deciding on a hotel for their stay.

4.3.1 Motivation, Perception towards brands, Learning

In the hotel industry, understanding guest motivation, perception towards brands, and the role of learning is crucial for effective marketing. Motivation drives consumer behaviour and varies based on individual needs and desires. The perception of hotel brands is influenced by factors such as reviews and location. Learning about hotel options helps consumers make informed choices. By catering to diverse motivations, managing brand perceptions, and providing reliable information, hotels can enhance guest satisfaction and build lasting customer relationships. Recognizing the significance of these underlying factors, the researcher aims to investigate the impact of physiological sub-factors, motivation, perception towards hotel brands, and the role of learning on consumer behaviour during the hotel selection process.

Figure 6: Motivation, Perception & Learning.



Source: own elaboration

The analysis of the data (Figure 6) reveals essential insights into the factors that influence consumers' behaviour during the hotel selection process. Motivation, brand perception, and learning all play significant roles in shaping guests' decisions.

Firstly, motivation is a key driver of consumers' choices. A substantial majority (66.15%) of respondents agreed that their inner desires and needs heavily impact their hotel selection. This highlights the importance of understanding guests' individual motivations to tailor offerings and services to meet their specific requirements. However, a smaller proportion (13.85%) disagreed with the importance of motivation, suggesting that some guests may be influenced more by external factors or may use different decision-making criteria.

Secondly, perception toward the brand proves to be a crucial factor in consumers' decision-making process. A significant majority (76.92%) of respondents emphasized the importance of brand perception when choosing a hotel. This underscores the significance of managing brand reputation, leveraging positive reviews, and maintaining a strong brand image to attract potential guests. Nonetheless, a small proportion (10.00%) disagreed with the role of brand perception, suggesting that for some consumers, factors beyond brand reputation might take precedence in their decision-making.

Thirdly, learning about hotels before making a booking is considered necessary by a significant proportion (60.00%) of respondents. This highlights the value guests place on obtaining information to make informed choices and mitigate potential risks. Hoteliers can leverage this by providing detailed, accurate information across various channels. On the other hand, a notable percentage (23.08%) remained undecided about the role of learning, suggesting they may not actively seek information or be uncertain about its significance. Furthermore, a smaller group (16.92%) disagreed with the importance of learning, suggesting that they might rely more on spontaneous decisions or have a higher tolerance for uncertainty.

In conclusion, the study underscores the significance of understanding and catering to guests' motivations, managing brand perception, and providing relevant information to enhance the hotel selection process. By leveraging these psychological sub-factors, hoteliers can better meet guests' needs and preferences, create personalised experiences, and ultimately foster customer loyalty in the competitive hospitality industry.

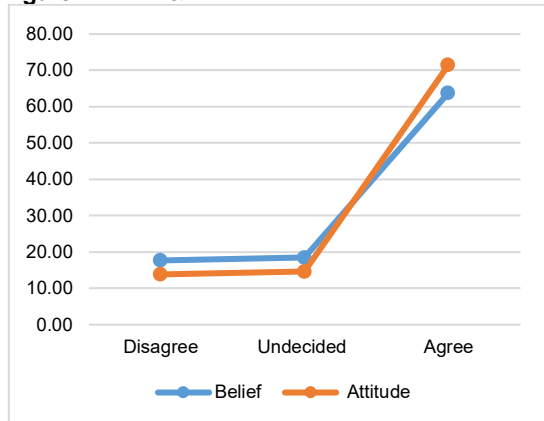
4.3.2 Attitude & Belief

In the hotel industry, understanding guests' attitudes and beliefs is crucial as they profoundly influence their decision-making process. Attitudes represent an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes towards different aspects of the environment. They reflect learned predispositions to respond favorably or unfavorably to specific objects or situations. For hotel marketers, awareness of guests' attitudes enables them to tailor their marketing programs effectively. By aligning product attributes and service components with guests' preferences, they can create a positive disposition in guests' decisions, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Beliefs, on the other hand, are shaped by knowledge, opinions, and personal experiences. Consumers seek products that align with their values and reflect their past interactions. In the hotel industry, guests form brand beliefs based on previous experiences with a particular hotel's services. If a guest has a positive experience at a hotel, they are likely to form a favourable impression of that brand. This loyalty can lead them to prefer the same hotel repeatedly, especially when staying in the same location. By recognising the importance of attitude and belief, the researcher seeks to determine from the respondent whether these psychological factors, such as attitude and belief, influence consumer behaviour when selecting a hotel for their stay.

The data (Figure 7) shows that beliefs and attitudes significantly influence consumer behaviour when selecting a hotel. A majority of respondents (63.85%) agreed that their beliefs, based on knowledge and experience, play a crucial role in their decision-making. Similarly, a significant proportion (71.54%) agreed that their enduring motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes (attitudes) have a substantial impact on their choices.

Figure 7: Belief & Attitude.



Source: own elaboration

The findings indicate that understanding and catering to guests' beliefs and attitudes are essential for hotel marketers. By aligning their offerings with guests' preferences and creating positive experiences, hotels can enhance customer satisfaction and foster loyalty. This data provides valuable insights for crafting effective marketing.

Based on the above analysis of psychological factors, it can be concluded that motivation, learning, attitude, brand perception, and emotional appeal significantly influence consumers' hotel choice decisions. Thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude, the data analysis reveals a significant correlation among various personal and psychological factors that influence consumers' hotel selection decisions, thereby supporting both hypotheses (H1 & H2). This study offers critical insights for hotel marketers on how to address the personal and psychological factors that influence consumers' hotel selection decisions.

Personal factors, encompassing age, occupation, gender, education, economic circumstances, lifestyle, and self-concept, play pivotal roles in shaping consumer preferences and behaviours within the hotel industry. Understanding the diverse personal needs of different demographic groups enables hotels to offer a range of service options tailored to various personality types. This includes, but is not limited to, recognizing and accommodating guests' diverse lifestyle requirements, as well as incorporating lifestyle-oriented amenities and services into the hotel's offerings. Trying to strike a balance between luxury and affordability to attract a broad clientele and customizing services and amenities to cater to different age groups and life phases. Thus, understanding the diverse personal needs of other demographic groups enables marketers to tailor their strategies effectively, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, this study highlights the significant impact of psychological factors, including motivation, brand perception, learning, attitude, and belief, on consumers' decision-making processes. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing and catering to guests' motivations, managing brand perceptions, and providing relevant information to enhance the hotel

selection process. Hotels can also incorporate aspects to ensure a consistent level of quality and transparent communication, shaping favourable perceptions. Addressing discrepancies between perceived and actual experiences through attentive service delivery and feedback mechanisms could be an additional means to induce consumer behaviour and perceptions. By leveraging these psychological sub-factors, hoteliers can create personalized experiences, foster customer loyalty, and gain a competitive advantage.

Thus, successfully aligning products, services, and marketing efforts with the personal and psychological factors discussed in our study can contribute to the overall success and sustainability of hotel businesses in a highly competitive market.

5.1 Limitations of the study

The survey was distributed using Google Forms to over 225 potential respondents, but only 130 responses were obtained. Identifying the reason for the relatively low response rate proves challenging. Possible factors contributing to this limitation include potential restrictions in Google Forms accessibility to specific segments within the target population, which may influence the diversity and representation of respondents. While the research provides valuable insights into personal and psychological factors, it may not fully explore the significance of other factors, such as cultural and social influences, in shaping consumer behaviour. Notably, the tourism sector has seen numerous studies on factors affecting consumer behaviour, but there remains a dearth of research specifically focused on the hotel industry.

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CRedit author statement.

Term	Definition	Author 1	A2	A3
Conceptualization	Ideas, formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.	x		
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models.	x	x	x
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components.	x		
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.	x	x	
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data.	x	x	x
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection.	x	x	x
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.	x		x
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse.	x	x	x
Writing - Original Draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).	x		
Writing - Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages.	x	x	x
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation.	x	x	x
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.	x		
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.	x	x	
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication.	x		

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