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Customer selection on Airbnb or hotels: Perspective of travelers visiting amusement parks

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the selection behavior between Airbnb and hotels among travelers visiting amusement parks in the U.S., such as Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland, Universal Studios, Six Flags Great Adventure, and Hershey Park. The selection between hotels and Airbnb has always been a debatable topic, and no studies have ever specifically discussed the selection of customers that visit amusement parks, and how the amusement park visiting could affect customers' choices. This study aims to identify the key factors influencing customer selection behavior when choosing between Airbnb and hotels as their accommodation. Specifically, the present study aims to examine the effects of price, location, servicescapes of the accommodation toward the choice of guests. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights to lodging service providers in the hotel and amusement park industry. By understanding the factors that influence customer selection behavior, lodging service providers can develop more effective marketing strategies and tailor their offerings to better meet the needs of their customers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The hospitality industry is a significant contributor to the global economy (Thommandru, Espinoza-Maguiña, Ramirez-Asis, Ray, Naved & Guzman-Avalos, 2021), with lodging services, such as hotels and short-term rental platforms (e.g., Airbnb) playing a crucial role in accommodating travelers (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017). Airbnb has disrupted the traditional lodging industry by offering travelers a unique alternative to hotels, with more affordable prices and a personalized experience. According to a report by Statista, the global market size of Airbnb was estimated to be around 120 billion U.S. dollars in 2019 and was expected to reach 158.4 billion U.S. dollars by 2021 (Statista, 2021). The lodging industry has undergone significant changes with the advent of sharing economy platforms such as Airbnb, forcing traditional hotels to adapt to new competition and consumer preferences.

Since the appearance of Airbnb in 2007, the selection and dilemma of guests choosing between traditional hotels or Airbnb has been an ongoing issue and a debatable topic (Guttentag, 2015). While hotels remain a major player in the lodging industry, Airbnb has gained popularity and attracted many guests to stay in an Airbnb rather than a hotel. It is important to recognize the hotel attributes that influence hotel choice and the features that are perceived as being important by guests to help hoteliers make optimal decisions for hotel development and pricing strategy (Masiero, Heo, & Pan, 2015).

Previous research has identified several factors that influence lodging selection behavior, including the reputation of the hotel, online reviews, location, price, amenities, and brand reputation. El-Said (2020) found that the location and price of hotels were some important factors for customers when selecting a hotel, while Liang and Schuckert (2018) found that the

reputation of the hotel and online reviews were also important factors. Kandampully, Zhang, Bilgihan, and Zhang (2015) found that service quality, brand reputation, and value for money were other important factors influencing hotel selection behavior among travelers. In contrast, research on Airbnb has focused on the unique characteristics of this peer-to-peer platform and how it has disrupted the traditional lodging industry. Guttentag (2015) discovered that the social connections and interactions facilitated by Airbnb can enhance the overall travel experience for guests. Zervas, Proserpio, and Byers (2017) found that Airbnb properties are often located in non-traditional tourist areas, which can provide travelers with a more authentic experience. Younger travelers and those on a budget were more likely to prefer P2P accommodations such as Airbnb, while older travelers and those who were willing to spend more money were more likely to prefer hotels (Young, Corsun, & Xie, 2017). Young, Corsun and Xie's study also found that safety and security were important factors for both types of accommodations, but that P2P guests were more concerned about privacy and hotels guests were more concerned about the quality of service.

While there is a growing body of research on customer selection behavior in the lodging industry, there is a lack of research specifically focused on travelers visiting amusement parks. Understanding how travelers select lodging options when visiting amusement parks is an essential and important area of study in the hospitality industry because it helps hotels tailor their marketing strategies to attract this specific market. By understanding the unique needs and preferences of amusement park visitors, hotels can better cater to their needs and offer packages that include park tickets or shuttle services. Hu and Ritchie (1993) highlighted the significance of amusement parks as an important industry and tourism attraction in the U.S., particularly for families with children (Formica & Olsen, 1998). Amusement park visitors have different lodging

preferences compared to normal travelers and they prefer hotels that are in close proximity to the park, offer shuttle services, and have affordable rates (Yang, Mao, & Tang, 2017). Another important difference between normal travelers and amusement park visitors is the length of stay. According to a study by Zhang, Liang, and Bao (2021), amusement park visitors tend to stay longer and spend more money than normal travelers. This presents an opportunity for hotels to offer packages that cater to longer stays, such as discounted rates for extended stays or packages that include park tickets for multiple days. As amusement parks are a major tourism attraction, it is important for the lodging industry to understand the factors that influence customer selection behavior in the amusement park industry.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Amusement Parks Benefiting Hotel Industry

Formica and Olsen (1998) indicated that amusement parks are a profitable business, and they represent a new concept among the most common tourist attractions, like cultural and heritage tourism and sun-sea-sand vacations. Amusement parks type of tourist attraction typically emphasizes major theme which man-made, natural, and human resources are coordinated in order to offer a unique visitation experience. In recent amusement parks and attractions, hotels, restaurants and other recreation, tourist facilities, theming is reflected through architecture, landscaping, costumed personnel, rides, shows, food services, merchandising, and any other services that impact the guest experience (Milman, Okumus, & Dickson, 2010).

The presence of amusement parks has a significant impact on the hotel industry, as tourists often choose to stay in hotels close to the parks (Wei, Zheng, Zhang, & Line, 2022). Hotels located in close proximity to amusement parks have higher occupancy rates, higher revenue per available room (RevPAR), higher average daily rate (ADR), and higher revenues compared to hotels located further away from the parks. The research further explains that amusement parks create a demand for hotel rooms, as tourists are more likely to extend their stay in the area to fully experience the attractions. Khoo-Lattimore, Prayag, and Cheah (2015) even suggested that hotels can offer packages that include tickets to the amusement park, collaborate with the amusement park to offer joint promotions, and offer special amenities that cater to families with children. As a result, hotels that are able to provide a convenient and enjoyable experience for amusement park-goers are likely to see an increase in business.

Customer Selection Behavior in Lodging Industry

Liu and Zhang (2014) investigated the factors that influence customer selection behavior in the lodging industry. The study found that customer selection behavior is influenced by a range of factors, including hotel reputation, hotel facilities, information quality, website quality, perceived price, brand and trust, and online review. Customer selection behavior differs across different segments of customers, such as business travelers, leisure travelers, and budget travelers. For business travelers, the most important factors were location, room quality, and hotel facilities, while for leisure travelers, the most important factors were room quality, hotel facilities, and price or value (Chu & Choi, 2000).

Previous research has found that Airbnb accommodations are typically less expensive than traditional hotels, which can be a major draw for budget-conscious travelers. According to Wang and Nicolau (2017), the price of Airbnb accommodations is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction. The study found that customers who perceived the price of Airbnb accommodations as fair were more likely to be satisfied with their stay. Hotel guests consider several factors when selecting a hotel, other than location and price, including amenities and reputation (Baaruca & Civre, 2012). Guests can be segmented based on their hotel selection criteria, with different segments having unique characteristics and preferences. For instance, the study identified four segments: convenience seekers, who prioritize location and accessibility; price sensitive travelers, who prioritize cost and value for money; amenities seekers, who prioritize hotel amenities and services; and reputation seekers, who prioritize hotel brand and reputation. Hotel managers can use the information on guest segments and their hotel selection criteria to tailor their marketing efforts and offerings to meet the needs of different segments (Victorino, Karniouchina, & Verma, 2009).

Online reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations play a significant role in customer selection behavior in the lodging industry and online reviews are more influential than reputation ratings when it comes to customer selection behavior (Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). Hotels can improve their online reputation by actively managing their online presence and responding to customer reviews (Liu & Zhang, 2014).

Hotel room comfortableness and facilities

Radojevic, Stanasic, and Stanic (2015) did research using a linear mixed model technique to find out the hotel characteristics associated with guests' satisfaction. Not only it is important for hotels to have high star rating, but guests also consider different hotel facilities like the presence of air-conditioning devices in rooms, a bar located within the hotel area, access to Wi-Fi, Internet free of charge, membership in a branded hotel chain, and room cleanliness. Lockyer (2005) summarized some research projects that considered the important attributes when selecting a hotel accommodation. It also conducted two survey which summarized the different factors for guests when choosing a hotel, like cleanliness of hotel, which they ranked as the most important factor and effective room locking systems as the second, safety and security of hotel and surrounding area, and efficiency of front desk as third.

Other attributes affecting guests' choice include room views, hotel floor, club access, free mini-bar items, smartphone service, cancellation policy, surrounding environment, interior design, signage, on-premises parking, free parking, comfortable mattress and pillows, access to computer/modem, entertainment lounges, fitness center/exercise faculties, availability of in-room coffee maker, alarm clock and hair dryer, laundry services and ironing etc. (Azmi, Ariffin,

Nejad, Noor & Zakaria, 2013; Masiero et al., 2015; Usta, Berezina & Cobanoglu, 2011; Yavas & Babakus, 2005). Based on TripAdvisor criteria, Zaman, Botti, and Vo Thanh (2016) also concluded bed quality, comfort & equipment and cleanliness are the top important attributes for guests to rate and choose a hotel. Additionally, geographically, cleanliness of the hotel room is relatively important to couples from North America and Oceania. Room quality is significant for business travelers from Europe and couples from North America and Oceania (Li, Law, Vu , & Rong, 2013).

Hotel service quality

“People factor” like service quality is significant in determining overall guests’ satisfaction and in securing business in the hospitality industries (Ganesh, Arnold, & Reynolds, 2000). Choi and Chu (2001) used a factor analysis technique and identified seven hotel attributes that are likely to influence guests’ choices and satisfaction towards hotels, which ‘Staff Service Quality’ stands out which guests would consider staff are politeness and friendliness, helpfulness, ability to understand and provide efficient service, efficiency front desk for check-in/check-out, staffs’ multi-lingual skills and even staffs’ neat appearance. Japanese guests particularly value the availability of Japanese-speaking staff and written information in Japanese (Lee & Zhao, 2003). On TripAdvisor, the world’s largest online travel platform, where people could write reviews after their stays, the word ‘Service’ is frequently mentioned in the hotel reviews, appearing times is just right below the word hotel and room, ranked in number three. (Panchapakesan & Jiseon, 2020). This showed that guests value guest service and hospitableness when it’s related to hotel and it affects guest satisfaction (Azmi et al., 2013). Li, Law, Vu and

Rong (2013) found out that service is the focus of businesspeople from Asia, Europe, and North America and families from Oceania.

Airbnb location and access

Location is another important factor that influences customer selection behavior in the lodging industry. Birinci, Berezina, and Cobanoglu (2018) found that a correct and clear location of Airbnb accommodations was a significant predictor of customer satisfaction. Customers who perceived the location of Airbnb accommodations as convenient were more likely to be satisfied with their stay. Sutherland and Kiatkawsin (2020) did research and they focused on the location of Airbnb as one of the factors affecting guests' satisfaction and choice. Guests are aware of the spatial relationship between the unit, its location characteristics, the surrounding neighborhood, the distance to different tourism resources or access to specific areas-of-interest from the property, which includes view from unit, trendiness of neighborhood, directions to unit, navigation information, accessibility to points-of-interest, proximity to subway stations, bars and restaurants, local eateries, and parks. Chica-Olmo, González-Morales, and Zafra-Gómez (2020) discussed the significance while guests choosing Airbnb that they would consider the accessibility to the city center of the Airbnb, the beach and places of interest, the walkability, the noise and the ethnic groups of the area. Additionally, leisure customers prefer to choose a convenient location, which they want easy access to a shopping mall and tourist attractions are their primary considerations for booking (Lu & Tabari, 2019). Deboosere, Kerrigan, Wachsmuth, and El-Geneidy (2019) demonstrates that locational factors, especially transit accessibility to jobs and neighborhood variation have large impact on both price per night and

monthly revenue for Airbnb. Airbnb shared house or room units can actually leverage their proximity to high-end hotels if they are located in areas that satisfy the guests' needs (Yang & Mao, 2020). These proved the importance of location-specific characteristics of Airbnb.

Airbnb guests' relationship with host and trust towards the host

Online trust refers to costumers' confidence in the ability of the seller to deliver a product or service as promised, and the seller's willingness to resolve the purchase if the customer's expectations couldn't match. If Airbnb guests feel that they have close relationships with their hosts, compared to guests with no or less interactions, they become more satisfied with their overall Airbnb experience (Kim, Yoon, & Zo, 2015). Findings suggested that guests seek gender congruity with the Airbnb hosts and the tendency is especially salient for female consumers. The finding indicates trust issues is more significant for females than males in the context of Airbnb (Su & Mattila, 2020). Guests value their relationship with the hosts, and they wish to develop a better and trustworthy relationship with the hosts. Their relationship with the host and their trust towards the host affect their decision making in booking an Airbnb. Since guests can only book an Airbnb through the app without being able to visit and see the room in-person first, the entire Airbnb system is based on trust. Guests can only look through some photos taken by the hosts and read comments from the previous guests; thus, trust mediated the relationship between the transaction-based satisfaction and repurchase intention. Liang, Choi, and Joppe (2018) identified an important factor, which is the electronic word-of-mouth, and the reputation of the hosts and the trust towards the hosts are vital for guests' decision. Guests need the assurance and enough understanding from the hosts (Sutherland & Kiatkawsin, 2020). Guests want the hosts to be

helpful, welcoming, friendly, has guests' best interests at heart, and make guests feel like they are at home so that they can give the hosts their trust (Ju, Back, Choi, & Lee, 2019; Li, Hudson & So, 2019).

According to Chen and Chang (2018), consumer perception of Airbnb's online reviews depends on the quality, the content of individual reviews, and quantity, the overall number of reviews. Guest ratings on Airbnb will positively impact the purchase intention of other potential guests. Before booking, guests can use the Airbnb's private messaging function to communicate with the hosts. Once the booking is confirmed, the Airbnb app shares the host's phone number and private email with the guest. According to the consumer purchasing model in the research, information gathering is the key factor affecting purchase intention and good information quality will positively impact consumer satisfaction and resulting higher booking (Wang & Jeong, 2018; Li et al., 2019). In the case of paid peer-to-peer accommodation there is a higher trust between guests and hosts. Travelers who choose a paid peer-to-peer service seek for meaningful physical and social interactions with locals or the hosts (Bresciani, Ferraris, Santoro, Premazzi, Quaglia, Yahiaoui, & Viglia, 2021).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

The sample for this survey included 103 U.S. residents. The survey was distributed through the *Prolific* platform. Table 1 provides the sample profile of all 103 participants. The number of male and female participants are similar, 48.5% of the participants were female and the average age of the respondents was 34.4 years old ($SD = 11.6$), and Caucasian were the predominant (70.9%). Approximately 37.9% were Married and 52.4% were Never married. 58.3% said they did not have children, 13.6% said they have one child, and 24.3% said they have two to four children. 68.9% were employed, and 15.5% were Students. For annual income, 45.6% earn less than \$40,000 and 13.6% earn \$100,000 or higher. 98.1%, 101 out of 103 participants, said that they have been to theme parks in the U.S. before. For the imaginative question that asked participants to imagine if they are going on a trip to any theme parks with friends and family, would they rather choose to stay in Hotel or Airbnb, 72 (69.9%) chose hotel and 31 (30.1%) chose Airbnb.

Table 1. Sample Profile

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	50	48.5
Female	53	51.5
<u>Age</u>		
Younger than 20 years	3	2.9

20 to 29 years	37	35.9
30 to 39 years	35	34
40 to 49 years	18	17.5
50 to 59 years	6	5.8
Older than 60 years	4	3.9
<u>Ethnicity/Race</u>		
Asian or Asian American	15	14.6
Black or African American	8	7.8
Hispanic or Latino	7	6.8
White	73	70.9
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Married	39	37.9
Widowed	1	1
Divorced	9	8.8
Never married	54	52.4
<u>Number of children</u>		
None	60	58.3
1	14	13.6
2-4	25	24.3
More than 4	2	1.9
Prefer Not To Answer	2	1.9
<u>Employment Status</u>		
Employed full-time	53	51.5
Employed part-time	18	17.5
Unemployed	13	12.6
Student	16	15.5
Retired	3	2.9

<u>Annual Income</u>		
Less than \$40,000	47	45.6
\$40,000 - \$59,999	16	15.5
\$60,000 - \$79,999	17	16.5
\$80,000 - \$99,999	9	8.7
\$100,000 - \$149,999	9	8.7
More than \$150,000	5	4.9
<u>Have you visited any theme parks in the US before?</u>		
Yes	101	98.1
No	2	1.9
<u>Imagine going on a trip to theme parks, will you choose Hotel or Airbnb?</u>		
Hotel	72	69.9
Airbnb	31	30.1

Measures and Attributes

The participants were asked to consider the importance of 11 different attributes while they were choosing their accommodation. Participants rated the extent to which they prefer the attributes using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. The full survey is presented in the Appendix.

Price of the Accommodation. Price can be suggesting the performance of the accommodation, therefore, it can affect customers' satisfaction regarding the accommodation (Bojanic, 1996; Mattila & O'Neill, 2003). Lockyer (2005) researched specifically on the impact

of price in accommodation selection and concluded price factor affects the decisions of guests while trigger points like location, facilities, and staff service would influence it.

Location of the Accommodation. Guests perceived locations as more attractive and desirable when their accommodations are located in central and scenic areas, such as near beaches, historical sites, and shopping centers. (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Hall and Page (2014) have discerned location as a favorable attribute of hotels, and Chaves, Gomes, and Pedron (2012) established that location is frequently used to qualify customer satisfaction regarding accommodation selection.

Speed of Service. Processing speed of service is defined as “the promptness of processing and interactive responsiveness to a consumer's requests” (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Guests are more satisfied and loyal when hotel employees provided prompt and efficient service, including fast check-in, quick response to requests, and timely room cleaning. Hotel employee responsiveness had a greater impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty than hotel facilities and service quality (Chen & Chen, 2010). Lockyer (2005) ranked speed of service as highly important and influencing in accommodation selection.

Friendliness of Staff and Helpfulness of Staff. Torres and Kline (2013) discussed about guests paying attention to exceptional staff friendliness, professionalism of staff, their ability to take care of guests’ needs, and employees performing beyond the call of duty when staying at their accommodation. Employees friendliness and helpfulness are important service attributes that influence consumers’ satisfaction. (Dolnicar & Otter, 2003)

Atmospheric Factors and Design Factors. Factors like temperature, scent, music, and lighting, etc. are considered as servicescape and atmospheric factors; Architecture, style, space, layout, material, etc. are considered as design factors of the accommodation. Ahmad, Ehsaneh,

and Noor (2013) stated atmosphere created by servicescape are crucial in creating a memorable experience for guests and the attractiveness of the atmosphere from service setting is one of the most fundamental aspects in improving customer satisfaction (Torres & Kline, 2013).

Essential Amenities and Extra Amenities. Accommodations' amenities play an important role in determining the overall value perceived by guests and physical-property management like high quality of guest-room design and amenities could improve guest loyalty towards the accommodation brands (Dubé & Renaghan, 1999). Amenities have become value-creating elements of hotel's product and they are used as tactics in marketing strategies designed to attract guests (Kucukusta, 2017). On the other hand, Birinci et al. (2018) found that the amenities provided by Airbnb accommodations were significant predictors of customer satisfaction. Customers who perceived the amenities provided by Airbnb accommodations as satisfactory were more likely to be satisfied with their stay.

Brands. A strong and positive brand image will make guests develop a sense of "knowing what will happen" and remind them of positive previous experience with the hotel. Guests indicate strong reliance on an accommodation's brand name and reputation when making a purchase decision. When the service manner hotels provide are corresponding with the hotel's brand image and reputation, it creates significant customer value (Dubé & Renaghan, 1999).

Personal Interactions with Employees or Host. Guests' interaction with employees was frequently mentioned as an essential part of the accommodation experience (Lutz & Newlands, 2018). Guests' satisfactions are generated in the interaction between employees and guests, and therefore, accommodation providers should actively encourage behavioral interaction between employees and guests, and strengthen interaction points (Huang & Xie, 2017).

Chapter 4

Results and Data Analysis

Means and Stand Deviation

Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations of all 11 attributes, dividing them into Hotel and Airbnb for descriptive statistics. For participants that chose a hotel in the question of “Imagine going on a trip to theme parks, will you choose Hotel or Airbnb?”, the top 3 most important attributes chosen by the participants are: Price of accommodation (mean = 6.31, SD = .80), Location of accommodation (mean = 6.22, SD = .70), and Essential amenities (mean = 5.81, SD = 1.06); For participants that chose Airbnb in the imaginative question, the top 3 most important attributes chosen from the participants are also: Price of accommodation (mean = 6.32, SD = .70), Location of accommodation (mean = 6.10, SD = .87), and Essential amenities (mean = 5.45, SD = 1.23).

Comparing the descriptive statistics for hotel and Airbnb selections, we can observe the following:

Price of Accommodation: Both hotel and Airbnb selections have similar means, with Airbnb being .01 higher (Hotel mean = 6.31 ; Airbnb mean = 6.32).

Location of Accommodation: Hotel selection has a .12 higher mean score for location than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 6.22 ; Airbnb mean = 6.10).

Speed of Service: Hotel selection has a .45 higher mean score for speed of service than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 4.90 ; Airbnb mean = 4.45).

Friendliness of Staff: Hotel selection has a .65 higher mean score for friendliness of staff than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 5.42 ; Airbnb mean = 4.77).

Helpfulness of Staff: Hotel selection has a .39 higher mean score for helpfulness of staff than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 5.42 ; Airbnb mean = 5.03).

Atmospheric Factors: Hotel selection has a .25 higher mean score for atmospheric factors than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 5.57 ; Airbnb mean = 5.32).

Design Factors: Hotel selection has a .26 higher mean score for design factors than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 4.74 ; Airbnb mean = 4.48).

Essential Amenities: Hotel selection has a .36 higher mean score for essential amenities than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 5.81 ; Airbnb mean = 5.45).

Extra Amenities: Both hotel and Airbnb selections have similar mean scores for extra amenities, with Airbnb being 0.5 higher (Hotel mean = 4.92 ; Airbnb mean = 4.97).

Brands Familiarity: Hotel selection has a .73 higher mean score for brands familiarity than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 4.31 ; Airbnb mean = 3.58)

Personal Interaction with the Employees or Host: Hotel selection has a .49 higher mean score for personal interaction with employees or host than Airbnb (Hotel mean = 4.10 ; Airbnb mean = 3.61)

Overall, comparing the means regarding choosing hotel or Airbnb, it appears that hotel selection outperforms Airbnb in terms of location of accommodation, speed of service, friendliness and helpfulness of staff, atmospheric and design factors, essential amenities, brands familiarity, and personal interaction with employees or host. However, Airbnb performs slightly better in terms of price of accommodation and extra amenities. For score distribution, hotel selection has a more varied score distribution for price of accommodation, design factors and extra amenities. While Airbnb selection has a more varied score distribution for location of accommodation, speed of service, friendliness and helpfulness of staff, atmospheric factors,

essential amenities, brands familiarity, and personal interaction with the employees or host, compared to hotel selection.

Table 2. Means and Std. Deviation

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Hotel</i>		<i>Airbnb</i>	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Price of accommodation	6.31	.80	6.32	.70
Location of accommodation	6.22	.70	6.10	.87
Speed of service	4.90	1.02	4.45	1.36
Friendliness of staff	5.42	.97	4.77	1.45
Helpfulness of staff	5.42	.90	5.03	1.49
Atmospheric factors	5.57	1.02	5.32	1.11
Design factors	4.74	1.21	4.48	1.12
Essential amenities	5.81	1.06	5.45	1.23
Extra amenities	4.92	1.23	4.97	1.11
Brands familiarity	4.31	1.59	3.58	1.61
Personal interaction with the employees or host	4.10	1.28	3.61	1.54

Logistic Regression

A logistic regression analysis for each attribute was conducted to detect how participants choose to stay in hotel or Airbnb while considering different attributes. Table 3 provides the logistic regression analysis regarding all 11 attributes.

From the analysis, considering the coefficient, we can conclude that when sample consider the attributes of price of accommodation, location of accommodation, speed of service, friendliness of staff, atmospheric factors, design factors of the accommodation, essential amenities, brands familiarity, and personal interaction with the employees or host, when

choosing their accommodation, are more important, they tend to choose to stay in hotels. While participants who consider the attributes of helpfulness of staff, and extra amenities when choosing their accommodation are more important, they tend to choose to stay in Airbnb.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Analysis

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Coefficient (B)</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>p-value (Sig.)</i>
Price of accommodation	.000	.000	1.000
Location of accommodation	-.111	.102	.749
Speed of service	-.180	.411	.521
Friendliness of staff	-.407	.807	.369
Helpfulness of staff	.394	.744	.388
Atmospheric factors	-.055	.047	.828
Design factors	-.037	.029	.864
Essential amenities	-.210	.705	.401
Extra amenities	.345	2.131	.144
Brands familiarity	-.267	2.502	.114
Personal interaction with the employees or host	-.039	.031	.860

Chapter 5

Discussion

Conclusion and Implications

This study discussed the following attributes, based on previous research, including price and location of accommodation, speed of service, friendliness and helpfulness of staff, atmospheric and design factors, essential and extra amenities, brands familiarity, and personal interaction with the employees or host, that influence customer selection between hotel and Airbnb, from the perspective of travelers visiting amusement parks. Participants who consider price and location of accommodation, speed of service, friendliness of staff, atmospheric and design factors, essential amenities, brands familiarity, and personal interaction with the employees or host as more critical attributes tended to choose hotels as their accommodation. Participants who consider the helpfulness of staff and extra amenities as more critical attributes tended to choose Airbnb as their accommodation. The results of the present study show that if hoteliers want to attract guests that prefer Airbnb back to hotel, they need to train staff so that they can provide exceptional service and make more extra amenities available to guests.

Hotel managers can provide customer service training to their staff to ensure that they are knowledgeable, responsive, and helpful in addressing guests' needs and concerns. This can include training in communication skills, problem-solving, customer service, and conflict resolution. By providing staff with the tools and skills necessary to interact positively with guests, hotels can create a more welcoming and positive environment. Improving staff friendliness is vital for hotels because it can have a significant and positive impact on the overall guest experience, guests' emotions, perceived value, and behavioral intention (Shi, Bao, Ma, &

Wei, 2020). Staff friendliness positively influences guests' emotions, such as happiness, satisfaction, and enjoyment. Guests who experience friendly staff are more likely to perceive the value of their stay as higher, including the quality of the hotel's services and amenities, and they are more likely to exhibit positive behavioral intentions, such as returning to the hotel, recommending the hotel to others, and leaving positive reviews (Choi & Chu, 2001). The friendly staff can create a welcoming and comfortable environment, which can lead to increased guest satisfaction and loyalty. When guests feel welcomed and valued, they are more likely to return to the hotel and recommend it to others. Furthermore, friendly staff can also help to create positive word-of-mouth marketing for the hotel (Hartline & Jones, 1996). Guests who have positive interactions with staff members are likely to share their experiences with others, either through online reviews or word-of-mouth recommendations to family and friends. This can help to attract new customers and build a positive reputation for the hotel brand.

Hotel should also offer more extra amenities to guests since offering extra amenities can have a positive effect on guest satisfaction and loyalty, and it indirectly influence guest loyalty through their impact on guest satisfaction (Cobanoglu, Berezina, Kasavana, & Erdem, 2011). They can provide additional amenities such as free breakfast, free Wi-Fi, a fitness center, a swimming pool, or shuttle service to nearby attractions. Offering extra amenities can make guests' stay more enjoyable and convenient, which can lead to increased guest satisfaction and loyalty. For example, providing free Wi-Fi can help guests stay connected and productive during their stay, while a fitness center or swimming pool can provide guests with the opportunity to maintain their fitness routine while traveling. A complimentary breakfast can also save guests money and time, making their stay more convenient and cost-effective. By providing customized and personalized amenities, hotels can increase their appeal to customers who value these

features and differentiate themselves from competitors, creating competitive advantage (Kimes, 2013). By offering extra amenities, hotels can also increase their perceived value to guests. For example, a hotel that offers a complimentary breakfast and fitness center may be seen as a better value than an Airbnb that are not capable of providing these amenities. This can make the hotel more attractive to budget-conscious travelers that might have originally chosen to stay at an Airbnb, or those seeking added convenience and value. Lee, Lee, and Koh (2019) examines the impact of multisensory experiences on hotel guest experience and found that multisensory experiences, such as pleasant scents, relaxing music, and tasteful food, had a positive impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty.

Additionally, hotels can offer personalized experiences for guests to create a memorable stay. This can include offering personalized recommendations for local restaurants or attractions, providing welcome gifts or complimentary drinks, or offering a personalized check-in experience, which counted as extra amenities that brings value to guests. Since online reviews and ratings are becoming increasingly important in the hospitality industry as more consumers turn to online platforms to research and book their travel accommodations (Xiang, Du, Ma, & Fan, 2017), positive reviews and ratings from previous guests are a powerful marketing tool for hotels (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). Hoteliers can then use positive reviews and ratings from previous guests to promote their hotel's helpful staff and extra amenities. This can be done through the hotel's website, social media channels, or online travel agencies. This can help build trust and credibility with potential guests and increase their likelihood of booking a stay at the hotel. Additionally, hotels can also encourage guests to leave reviews and ratings by providing incentives such as discounts on future stays or free amenities. This can help generate more positive reviews and ratings and further promote the hotel's helpful staff and extra amenities.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this research is that the participants are based on only 103 U.S. residents, and the data were collected through a self-reported survey, which may be subject to response bias. The study may suffer from low statistical power due to an insufficient sample size, which could compromise the ability to draw a definitive conclusion or yield statistically significant results. Another limitation of the study is that participants were presented with a hypothetical scenario at the outset of the survey, which may not reflect real-life situations. As a result, participants' responses may have been influenced by their imagination, and their actual choices in real-life situations may differ from those reported in the survey.

Another potential constraint is that the p-value resulted from the logistic regression analysis for all 11 attributes are higher than 0.05, and the elevated p-values suggest that the available evidence is insufficient to support the existence of an effect in the population. While it is conceivable that an effect does indeed exist, it is plausible that the effect size may be too minuscule, the sample size may be inadequate, or the hypothesis test may be unable to detect it due to excessive variability. Also, the attributes are in a correlational relationship rather than causal relationship with the guests' selection regarding hotels and Airbnb, therefore, there could be other unknown factors that might influence their decisions, or even each attribute might affect each other regarding the decisions of accommodations of guests, which causing the result of the analysis not as convincing.

Additionally, the study only focused on travelers visiting amusement parks, and thus the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts.

Future Research

Future research could expand on this study by investigating the factors that influence amusement park travelers' selection in other contexts, such as guests who are located in other countries other than the U.S., group size, age, employment status, and ethnic backgrounds. The operations and offerings of amusement parks vary significantly across the world, which may impact nearby accommodation business decisions. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the effects of different amusement parks on lodging options comprehensively. Additionally, researchers should conduct an in-depth analysis of the distinguishing attributes of hotel and Airbnb accommodations. Considering macrofactors such as the COVID-19 pandemic could also shed light on the impact on customer preferences when choosing between hotels and Airbnb accommodations.

APPENDIX

Survey Questions

Q1. Have you visited any theme parks in the US before?

- Yes
- No

Q2. If you have been to any theme parks or are planning on going, what was/will be the group size on the trip?

Q3. Imagine you and your family or friends are going on a trip where you will be visiting theme parks like Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland, Universal Studios, Six Flags Great Adventure, Hersheypark, etc. Would you rather choose to stay in a Hotel or Airbnb?

- Hotel
- Airbnb

Q4. How important to you are the following aspects when you are choosing your accommodation?

Rating from 1 to 7, 1 means strongly disagree, 7 means strongly agree

- Price of the accommodation
- Location of the accommodation
- Speed of Service
- Friendliness of Staff
- Helpfulness of Staff
- Atmospheric factors (e.g., temperature, scent, music, and lighting)
- Design factors (e.g., architecture, style, and layout)
- Essential Amenities (e.g., toiletry, soap, hairdryer, linens, towels, pillows, Wi-Fi)

- Extra Amenities (e.g., pool, jacuzzi, kitchen, free parking, washer, dryer, pet-friendly area)
- Brands (Preferring more known brands like Marriott, Hilton, IHG, Wyndham, and Hyatt)
- Personal Interactions with the employees or host

Q5. What is your age?

Q6. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender

Q7. What is your ethnicity/race?

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Q8. What is your marital status?

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated

- Never married

Q9. How many children do you have?

- None
- 1
- 2-4
- More than 4
- Prefer Not To Answer

Q.10 What is your employment status?

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployment
- Student
- Retired

Q11. What is your annual income?

- Less than \$40,000
- \$40,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- More than \$150,000

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LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

- President of Hong Kong Student Association August 2020 – May 2023
- Committee member in International Student Council December 2021– May 2023
- THON 2023 Dancer Relations committee member December 2022 – February 2023
- President of Chinese Culture Club August 2019 – May 2020
- Intercultural Mentor August 2019 – May 2020
- Math Teaching Assistant August 2019 – May 2020
- Orientation Leader August 2019 – May 2020

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Alumni Recognition for Student Excellence Award for Hospitality Management 2023
- The President's Sparks Award 2020
- The President's Freshman Award 2019
- Dean's lists - Pennsylvania State University (2018 Fall, 2019 Spring & Fall, 2020 Spring & Fall, 2022 Spring & Fall)