

A Study on Customers' Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Environmentally Friendly Products and Services in Selected Hotels in Lagos and Ekiti States.

BY

*Alade A.A, **Ogunjinmi A.A and Ojo I.

*Federal College of Freshwater Fisheries Technology, New Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria.

**Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria Elizade University, Ilara Mokin, Ondo State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This study examined customers' perceptions and attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services in selected hotels in Lagos and Ekiti States. The convenience sampling method was used to administer 200 copies of a questionnaire to customers of the selected hotels. Data were analyzed descriptively using tables and inferentially through correlation, chi-square, and regression analyses.

The results revealed that the majority of the hotel customers were male (50.5%) and within the age range of 25–54 years (65%). Additionally, the perception that the number of garbage cans around the hotel is sufficient (Mean = 4.13) was a major observation recorded by the customers. The attitude that "environmental awareness should be raised among Nigerians" (Mean = 4.58) was a significant finding.

Furthermore, the socio-demographic characteristics of the hotel customers significantly predicted their perceptions and attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, hotel service providers should always consider the demographic characteristics of their customers when implementing environmentally friendly practices to ensure sustainability.

Keywords: Perception, Attitude, Green, Environment, Hospitality, Service

1.0 Introduction

The widespread urbanization and rapid population growth in recent times have significantly increased pressure on the environment and natural ecosystems. This phenomenon has led to the depletion of natural resources, environmental pollution, and the disruption of ecological balance, thereby threatening not only the survival of the human race but also hindering sustainable economic development (He, Zha & Loo, 2019).

Environmental sustainability has been identified as a critical challenge for the hotel industry, which is required to adopt environmentally friendly practices to maintain its relevance and long-term viability (Hall et al., 2016). As one of the primary forms of accommodation, hotels play a crucial role in the travel and tourism sector. They also serve as essential infrastructure for the industry, consuming substantial amounts of energy and water in their day-to-day operations (Merli et al., 2019). This extensive resource utilization emphasizes the need for sustainable practices within the sector to mitigate its environmental impact and contribute positively to global sustainability goals.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Environmental Impact

Environmental impact has become a critical concept garnering significant attention from firms and governmental bodies in recent years (Robertson & Barling, 2017). The hospitality industry, particularly hotels, contributes substantially to environmental challenges, as their operations are heavily reliant on environmental resources (Hornig et al., 2017). Increasing pressure from the general public, marketplaces, and government regulations has driven firms to recognize and address environmental issues more proactively. This growing awareness has catalyzed efforts to develop and implement sustainable solutions, especially within the hotel sector (Chan & Hsu, 2016). Consequently, the conservation of the environment through the adoption of environmentally friendly products and services has emerged

as a significant area of research and practice (Masri & Jaaron, 2017).

In response to heightened consumer interest in sustainability, hotels worldwide have begun introducing environmental programs and promoting environmentally friendly products and services to align with global sustainability goals (Fedina, 2018). Investments in eco-friendly practices are increasingly regarded as essential operational standards in the hotel industry, with less emphasis placed on cost implications or their potential impact on customer expectations (Bruns-Smith, Choy, Chong & Verma, 2015). Such initiatives have contributed to the rise of environmentally conscious consumers who prefer products and services that pose no harm to human health or the environment (Tekade & Sastikar, 2015).

2.2 Consumer Attitudes Towards the Environment

Consumer attitudes toward the environment are shaped by consistent behavioral responses to environmental concerns, whether positive or negative (Handayani & Prayogo, 2017). Recent studies have explored the impact of hotels' environmental practices on customer loyalty, including revisit intentions and post-visit behaviors (Chen, 2015). Additionally, researchers have examined the non-financial benefits of environmentally friendly practices, such as enhancing competitive advantage, achieving regulatory compliance, improving brand image, and reducing operational costs (Zaiton, Syamsul, Kasimu & Hassan, 2016; Oliver, Naar & Harries, 2015).

Green practices, often referred to as environmentally friendly initiatives, have been linked to consumer satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Namkung & Jang, 2017). Yu, Li, and Jai (2017) emphasized that such practices not only enhance customer experiences but also positively influence consumer loyalty and satisfaction levels.

However, despite growing research on green practices, there remains a notable lack of information on customers' perceptions and attitudes toward environmentally friendly products and services. Addressing this gap, this study

focuses on investigating these aspects within selected hotels in Lagos and Ekiti States, Nigeria. By understanding customer attitudes, the study aims to provide actionable insights for hotel operators to refine their sustainable practices and better meet consumer expectations

3.0 Methodology

This study was carried out in Lagos and Ekiti States. Lagos State is approximately located at 2°40'E Longitude and 6°20'N Latitude, while Ekiti State is approximately situated at 4°45'E Longitude and 7°25'N Latitude. The study specifically focused on selected hotels with five-star and three-star ratings to provide a multi-dimensional perspective for data collection across different classes of hotels.

A convenience sampling technique was employed to select the respondents, with two hundred hotel customers sampled based on their willingness to participate in the study. A well-structured questionnaire served as the research instrument for retrieving data from the hotel customers. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, their attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services at the hotels, and their perceptions of such products and services.

The data obtained in this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23). The results were presented both descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive statistics included the use of tables, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics, which involved testing the hypotheses, were conducted using correlation, chi-square, and regression analyses.

4.0 Data Analysis

4.1 Results

Socio-economic Profile of Customers

Table 1 shows the socio-economic profile of customers at the destinations. The majority of the customers were male (50.5%) and within the age range of 25–54 years (65%). Additionally, the highest percentage of customers were businessmen (42.5%) and had attained tertiary education (78%).

The frequency of customers' stays revealed that most of them were 1–2-time visitors (38%) and had primarily visited for business purposes (43%). Furthermore, the majority of the customers earned between 30,000 and 60,000 naira monthly (25%) and was not members of NGOs (82.5%).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of customers

Variables	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	101	50.5
Female	99	49.5
Age (years)		
18-24	36	18.0
25-54	130	65.0
55-64	29	14.5
Above 65	5	2.5
Occupation		
Civil servant	43	21.5
Businessman	85	42.5
Private sector	72	36.0
Education		
Primary	6	3.0
Secondary	38	19.0
Tertiary	156	78.0
Frequency of Stay		
1-2 times	76	38.0
3-5 times	57	28.5
6-8 times	55	27.5
9 and above times	12	6.0
Purpose of Stay		
Leisure	70	35.0
Business	86	43.0
Others	44	22.0
Monthly income (₦)		
Less than 30,000	25	12.5
30,000-60,000	50	25.0
61,000-90,000	44	22.0
91,000-120,000	24	12.0
121,000-150,000	15	7.5
151,000 and above	42	21.0
Membership of NGO		
Yes	35	17.5
No	165	82.5

Perception of consumers towards environmentally friendly products

Table 2 reveals consumers' perceptions of environmentally friendly products and services. The mean scores ranged from 2.77 to 4.13. The statement "The number of garbage cans around the hotel is sufficient" had the highest mean

value of 4.13, followed by "For me, staying at a green hotel when traveling is extremely positive," with a mean score of 3.97. The statement "It is not my duty to contribute to a better society and environment" had the lowest mean score of 2.77.

Table 2: Customers' perception towards environmentally friendly products and services

Perceptual statements	Mean	Standard deviation
The number of garbage cans around the hotel is sufficient	4.13	0.829
I like products that are non-biodegradable.	3.50	1.027
I prefer products that cause decrease in ozone depletion	3.69	0.994
Global warming and climate change is severe	3.92	0.755
Environmentally friendly products are not satisfying	3.16	1.145
Environmentally friendly products are overrated	3.16	1.180
it is not my duty to contribute to a better society and environment	2.77	1.389
I am willing to stay at a green hotel when traveling	3.80	0.977
Whether or not I stay at a green hotel when traveling is completely up to me	3.80	0.827
For me, staying at a green hotel when traveling is extremely good	3.65	0.832
Staying at a green hotel when traveling would enable me to perform environmentally friendly practices.	3.74	0.785
For me, staying at a green hotel when traveling is extremely positive	3.97	0.712
I will encourage my friends and relatives to stay at a green hotel when traveling	3.69	0.767
Staying at a green hotel when traveling would enable me to enjoy environmentally friendly products and healthy amenities	3.74	0.698
Staying at a green hotel when traveling would enable me to be more socially responsible	3.67	0.810
Overall image I have about a green hotel is very positive	3.71	0.854
Staying at a green hotel when traveling would enable me to protect our ecology.	3.77	0.709
Location of a green hotel needs to be convenient.	3.81	0.768
I have resources, time, and opportunities to stay at a green hotel when travelling	3.64	0.868
I plan to stay at a green hotel when traveling	3.65	0.722
Staying at a green hotel when traveling would enable me to eat fresh and healthy foods.	3.77	0.776
For me, staying at a green hotel when traveling is extremely desirable	3.72	0.759
I will make an effort to stay at a green hotel when traveling	3.82	0.794
For me, staying at a green hotel when traveling is extremely enjoyable	3.63	0.847
It is acceptable to pay more for a hotel that engages at green practices	3.73	0.934
Finding a green hotel when traveling takes time and effort	3.32	0.955
I am willing to spend extra in order to stay at an environmentally friendly hotel	3.62	0.916
I am willing to pay more for a green hotel	3.52	0.868
Staying at a green hotel is expensive.	3.32	1.124
Staying at a green hotel when traveling would enable me to have reduced expenses	3.03	0.937
Total Perception	108.38	10.136

Attitude of consumers towards environmentally friendly products

Table 3 reveals consumers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly products at the destinations. The mean scores ranged from 2.36 to 4.58. The statement

"Environmental awareness should be raised among Nigerians" had the highest mean value of 4.58, followed by "In order to save natural resources, recycling is essential," with a mean value of 4.20. The statement "Environmental protection is useless" had the lowest mean value of 2.36.

Table 3: Consumers' attitude towards environmentally friendly products and services

Attitudinal Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
Environmental awareness should be raised among Nigerian People	4.58	0.622
Purchasing green product is a good idea	4.04	0.867
Environmental protection attempt should be more throughout Nigeria	4.17	0.688
In order to save natural resources, recycling is essential	4.20	0.787
I like the idea of purchasing green	3.73	0.748
I have an attitude towards purchasing green products	3.43	0.876
The hospitality corporations are concerned about the ecology	3.62	0.866
Environmental protection is just too costly	2.76	1.048
There is no need to be worried regarding conservation in Nigeria because there is always enough electricity, water and trees	2.52	1.389
Environmental protection (recycling) involves too much trouble	2.76	1.039
Promoting environmental protection in Nigeria is just a waste of money.	2.56	1.321
Environmental protection has no importance for me	2.45	1.275
Environmental protection is useless	2.36	1.349
Total attitude	43.15	5.287

Relationship between customers' socioeconomic characteristics and their perception towards environmentally friendly products and services

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant relationship between customers' perceptions of environmentally friendly

products and services and their age ($P < 0.01$). Additionally, there is a significant relationship between customers' perceptions of environmentally friendly products and services and their occupation ($P < 0.01$), education ($P < 0.01$), and frequency of stay ($P < 0.01$).

Table 4: Relationship between customers' socioeconomic characteristics and their perception towards environmentally friendly products and services

Variables	Correlation value (r)	Sig.	Decision
Age	0.268**	0.000	Significant
Monthly income	0.049	0.494	Not significant
	Chi- square (χ^2)	Sig.	Decision
Gender	49.077	0.313	Not significant
Occupation	129.061**	0.004	Significant
Education	126.150**	0.007	Significant
Frequency of stay	210.705**	0.000	Significant
NGO membership	45.964	0.432	Not significant
Hotel status	54.988	0.146	Not significant

** $P < 0.01$

Relationship between customers' socioeconomic characteristics and their attitude towards environmentally friendly products and services

Table 5 reveals that there is a significant relationship between customers' attitudes towards environmentally

friendly products and services and their age ($P < 0.01$) and monthly income ($P < 0.01$). Additionally, there is a significant relationship between customers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services and their occupation ($P < 0.01$) and education ($P < 0.01$).

Table 5: Relationship between customers' socioeconomic characteristics and their attitude towards environmentally friendly products and services

Variables	Correlation value (r)	Sig.	Decision
Age	0.196**	0.005	Significant
Monthly income	-0.235**	0.001	Significant
	Chi- square (χ^2)	Sig.	Decision
Gender	29.926	0.187	Not significant
Occupation	95.853*	0.000	Significant
Education	86.644*	0.001	Significant
Frequency of stay	88.830	0.087	Not Significant
NGO membership	30.341	0.174	Not significant
Hotel status	22.765	0.534	Not significant

** $P < 0.01$

Determinants of customers' perception towards environmentally friendly products and

Table 6 reveals that 42.6% (R-squared) of customers' perceptions of environmentally friendly products and

services is accounted for by their socio-demographic characteristics. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the socio-demographic characteristics of the hotel customers significantly predict their perceptions of environmentally friendly products and services.

Table 6: Determinants of customers' perception towards environmentally friendly products and services

Variables	Beta-value	t-value
Hotel status	0.062	0.873
Gender	0.000	0.006
Age	0.285	3.947**
Occupation	0.078	1.126
Education	-0.025	-0.367
Frequency of stay	0.326	4.358**
Purpose of stay	0.027	0.364
Monthly income	-0.089	-1.195
NGO membership	-0.042	-0.588
R	0.426	
R squares	0.181	
Adjusted square	0.142	
Std Error	9.386	
F change	4.671	
Df	199	
Sig.	0.000	

**P<0.01

Determinants of customers' attitude towards environmentally friendly products and services

Table 7 reveals that 19.4% (R-squared) of customers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services is accounted for by their socio-demographic characteristics. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the socio-demographic characteristics of the hotel customers significantly predict their attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services.

Table 7: Determinants of customers' attitude towards environmentally friendly products and services

Variables	Beta-value	t-value
Hotel status	-0.085	-1.195
Gender	0.064	0.921
Age	0.207	2.896**
Occupation	-0.135	-1.962
Education	-0.134	-1.973*
Frequency of stay	-0.017	-0.234
Purpose of stay	0.097	1.326
Monthly income	-0.236	-3.190**
NGO membership	0.105	1.488
R	0.440	
R squared	0.194	
Adjusted square	0.155	
Std Error	4.859	
F change	5.071	
Df	199	
Sig.	0.000	

*P<0.05, **P<0.01

4.2 Discussion and Findings

This study revealed that the majority of consumers at the hotels were male and within their youthful and energetic age range. This is consistent with findings by Salleh, Said,

Bakar, Ali, and Zakaria (2016), who revealed that the majority of hotel visitors were male and in their youthful ages. Additionally, the highest percentage of customers were businessmen, which contrasts with the findings of Rodríguez, Jacob, and Florido (2020), who found that the highest percentage of consumers were retired. Most of the hotel consumers had tertiary education, aligning with findings by Adebisi, Oduneye, and Adediran (2017), who found that the majority of hotel visitors had tertiary education.

The frequency of customer stays revealed that most were first- or second-time visitors and had visited mainly for business purposes, which explains why many consumers were businessmen. Furthermore, the majority of customers earned between 30,000 and 60,000 naira monthly and were not members of NGOs. This income level is low and consistent with the findings of Alananzeh, Al-Badarneh, Maaiah, and Al-Mkhadmeh (2018), who found a low-income level among hotel consumers.

The hotel customers perceived staying at a green hotel when traveling as extremely positive. This aligns with Handayani and Prayogo (2017), who revealed that engaging in environmentally friendly practices can be very beneficial. Moreover, the consumers made positive comments about environmentally friendly practices and agreed that the number of garbage cans around the hotel was sufficient. This, among many other environmental practices, was perceived and accepted by the customers, indicating their awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. This suggests that these consumers are beginning to embrace environmental consciousness, driven by their awareness of environmental issues in hotels, as supported by Norazah and Norbayah (2015), who noted that increasing understanding of the environment influences consumers' ecological attitudes, decision-making, and the acceptability of green goods and services.

The study also reveals consumers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly products at the destinations. The consumers expressed that environmental awareness should be raised among Nigerians. They also emphasized that recycling is essential to saving natural resources. This shows that hotel customers are aware of environmental practices and are urging hotels to continue these practices, as supported by Yi, Li, and Jai (2018), who found that hotel guests are increasingly aware of environmental issues and are calling for environmental consciousness in hotel management. The study further reveals that consumers expect hotels to do more in educating the public about environmental consciousness and to encourage consumers to adopt these practices through the environmental safety actions carried out by the hotels. This is supported by Bubik & Kolar (2019), who stated that to address environmental challenges, authorities should promote environmentally friendly infrastructure through public actions such as media campaigns and public events.

Furthermore, the hypotheses revealed that socio-economic characteristics, such as age, occupation, and education, have a significant relationship with the hotel customers' perceptions of environmentally friendly products and services. This contrasts with a study by Ravanan and Com (2019), which found that age, gender, education, and occupation did not significantly impact respondents' eco-

friendly perceptions. However, this finding aligns with the fact that monthly income had a significant relationship with perceptions of environmentally friendly products. Further analysis revealed that socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents significantly predict their perception and attitude towards environmentally friendly products. This is supported by Bryła (2016), who found that the perception of environmentally friendly products and respondents' attitudes towards assessing product features depend on socio-demographic characteristics. This indicates that hotel service providers should consider the socio-economic characteristics of their customers when implementing environmentally friendly practices in their hotels.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine customers' perception and attitude towards environmentally friendly products and services in selected hotels in Lagos and Ekiti States, Nigeria. The findings are summarized as follows

5.1 Key Findings:

- Demographics of Hotel Consumers:
 1. Majority of the hotel consumers were male.
 2. Most were youthful and energetic, often businessmen with tertiary education.
 3. They were primarily first- or second-time visitors to the hotels, mostly traveling for business purposes.
- Perceptions of Environmentally Friendly Practices:
 1. Customers perceived the number of garbage cans around the hotels as sufficient.
 2. Staying at a green hotel while traveling was viewed extremely positively.
 3. Environmental awareness influenced their behavior, as many preferred products that contribute to minimal pollution and opted for energy-efficient household appliances.
- Attitudes Towards Environmental Sustainability:
 1. Customers believed raising environmental awareness among Nigerians is crucial.
 2. They emphasized the importance of recycling to conserve natural resources.

5.2 Conclusion

1. The socio-economic profile of hotel customers significantly influences their perceptions and attitudes towards environmentally friendly products and services.
2. Younger, educated, and business-oriented individuals are more likely to embrace sustainable practices, indicating the importance of targeted marketing strategies.
3. Positive perceptions of green hotels suggest an opportunity for businesses to enhance their branding by adopting environmentally friendly practices.
4. Customers' environmental awareness reflects a growing demand for sustainable options, which can drive innovation in eco-friendly service offerings.
5. Hotels that fail to align with environmental expectations risk losing relevance in an increasingly eco-conscious market.

5.3 Recommendations

- Customer-Centric Sustainable Practices:
 1. Tailor environmentally friendly initiatives to match the demographics and preferences of customers, particularly business travelers and young professionals.
 2. Develop programs that educate customers about the hotel's sustainability efforts to foster a deeper connection and brand loyalty.
- Facility Enhancements:
 1. Ensure adequate waste management systems, such as strategically placed garbage cans and effective recycling bins.
 2. Invest in energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources for hotel operations.
- Marketing and Awareness:
 1. Promote the environmental benefits of green hotels in advertising campaigns to attract eco-conscious customers.
 2. Collaborate with environmental organizations to launch awareness campaigns about sustainability in the hospitality industry.
- Incentives for Sustainable Behavior:
 1. Offer discounts or rewards for customers who participate in eco-friendly programs, such as reusing towels or opting out of daily room cleaning.
 2. Introduce loyalty programs that emphasize green practices to encourage repeat visits from environmentally aware customers.
- Policy Advocacy:
 1. Engage with local authorities and industry bodies to promote regulations supporting sustainability in the hospitality sector.
 2. Advocate for incentives for hotels that implement green practices, such as tax breaks or grants.
- Continuous Improvement:
 1. Conduct regular customer feedback surveys to assess the effectiveness of sustainable practices and identify areas for improvement.
 2. Benchmark against global standards in eco-friendly hospitality to remain competitive in the international market

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