FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER CHOICE IN
HOTEL SELECTION IN GHANA

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Abstract

There has been extensive research in consumer behaviour most of which are directed towards products and services in general. However in this research the focus is on the service industry and specifically hotels. The main purpose of this research was to explore the mediating role of culture in consumer decision making on hotel selection in Ghana. The study employed the descriptive survey design which made use of questionnaires to collect data from One Hundred and Fifty (150) hotel customers as well as elite interview with key respondents working in the hotel industry. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics based on frequencies and percentages. Findings from the study revealed that consumers' patronage of hotel services is influenced largely by religion and to some extent traditional beliefs of consumers in Ghana. The study recommended among others that due to religious influence on customers' hotel services selection, hotel operators should consider mobile up sell technology providers to help identify which services to render at the hotel to attract religiously inclined potential hotel customers.

Keywords: Culture, Hotel, Consumer Behaviour, Tourism, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Study of consumer behaviour is very important because knowingly or unknowingly we are consumers. There has been extensive researches in consumer behaviour most of which are directed towards products and services in general. However in this research, the focus is on the

service industry and specifically hotels. Consumer decision making has long been of interest to researchers. Beginning about 300 years ago early economists, led by NicholasBernoulli, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, started to examine the basis of consumer decision making (Richarme,2005). This early work approached the topic from an economic perspective, and focused solely on the act of purchase (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). The most prevalent model from this perspective is Utility Theory which proposes that consumers make choices based on the expected outcomes of their decisions. Consumers are viewed as rational decision makers who are only concerned with self-interest (Zinkhan, 1992). It was not long after which marketing scholars responded to the concept and growth of consumer behaviour and activities that impact the consumer decision(Blackwelletal., 2001).

In addition to other basic principles of consumer buying habits, marketers also need to study the decision and actions of real people. Until recent history the study of consumer behaviour was focused on generalized consumer decisions. With over 6.3 billion people, the world is a marketing oyster (Armstrong & Kotler, 2005). The trouble or the task that most marketers face is identifying how to sell their product to those people. There are many ways, but identifying the buying behaviour of the target market and catering for those behaviours is integral in today's complex society.

The effect of culture on consumer buying behaviour has been extensively explored. This study therefore seeks to add to literature what is already known about cultural influence on the behaviour of the consumer and in particular towards the hotel industry in Ghana which has seen little or no research in that regard. Culture is a very dynamic subject and its influence on human behaviour is inevitably strong in general and much stronger in terms of buying in particular. It is not strange a lot of scholars spent a great deal of time to investigate this phenomenon. In this era of globalization and technological advancement, the consumer has become very complex and understanding consumer buying behaviour is somewhat difficult if not at all impossible. Consumer behaviour is made up of all the consumer decisions and activities connected with the choosing, buying, using and disposing of goods and services.

Recent years have seen increasing interest in the consequences of culture for global marketing and advertising. Many recent studies point at the necessity of adapting branding and advertising strategies to the culture of the consumer (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). In order to understand cultural differences, several models have been developed of which includes the Hofstede model which by far is the most used.

Despite the growing interest in cross-cultural research in the hospitality literature, little empirical research has been conducted on the effects of cultural factors on consumers assessment and decisions to patronize or not to use hotel services. This study has been

designed to close this gap by investigating the role of cultural factors in the decision of whether or not to patronise hotel services.

Objectives of Study

This study aims at exploring how consumer decision making process is influenced by culture in hotel choice and patronage in Ghana.

Specifically, the study aims at exploring the following:

- To find out factors that influence consumer choice of hotel selection in Ghana
- To find out how cultural factors mediate purchasing behaviour of hotel services'

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Defining Culture

Culture is one of the broadest influences on many dimensions of human behaviour including buying and consumption pattern. This pervasiveness makes defining culture difficult (McCort & Malhotra, 2001). The difficulty in defining culture hampers research about the influence of culture on consumer behaviour (as cited in Manrai and Manrai, 1996; McCort & Malhotra, 2001; Clark, 1990; Nasif et al., 1991; Dewar et al., 1996; Lenartowicz & Roth, 1999). The process of the human consumption which has been presented from the beginning was initially an activity that must be fulfilled for the rest of life whereas today it has been the goal of life. Today, the consumption is no more a process due to the need of consumers but, in accordance with the wishes of consumers has become an evolving process. The concept of "customer focus", "customer loyalty" in modern marketing requires the audience and the audience recognition of the section (Gulati & Oldroyd, 2005). Therefore in terms of marketing, consumer behaviour in order to define their influence has become necessary to examine the factors that remain. In study, concepts such as culture, sub-cultures and social classes, how to influence consumers' buying behaviour has been investigated.

Cultural influences on consumer behaviour

Culture is a convenient catchall for the many differences in market structure and behaviour that cannot readily be explained in terms of more tangible factors (Buzzell, 1968), a rubbish bin concept, which constitutes rather clear and strong images of the superficial form. The concept of culture is often called upon, as an explanatory variable for residuals, when more operative explanations have proved unsuccessful (Usunier, 1999). As define by Taylor, culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society (McCort & Malhotra, 2001). The Centre for

Advance Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further, defining culture as shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group.

Also Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) said by culture we irrational, and non-rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men. From all definitions above, there are certain common elements that run through so there culture can be define as those complex beliefs of human societies, their roles, their behaviour, their values, traditions, mores, customs and norms. In simpler words, culture is nothing but values of an individual what an individual learns from his parents and relatives as a child becomes his culture.

In Ghana people still value joint family system and family ties. Children in Ghana are conditioned to stay with their parents till they get married as compared to foreign countries where children are more independent and leave their parents once they start earning a living for themselves. Indeed culture has a great influence on human behaviour. To this end so many research has been done on culture with a lot of models developed that are in use to measure the effect of culture on human behaviour. Hofstede s framework is the most widely used national cultural framework in psychology, sociology, marketing, or management studies (Sondergaard, 1994; Steenkamp, 2001). Hofstede used 116,000 questionnaires from over 60,000 respondents in seventy countries in his empirical study (Hofstede, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007). He found that cultural differences tended to centre around four key dimensions:

Individualism collectivism: which describes the relationships individuals have in each culture. In individualistic societies, individuals look after themselves and their immediate family only whereas in collectivistic cultures, individuals belong to groups that look after them in exchange for loyalty.

Uncertainty avoidance: refers to the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations (Hofstede, 2001). Uncertainty avoidance deals with the need for well-defined rules for prescribed behaviour.

Power distance: This dimension reflects the consequences of power inequality and authority relations in society (Hofstede, 2001). Power distance influences hierarchy and dependence relationships in the family and organizational contexts.

Masculinity femininity: Masculine values involve competition and conquering nature by means such as large construction projects, while feminine values involve harmony and environmental protection (Hofstede, 2001). Dominant values in masculine countries are achievement and success and in feminine countries are caring for others and quality of life (Hofstede, 2001).

Hofstede in his 2005 research works added a fifth (Long-term orientation); this refers to fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift. Long-term orientation represents a range of Confucian like values and was termed Confucian Dynamism. Hofstede (2007) later proposed the long-versus short-term designation as more appropriate for this dimension.

The arguments above therefore makes Culture one but an extremely important factor that influences consumer behaviour and needs to be critically examined.

Consumer behaviour in the Service Sector

The consumer behaviour concept is directly applied to this study for the process of the customers that are interested in the selection of the hotel. Marketers have to understand needs and wants of the customers, which are one of the major factors in the establishment for the effective marketing concept (Kotler, 2007). The marketers have to understand and predict the general human actions in the buying process. In consumer behaviour, the marketers should not focus only as where, how often, and what conditions the purchase is made they should be concern with other significant factors such why, how, and what people want to buy (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Hence, to understand buyer s behaviour is very important in marketing planning and programs for the sustainable marketing intelligence. Moreover, it is one of the most important keys to successful marketing in long term. Kolb (2006) clarifies that, based on consumer s level of involvement; decision-making can be a quick and easy or a lengthy and complicated process. The fact is that consumer buying and consumer decision-making are so complicated as a result of external influences that have to be handled within an internal frame of preference (Siwach & Dahiy, 2009). Consumer behaviour within the discipline of consumer science focuses on consumption behaviour where the humane aspect of decision-making and purchasing is of major importance as opposed to buyer behaviour - the domain of the marketing and business professionals who wish to understand buyer behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

For better understanding of what happens in a real situation until a consumer decides to buy a product or service scientists suggested developing models (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Walters (1978) states that consumer decision-making models specify exact cause and effect that relate to consumer behaviour (Engel et al.,1995) and went further to explain that consumer decision-making models offer many advantages including: (1) the possibility to grasp visually what happens as variables and circumstances change; (2) providing conceptual frames of reference that logically indicate the interrelationship of variables for research purposes; (3)

offering the possibility to understand different consumer decision processes and marketing strategies; (4) and finally playing an important part in the establishment of theory.

In Hospitality literature, a considerable number of researchers have studied individual tourists travel decisions as well as hotel guest behaviour patterns (Hornik & Miniero, 2009) Many of them applied traditional consumer behaviour theories such as grand models. While grand models of consumer behaviour never designed to explain service purchase decisions, they were greatly used by these scholars for explaining the process used to purchase tourism services (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Grand models in relation to this study offers a substantial conceptual and empirical supports for understanding hotel choice by potential guest and guests in general.

On the other hand, there has been a distinct lack of studies on hotel guest behaviour while it's been considered a major sector of the tourism market and of economic significance to many countries worldwide (Jeddi et al., 2013). The scope of consumer behaviour includes not only the actual buyer but also the various roles played by him and different individuals (Yoo & Chon, 2008).

The Decision making role: this includes the stages of decision making: Need recognition, Information search, Evaluation of alternatives, Purchase activity, Post purchase behaviour (Smallman & Moore, 2010).

Actual purchase role: this includes the visible physical activity of buying of goods and/or service. It is the result of the interplay of many individual and environmental determinants which are invisible.

Individual determinants and environmental influences: The environmental factors affect the decision process indirectly, through way of affecting individual determinants (Smallman & Moore, 2010)

Buying roles: Smallman & Moore (2010) states that there are five buying roles; Initiator, Influencer, Decider, User, Buyer. The initiator is the person who identifies that there exists a need or want; the influencer is the one who influences the purchase decision, the actual purchase activity and/or the use of the product or service; the decider is the one who decides whether to buy, what to buy, when to buy, from where to buy, and how to buy; the buyer is the one who makes the actual purchase; and, the user is the person (s) who use the product or service. These five roles may be played by one person or by different persons. A person may assume one or more of these roles. A marketer must therefore know these behaviour patterns in order to design marketing programs that can meet the role expectation.

Consumer behaviour in tourism

Consumer behaviour functions as a foundation for marketing enterprises. It is a crucial part of understanding why people tend to choose a certain destination and what sort of factors influences them (Lee &Wu, 2011). The decision process of buying tourism products or services such as hotels takes time, because they are mostly intangible and there are many risks involved in the buying process (Morosan & Jeong, 2008).

The decision to spend non-refundable money on hotel versus purchasing tangible products involves psychological determinants (Morosan & Jeong, 2008). The most important variables are cultural, demographics and lifestyles among others that are prestige, escape, sexual opportunity, education, social interaction, family bonding, relaxation, and self-discovery (Kotler et al. 2003) Therefore, in order to understand comprehensively customer behaviour in tourism, various models have been developed to describe and generalize consumer behaviour patterns. The models attempt to show the important role of different elements affecting the decision making process (Swarbrooke et al., 2007).

Hotel buying behaviour or in others words booking for a hotel, just like the overall buying behaviour, includes passing the five stages of decision making process; first feeling the need for hotel accommodation or travel desire, then information collection and evaluation image, decision to use hotel services, experience and satisfaction of hotel services, and finally outcome and evaluation (Gilani nia, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the mixed methodology as it research approach.

Sampling design

Purposive sampling was used to select hundred and fifty customers who patronize hotel services in Ghana for the study because it was hoped that they were in a better position to give out the needed information. According to Sarantakos (1998) in purposive sampling, the researcher purposely chooses subjects, who in his/her opinion, are thought to be relevant to the research topic. Consumers of hotel services in Ghana were sampled for this study and a sample size of 150 respondents were used. Furthermore, Yamane (1967) suggested that the formula for the random sample is when N: is the population of sample, and e^2: is the probability of error.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

The sample size for this study has been calculated with e= 5% i.e. 95% confidence level. Therefore, this research study used the survey questionnaire method to collect information from potential and consumers who have personal and direct experience as well as intension to use hotel services within the year past. The questionnaire was administered to 150 respondents. The sample comprised 60 male respondents and 90 female respondents who are consumers of hotel services in Ghana.

Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire formed the main instrument for collecting data for this study. There are many ways to providing questionnaires. As the lead researcher is currently working as a hotel manager, the sample group were his colleague hotel managers and consumers, who stay in hotels or intend to. In addition, Google website provided the new application for creation of the online questionnaires, which is called the Google spreadsheet which was also used to target other people with strong cultural beliefs like Christians, Muslims, Traditionalist and other sub-culture groups. After developing the questionnaires, it was randomly sent to the respondents through e-mail and Facebook accounts to be filled.

Research Ethics and Limitations

All participants in this study were properly briefed and the objectives and purpose of the study indicated to them. The participants were not under any compulsion to participate in the study and were at liberty to withdraw at any time in the course of the interview. The case organizations were officially notified by serving them letters before the commencement of the study. The identities of the respondents are also protected and the information provided treated with upmost confidentiality. All information that may be injurious to the company or publication of which may give competitors undue advantage were avoided.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents of the Study

The demographic profile of the respondents of the study describes the various relevant characteristics the researcher collected for the purpose of the study. The main characteristics use to describe the respondent are categorised as; gender status of the respondent, age distribution of respondent, level of education, occupation, ethnic background and income level. These categories are detail described in the table below.

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	86	61.0
Female	55	39.0
Age category		
24-29 years	37	26.2
30 - 35 years	47	33.3
36 - 41 years	32	22.7
42 - 47 years	18	12.8
48 and above	7	5.0
Level of education		
SSCE	14	9.9
A level/O level	16	11.3
Degree	78	55.3
Postgraduate	21	14.9
Others	12	8.5
Ethnic background		
Akan	48	34
Akuapem	9	6.4
Builsa	6	4.3
Dagaaba	2	1.4
Dagomaba	4	2.8
Ewe	20	14.2
Fante	11	7.8
Frafra	3	2.1
Ga	6	14.3
Gonja	7	5.0
Hausa	10	7.1
Mamprusi	2	1.4
Others	13	9.2

Table 1 above shows the demographic background of respondents. Considering gender, male respondents are 86 representing 61% and 55 females representing 39% of the sample. This means that males dominate the research sample.

With respect to the age distribution of the respondents table 1 shows that 26.2% of the total respondents fall within '24-29' years age group. Also, the table shows that forty seven 47 respondents constituting 33.3% of the entire respondents are within '30-35' years age group. This is the most significant age group of the study. Thirty-two (32) respondents representing 22.7% of total sample were within '36-41' years age group. Additionally, eighteen (18) respondents representing 12.8% were within the age group '42-47' years;   whiles the remaining 5% of the respondents were within '48 and above' group.

The data presented emphasized that persons who fall within the age group of '30-41' years forms well over 56% of people who patronise hotel services in Ghana than any other age group. This is in agreement with Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2006) that a young unmarried person usually has less financial burdens than those with family. It means people within this age group can spend on leisure. The least popular age group which patronise hotel services in Ghana falls within '48 and above' years age group.

Table 1 further shows respondents' level of education. The table indicates that 11.3% and 55.3% of the respondents hold "A level/O level" and "degree" respectively; 14.9% of the respondents have postgraduate degree; and 8.5% of persons who patronise hotel services in Ghana have other higher level of education apart from the already mentioned.

Ethnic background refers to the ancestral race that individual belongs to. The data below shows the various ethnic backgrounds of the individual persons who patronise hotel services in Ghana. Forty-eight (48) respondents which represents the majority of the respondents (34%) are Akans; 11 respondents representing 7.8% Fantes. Also, 14.2%, 7.1% and 9.2% respectively are of Ewe, Hausa and other ethnic backgrounds. The remaining 27.7% of the respondents are of Ga, Frafra, Mamprusi, Gonja, Dagaaba, Dagomba, Builsa and Akuapem. ethnic backgrounds.

Factors that influence consumer's choice of hotel services

The customers of hotels in Ghana sampled for the study were also asked about other possible factors apart from the cultural factors that can influence their choice of hotel services in the first three stages of consumer buying process. Their responses are grouped under the following headings; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives and other factors.

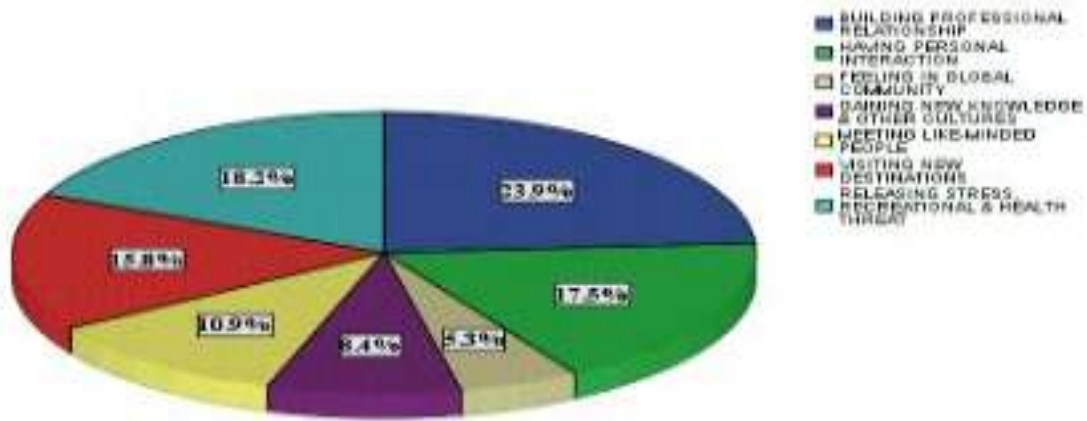Figure 1: Factors that influence consumers' choice of hotel service under needs recognition

Figure 1 shows consumers responses on factors that influence their decision as consumers in the choice of hotel services under need recognition stage of consumer buying process. 23.9% of the respondents said their choice of hotel services is influence by the fact that they want to build professional relationship. However, 18.2% and 17.5% of them said their choices are respectively influenced by recreational and health threat and having personal interaction.

Figure 2: Factors that influence consumers' choice of hotel service under personal source
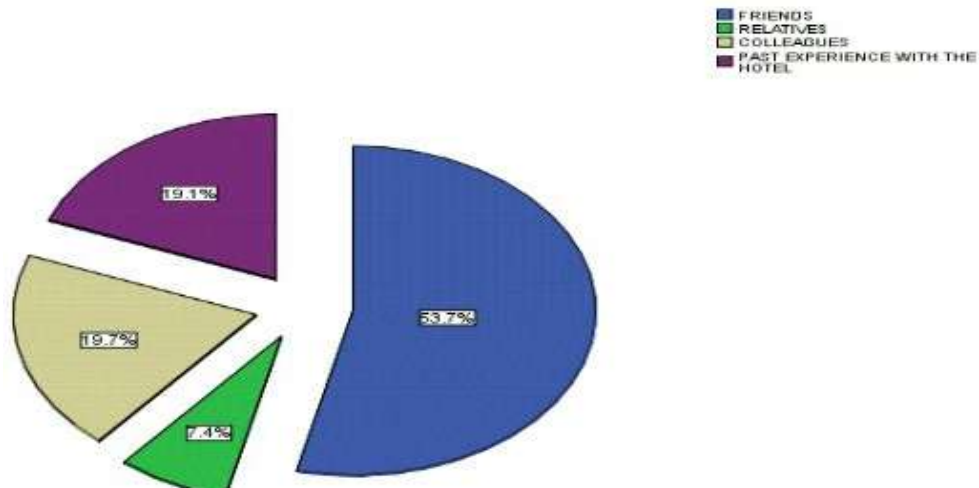

Figure 2 shows that 53.7% of the total respondents are influenced by their friends whenever they seek information about hotel services from personal sources. But, 19.1%, 7.4% and 19.7% of them said they are influenced by their past experience with the hotel, relatives and colleagues respectively. This means that the significant factor under this stage is friends.

Figure 3: Factors that influence consumers' choice of hotel service under non-personal source
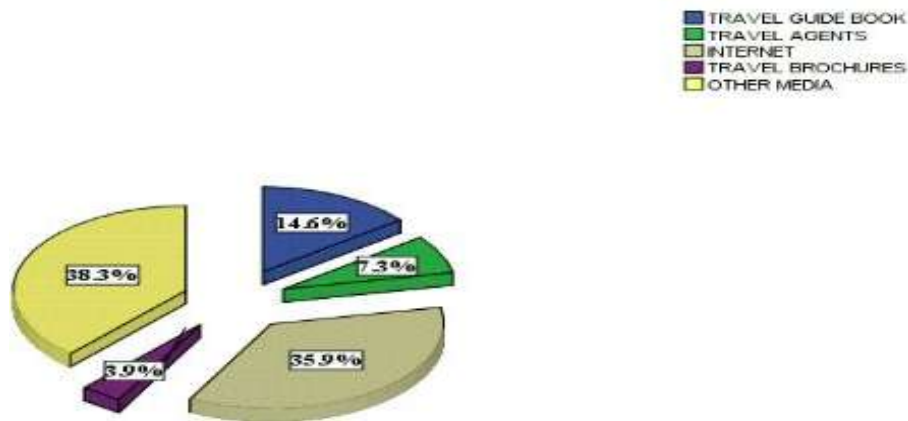
The most popular factor that influences consumers' choice of hotel services under non-personal search of information is other media. This was stated by 38.3% of the total customers sampled for the study. According to figure 35.9% of the customers, the second popular factor that influences their decision on hotel services is the internet.

Figure 4: Factors that influence consumers' choice of hotel service
under evaluation of alternatives
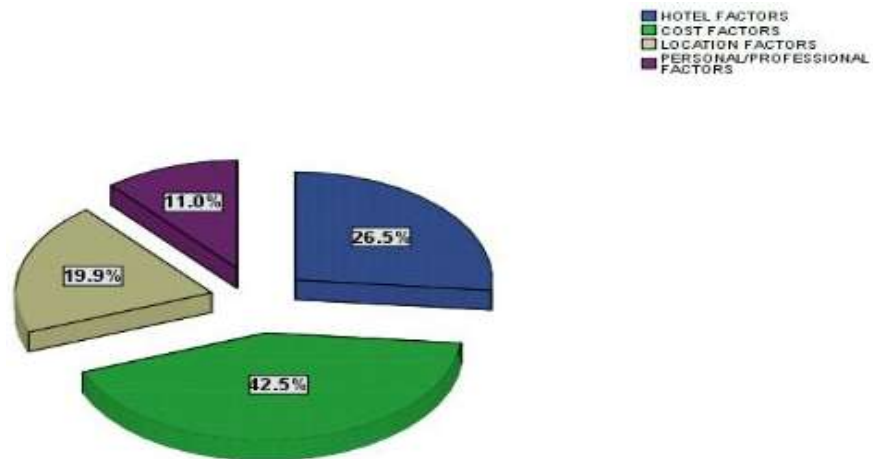
From figure 4, 42.5% of the total respondents said they are influenced by cost factors whenever they are evaluating hotel services alternatives. Nonetheless, 26.5%, 11% and 19.9% of them said they are influenced by hotel factors, professional/personal factors and location factors respectively. This means that the significant factor under this stage is cost factor.

*Figure 5: Other factors that influence consumer's choice of hotel service
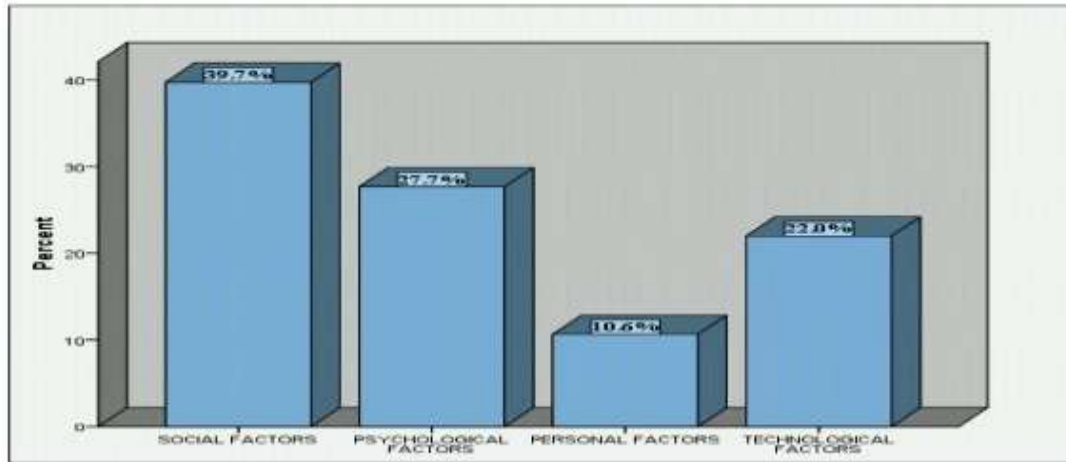apart from the cultural factors*

Figure 5 shows the responses of the hotel customers sampled for the study concerning other factors apart from cultural factors that influence their hotel selection decision. It indicates that a significant number of the respondents constituting 39.7% said social factors influence their hotel selection decision. It is also indicates that 27.7% and 10.6% of the entire respondents who to part of the study said they their hotel decisions are influence by psychological factors and personal factors respectively whiles the remaining 22% of them said they are also influence by the technological factors whenever they are making decisions about their choice of hotel.

The Role of Cultural Factors in Consumer Decision Making Process

This section deals with the cultural factors that influence hotel customers decision making process in selecting hotel services. Each respondent chose from a seven options provided on the questionnaire to select the cultural factor(s) which influence their hotel services selection decisions.

Figure 6 shows the responses of the respondents when they were asked to choose the cultural factor that influence their hotel selection process. The answer is not surprising. It indicates that a significant number of the respondents constituting 38.3% said Religion is the cultural factor that influence their decision making process in selecting hotel services in Ghana. It indicates that 19.1% and 14.2 of the entire respondents who took part in the study said their decisions are influence by cultural values and Cultural norms respectively however the remaining 28.4% of them said they are also influence by following cultural factors; customs, mores, traditional beliefs and others whenever they are selecting a particular hotel service.
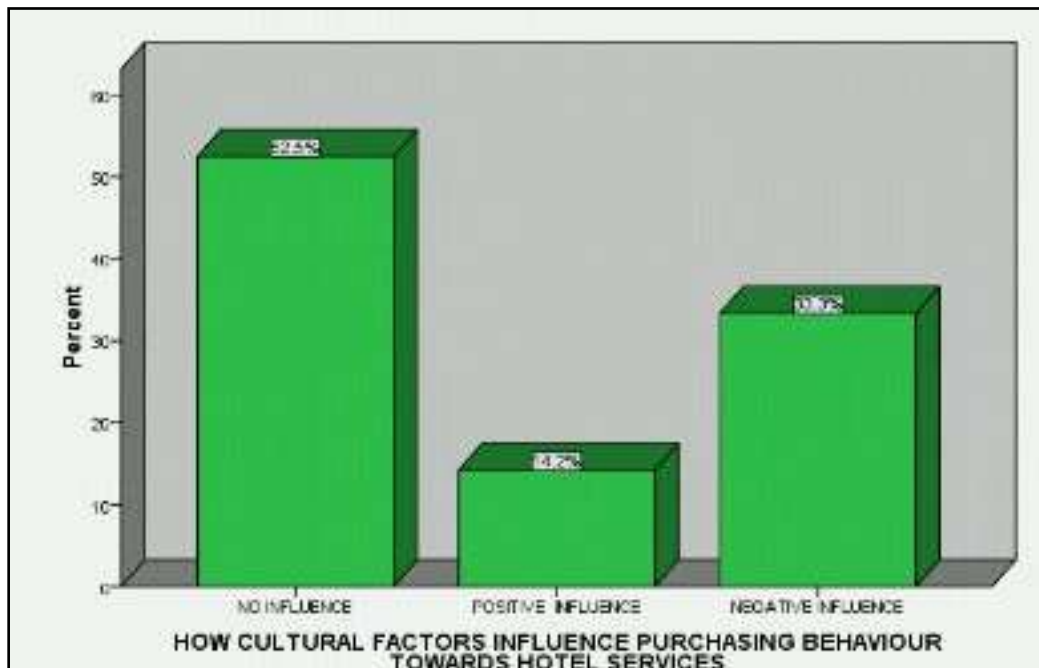
Figure 6: cultural factors that influence respondents decision making process
in selecting hotel services in Ghana.
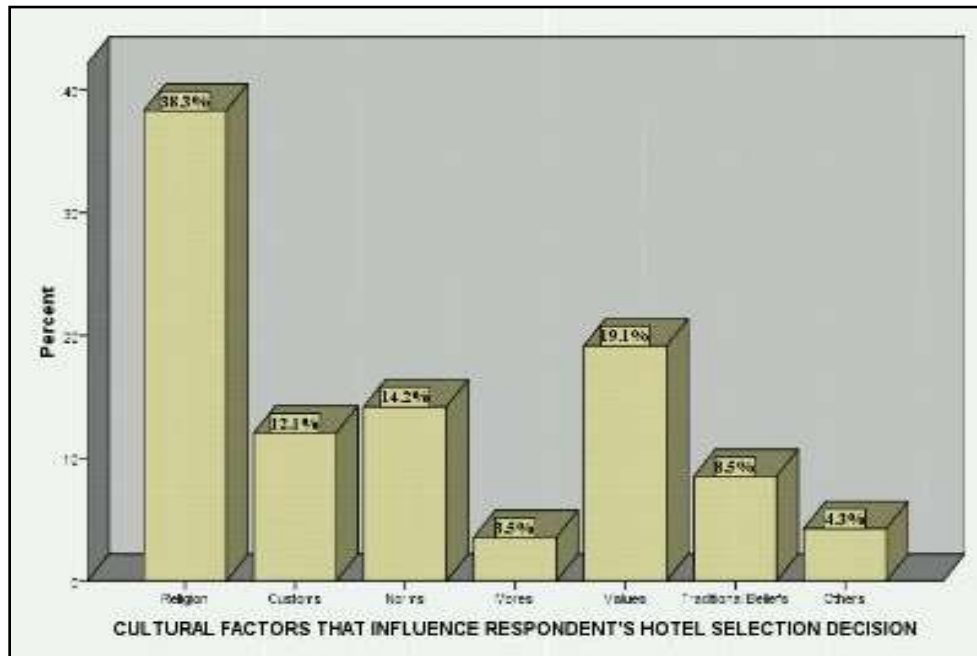
How cultural factors influence purchasing behaviour of hotel services

The sampled hotel customers sampled for the study were also quizzed to find out how cultural factors have influence their purchasing behaviour towards hotel services in Ghana.

Figure 7: How cultural factors influence purchasing behaviour towards hotel services

The figure 7 shows that a significant number of the hotel customers sampled for the study representing 52.5% indicated that cultural factors do not influence their purchasing behaviour towards hotel services.

The following are some of the comments they gave; culture has no influence on my decision. No, it has no effect on my decision to or not to use hotel services, Cultural factors has no influence on my choice of hotel, My culture factors does not influence me on the selection of hotel. No effect on my choice. The cultural factors sometimes do not influence my choice in the hotel. The cultural factor does not affect my hotel selection but the cost factor and hotel factors are my priority.

Also 14.2% of the entire respondents who took part in the study said cultural factors have influence their purchasing behaviour towards hotel services negatively. This is very significant and an area managers of hotel facilities needs to take keen interest in order to develop programs that can change or influence their stands. Some of their comments are as follows; Religion do have a negative influence on hotel services, my cultural values holds that hotels are places for womanising hence it takes a lot of efforts for me to visit one. However, the remaining 33.3% of them said yes their purchasing behaviour towards hotel services is being influence by cultural factors but rather in positive way.

Discussion of findings

Consumer buyer behaviour is defined as the buying behaviour of final consumers; individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption (Kotler & Armstrong 2010). There are four main factors that influence the behaviour of consumers as presented by Kotler (1997). These include cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors. Recent years have seen increasing interest in the consequences of culture for global marketing and advertising.

As defined by Taylor, culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society (McCort & Malhotra, 2001). The Centre for Advance Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further in defining culture as shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. Also Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961) said by culture we mean all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and non-rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men.

With regards to the consumer decision making process and its influence on consumer s purchase behaviour, the study revealed that at the need recognition stage of consumer buying process customers choice of hotel services is influence by building professional relationship (23.9%). However, 18.2% and 17.5% of the respondents said their choices are influenced by recreational and health threat and having personal interaction. This finding is supported by Stávková, Stejskal and Toufarová (2008) who found that consumers are influenced in their purchase decision by factors such as recreational, health, medicines and vitamins.

Furthermore, this study revealed that 53.7% of the sampled respondents are influenced by their friends whenever they seek information about hotel services from personal sources. But, 19.1%, 7.4% and 19.7% of respondents said they are influenced by their past experience with the hotel, relatives and colleagues respectively. This means that the most significant influencing factor under this stage is friends. This finding supports the finding of Stávková, Stejskal and Toufarová (2008) who found that factors that influence consumer behaviour in recreation are friends and relatives. Also, the most popular factor that influences consumers choice of hotel services under non-personal search of information is other media.

A significant number of hotel customers (39.7%) said social factors influence their hotel selection decision. Nonetheless, 27.7% and 10.6% of the entire respondents who took part in the study said their hotel decisions are influence by psychological factors and personal factors respectively; whiles the remaining 22% of the respondents also indicated they are also influenced by the technological factors.

With regards to the major cultural influences on customers hotel selection in Ghana, the study revealed that majority of the respondents (38.3%) stated religion as the major cultural factor influencing their decision making process in selecting hotel services in Ghana. Also, a handful of respondents (33%) indicated that the cultural factors influencing their hotel selection decisions are cultural values and cultural norms respectively as mentioned by Kotler (2001) and Getz and Brown (2006).

The study however also revealed that majority the respondents (52.5) do not think cultural factors do not influence their purchasing behaviour towards hotel services. This findings supports assertion by Kirkman and Shapiro (2001) that even though culture does influence individual outcomes, such as perceptions, the statistical significance of this relationship is very weak. On the other hand, some respondents 14.2% and 33.3% respectively said cultural factors have influence on their purchasing behaviour of hotel services in Ghana as indicated by Brown &Getz, (2006) and Kotler (2001).

CONCLUSION

This study attempt to explore how consumer decision making process is influenced by culture in patronage of hotel services in Ghana. The study's findings indicate that culture plays a strong role in the consumer hotel selection in Ghana. Thus, religion and other cultural factors shape their hotel services decisions. Aside cultural factors, other factors like cost, social, building professional relationship, location and security factors also influence customers' choice of hotel service selection and patronage in Ghana.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Due to religious influence on customers' hotel services selection, hotel operators should consider mobile upsell technology providers to help identify which services to render at the hotel to attract religiously inclined potential hotel customers.

- Hotel operators must beware of overcharging for services and items that may be perceived to be essential to attract low income earners to patronise their services.

- Hotel operators should also take a holistic approach because it is not just about in room revenues but to introduce dynamic programs that can also permit persons with strict cultural backgrounds to patronise their hotel services.

- The Ghana Tourism Authority should develop and educational programs for the public to appreciate what hotels are meant to help correct the impression held by the people regarding hotels in Ghana. Also the hotel classification process should be made known to the public the GTA to make easy as well boost the confidence level of patrons when deciding to choose a hotel. Making the standards known through these classifications will serve as the official bases for which a certain services and facilities will be expected by patrons as an informed choice is being made.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research should focus on an assessment of the impact of hotel industry on the economic growth of Ghana. Additionally, since not much research has been done in this context, future research should also delve into the contribution of the hotel industry in tourism development in Ghana.

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