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# An Assessment of the Relationship Between the Price Tariffs of a Christian-Affiliated Guesthouse and Customer Choice Behavior in Nairobi County

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#### Abstract

**Purpose:** To assess the relationship between the price tariffs of a Christian-affiliated guesthouse and customer choice behavior in Nairobi County.

Methodology: Descriptive survey research design was used on a target population of the study comprising 13 Christian Affiliated Guest houses registered with the Christian Guest Houses Association of Kenya (CGHAK) in Nairobi County. The total number of respondents was 723, including all guesthouse general managers (13), two supervisors (Front Office and Food and Beverage Supervisors) from each guesthouse (26), and all customers based on the average occupancy (684). A census sampling method was used to select guesthouse managers (13) and supervisors (26). Further, the random sampling method was used to obtain the 252 customer respondents. Closed and open-ended questionnaires were used to obtain data from 252 CAG guests while an interview schedule was used to obtain data from 26 CAG supervisors and 13 CAG general managers. For piloting, this study used one randomly selected CAG (10%) in Kiambu and obtained 1 manager, 2 supervisors, and 25 guests (10%) as respondents. Cronbach alpha was used to measure reliability. For validity, the instrument was piloted before the actual data collection process. Quantitative data such as mean and standard deviation was analyzed using SPSS whereas thematic method was used to analyze qualitative data. Data was presented using tables and figures.

**Results:** The highest mean score was observed on the dimension of mode of payment which had an average score of 4.22. This observation implied that one of the reasons that could be attracting guests to remain loyal to a particular guesthouse is a mode of payment of bills the guesthouse has adopted. The least mean rating was observed on fair price tariffs, with an average score of 4.22. This is an indication that fairness in the price tariffs, as a dimension of Price Tariff, is not such an important factor when it comes to choosing a guesthouse. Again, this rolls back to service provisions. That is, an individual would be more willing to pay more as long as the service will meet his/her expectations. Nonetheless, the fact that the fairness of price tariffs was not such an important factor, the overall mean response of 3.9.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The study concluded that price tariffs had a positive influence on customer choice behavior. This was based on the fact that versatility of modes of

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paying bills ensured that there was efficiency and convenience in payments. The study recommends that more attention should be paid by the management to payment modes such as mobile money since it promotes security and convenience to the guests.

**Keywords:** Price Tariffs, Christian-Affiliated Guesthouse, Customer Choice Behavior, Nairobi County

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#### 1.0 Introduction

Christian Affiliated Guesthouses referred to guesthouses owned and operated by Christian churches (Kwenga, 2012). Customer Choice Behavior (CCB) refers to the reasons why customers acquire items or services, as well as the decision-making process (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016). It entailed making decisions, engaging in activities, coming up with ideas, or providing experiences that catered to the needs and wishes of clients (Cohen et al., 2014). Globally, guesthouses had a long operation and their descriptions differed from one country to another. In the UK, for example, guesthouses were regarded as bed and breakfast establishments.

In Africa and East Africa, accordingly, they were considered guesthouses (Ng'oriarita, 2020). Hotel accommodations were under the category of the lodging sector, which stood as a subsector of the tourism industry, including retreats, graduation ceremonies, and church crusades. Guesthouses were typically less expensive, catering to a variety of tastes and budgets. They were more individualized and less official than hotels, which were typically the most frequent or only kind of lodging offered.

Locally in Kenya, Christian Affiliated Guesthouses played a very important role as they allowed customers to have more overnight stay choices (Ng'oriarita, 2020). They were very popular with both local and international tourists who might not afford accommodation in starrated tourist hotels. Target markets for most guesthouses included individual customers, families, church organizations, NGOs, business people, and government departments.

Additionally, Christian-affiliated guesthouses contributed significantly to the county's economic growth (Ng'oriarita, 2020). Due to the ever-increasing demand for affordable and quality accommodation facilities, churches in Nairobi responded by providing equally comfortable and reasonably priced accommodations. They were very popular, mostly catering to church organizations, local and international religious missions, individual customers who could not afford accommodation in star-rated tourist hotels, families, NGOs, business people, and government departments (Milimu, 2017).

#### 1.1 Problem Statement

Despite a reasonable determination through several religious organizations in Nairobi County to invest in the guesthouse business, the average occupancy percentage in these guesthouses over the last three years was not encouraging (Mutinda, 2020). This resulted in a detrimental tendency and a dramatic drop in guesthouse space occupancy, leading to the underutilization of accommodation facilities. Additionally, this resulted in revenue loss and low organizational productivity.

Existing studies on guesthouses in Kenya, and specifically in Christian-affiliated guesthouses, mainly focused on general marketing issues such as business promotion strategies, business challenges, and solutions during and after COVID-19, and their contribution to the overall

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hospitality and tourism industry without considering the specific attributes that led to customer attraction and retention. This implied that no research had assessed the attributes and customer choice behavior in these guesthouses. This study, therefore, aimed to assess the relationship between the price tariffs of a Christian-affiliated guesthouse and customer choice behavior in Nairobi County. The study aimed to assess the relationship between the price tariffs of a Christian-affiliated guesthouse and customer choice behavior in Nairobi County.

### 1.2 Research Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>1: There was no significant relationship between the price tariffs of a Christian-affiliated guesthouse (CAG) and customer choice behavior in Nairobi County.

#### 2.0 Literature Review

#### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The Consumer Behavior Theory in the Hotel Industry. According to this concept, a consumer's desire, influence, and interest were the main triggers for the creation of stimuli (Cantallops & Salvi, 2014). These triggers compelled the customer to begin gathering data on the goods and/or services offered and matching them to their needs. This was because customer preferences for various goods and services were impacted by a number of variables considered in purchasing decision procedures. The location of the hotel (such as near a major travel hub, airport, or town), brand name, amenities (like a spa, fitness center, and swimming pool), pricing, loyalty program, and previous visitors' reviews could all influence a customer's decision. The consumer's preferred mix could include any or all of these (Ramkissoon, 2017). The third indicator of service quality was the phenomena of a product or service after it had been purchased This theory allowed for the following modeling of customer choice decision-making in hotels:

- •Problem Identification: The purchasing process began when a customer realized that he or she had trouble selecting from the range of possibilities that would fulfill their requirements and wants.
- •Information Search: Some of the most important sources of information were private, like friends and family; public, like the media and consumer organizations; and commercial, like advertisements, websites, and displays.
- •Evaluation of Options: A consumer's decision to stay at a restaurant in this situation was influenced by a number of internal, external, and personal variables. Location, price, cleanliness, atmosphere and approachability, technology, government policies, generation change, and the rise of ethical concerns in consumption decisions were examples of external factors, while internal variables included factors such as family size, religion, income, employment, education, attitude, personality, perceptions, and age. Finally, a customer narrowed down his or her selection to the hotel that best met all of their desired demands and wants.
- •Purchase Choice: A consumer's purchase decision is based on the situational aspects that they expected, such as the facility's location, price, and the value of the goods and services.
- •Behavior Following a Purchase: Customer satisfaction following a purchase was a crucial component of the purchasing process. In other words, the client would have been unhappy and

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dissatisfied if the product did not meet their expectations. This would have impacted both the hotel's reputation and customer retention.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Arghutashvili and Gogochuri (2019) asserted that every facility intended to be used as a hotel had to provide communal spaces and an accessible phone available to visitors in every building. Each bedroom needed to have an entrance area of at least eight square meters and be equipped with a shower. Rooms with multiple beds had to have a minimum floor space of twelve square meters (plus four square meters for each additional bed) and a bathroom. It also encompassed various forms of tourist activities with features comparable to those in small hotels (Weng & Wang, 2019).

Abraham (2015) noted that guesthouse attributes included the mission and vision of a guesthouse, location, guesthouse price tariff, security and safety status, the physical environment, and service convenience and quality (which included food and beverages, accommodation, and quality of staff). Abraham (2015) further concluded that most travelers, and missionaries in particular, considered hygiene, place of residence, room pricing, security, the level of service, and the hotel chain's reputation as important criteria when choosing a guesthouse. It was, however, important to note that guesthouses were a significant part of the hospitality business that contributed directly to the growth of the regional economy.

Guesthouse tariffs indicated the cost that consumers had to pay for products and services, particularly accommodation, food, and drink. For guesthouse business operators, the tariff represented the returns on efforts (Adem, 2019). According to Bello (2018), guesthouse rates were not only significant to guesthouse owners but were also significant for consumers, as they symbolized the value that customers attributed to meeting their requirements and wishes. In his investigation of customer selection factors in CGs in Nairobi, Kenya, Kwenga (2012) found that equitable guesthouse pricing impacted customers' choices and purchases of lodging and other services. This indicated that guesthouse visitors anticipated a greater quality of service when they spent more. As a result, the fee paid had to be proportionate to the level of services provided and the overall satisfaction acquired. This demonstrated that guesthouse tariffs were a crucial factor in consumer satisfaction and intention to repurchase. It also implied that guesthouse tariffs determined the number of bookings per season as well as the length of stay of the guest.

## 3.0 Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used on a target population of the study comprising 13 Christian Affiliated Guest houses registered with the Christian Guest Houses Association of Kenya (CGHAK) in Nairobi County. The total number of respondents was 723, including all guesthouse general managers (13), two supervisors (Front Office and Food and Beverage Supervisors) from each guesthouse (26), and all customers based on the average occupancy (684). A census sampling method was used to select guesthouse managers (13) and supervisors (26). Further, the random sampling method was used to obtain the 252 customer respondents. Closed and open-ended questionnaires were used to obtain data from 252 CAG guests while an interview schedule was used to obtain data from 26 CAG supervisors and 13 CAG general managers. For piloting, this study used one randomly selected CAG (10%) in Kiambu and obtained 1 manager, 2 supervisors, and 25 guests (10%) as respondents. Cronbach alpha was used to measure reliability. For validity, the instrument was piloted before the actual data

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collection process. Quantitative data such as mean and standard deviation was analyzed using SPSS whereas thematic method was used to analyze qualitative data. Data was presented using tables and figures.

#### 4.0 Results and Discussion

#### **4.1 Response Rate**

The study had sampled 13 guesthouse managers, 26 supervisors, and 252 guests making a total sample size of 285. Table 1 provides their response rate.

**Table 1: Response Rate** 

Sample Category	<b>Expected Response</b>	<b>Actual Response</b>	Percentage	
Managers	13	13	100.0%	
Supervisors	26	26	100.0%	
Guests	252	207	82.1%	
Total	285	246	86.3%	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table 1 shows that in all categories of respondents, the response rate was above 70%. Cumulatively, the response rate was 86.3% (252 of 285). This response rate, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), surpassed the suggested minimum sample size, which is 70%. Creswell and Port (2017) also admitted that a response rate of at least 70% is a good representation of a targeted population. Since the sample was sufficient, it implied that inferences about population characteristics can be made based on this data.

## 4.2 Reliability Results

For piloting, this study used one randomly selected CAG (10%) and obtained 1 manager, 2 supervisors, and 25 guests (10%) as respondents. The results are in Table 2.

**Table 2: Reliability Results** 

Study Variable	No. of Items	Alpha Score (α)
Price Tariffs	7	0.901
Customer Choice Behavior	11	0.824
<b>Overall Instrument Reliability</b>		0.863

Table 2 shows that all indicators in each study variable was reliable since all the alpha values are greater than 0.5. Further, it can be seen that even in the overall instrument reliability, the alpha value is 0.863, an indication that the overall instrument was reliable.

## 4.3 Results on Guesthouse Choice Behavior

Behavior of customers in choosing a Christian-affiliated guesthouse was measured using some key attributes of Christian-affiliated guesthouses and how vital they are in attracting guests. The extent of influence was measured on a continuous scale of "1 = 0.5%", "2 = 5%-10%", "3 = 10%-15%", "4 = 15%-20% and "5 =Above 20%" was used. The scale showed the extent to which the specified sub-indicators have influenced the decision of guests to choose that

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particular guesthouse. Mean ratings and the corresponding standard deviations were also obtained and a summary of the responses was shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Responses on Guesthouse Choice Behavior** 

Indicators	Min	Max	Mean	SD	CSD
<b>Cost and Price Dimension</b>					
Accommodation costs	1	4	1.62	.766	0.473
Value for money	1	5	2.19	.622	0.284
Mode of payment	Mode of payment 1				
Availability of various accommodation packages	1	4	2.23	.587	0.263
Universality of currency used	1	4	2.32	.868	0.374
Average			2.15	0.705	0.328
<b>Attributes Satisfaction</b>					
General guesthouse ambience	1	4	2.32	.868	0.374
Variety of adjacent attractions	1	5	2.19	.622	0.284
Personal safety and security	1	4	1.78	.643	0.361
General cleanliness and hygiene	1	4	2.23	.587	0.263
Accessibility	1	4	1.62	.766	0.473
General service quality	1	4	2.40	.681	0.284
Average			2.09	0.695	0.332
Overall Average			2.12	.700	.330

Table 3 indicates coefficient of standard deviation, it can be observed that value for money, mode of payment, and availability of various accommodation packages had almost similar levels of uniformity in responses. Coincidentally, even the mean ratings are not wide apart from one another. This means that in terms of the weights of the influences, respondents felt that the three sub-indicators have the same weights in influencing customer's guesthouse choice behavior. Nevertheless, high variation in the responses was noted in accommodation cost as a sub-indicator (CSD = 1.473) and universality of currency used (CSD = 0.374).

Generally, it can also be seen in attribute satisfaction that general service quality, general guesthouse ambience, and general cleanliness and hygiene are very key in influencing customer's guesthouse choice behavior. This is due to the generally high mean scores that these variables exhibit. A measure of uniformity of the responses, however, reveals that high uniformity was noted in general cleanliness and hygiene (CSD = 0.263), general service quality (CSD = 0.284), and variety of adjacent attractions (CSD = 0.284). Nevertheless, from the average ratings for the two dimensions, a similar trend can be observed. In sum, using the overall average, it can be observed that all the indicators influenced customer's guesthouse choice behavior by at least 10% as shown by mean rating of 2.12.

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# **4.4 Responses to Price Tariffs**

On Price Tariffs, as an independent variable, focus was on the actual charges, mode of payment, efficiency of payment systems, and availability of discounts and offers among others. Table 4 provides the results.

**Table 4: Responses on Price Tariffs** 

Indicators	Min	Max	Mean	SD	CSD
Fair Price Tariffs	2	5	3.22	.636	0.198
Economic package charges	2	5	3.87	.490	0.127
Mode of paying bills	2	5	4.22	.830	0.197
Availability of discounts and offers	3	5	3.87	.755	0.195
Value for money	2	5	3.98	.727	0.183
Payment system efficiency	2	5	4.09	.796	0.195
Convenience payments	3	5	4.05	.787	0.194
Average			3.90	.717	0.184

Table 4 shows that the average means for each dimension are all higher than 3, which suggests that respondents preferred to concur with the statements listed under Price Tariffs. The highest mean score was observed on the dimension of mode of payment which had an average score of 4.22. This observation implied that one of the reasons that could be attracting guests to remain loyal to a particular guesthouse is a mode of payment of bills the guesthouse has adopted. The least mean rating was observed on fair price tariffs, with an average score of 4.22. This is an indication that fairness in the price tariffs, as a dimension of Price Tariff, is not such an important factor when it comes to choosing a guesthouse. Again, this rolls back to service provisions. That is, an individual would be more willing to pay more as long as the service will meet his/her expectations. Nonetheless, the fact that the fairness of price tariffs is not such an important factor, the overall mean response (= 3.9), which tends towards *Very Important*, Price Tariffs as a variable is still key in influencing customer's choice behavior.

For standard deviations, all values were less than 1 (one), which showed that there was a high uniformity in all the responses. A low standard deviation shows that there were no wide discrepancies in the responses this can be quantified using the coefficient of variation (or equivalently, coefficient of standard deviation) values. Apart from *Economic package charges*, which the least coefficient of variation (= 12.7%), the remaining indicators had an almost equivalent extent of uniformity. Despite having this observation, the finding cannot be used to infer that Price Tariffs are such an important factor that significantly influences customer choice behavior.

### 4.5 Interview Results of Demographic Factors

The first question required them to list the attributes in Christian-affiliated guesthouses that influenced customers' choice behavior. The respondents named the services offered, an attitude of workers, prices of rooms, serenity of the environment, and referral rates of the guest houses. Comparatively, Bekele (2020) noted that quality of services was a major factor to be considered by clients. Additionally, Baruca and Civer (2012) noted that aspects such as room prices,

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referrals, and attitude of staff enabled clients to decide on whether they would utilize the guest house services. Further, Cantallops and Salvi (2014) linked room-seeking behaviour to be closely associated with how modern the rooms were.

The second question required them to describe the challenges they faced while managing customers' choice behavior(s) in their guest houses. The challenges named included arrogant guests who used vulgar language while on the premises; guests who abused drugs and substances which made other Christian guests uncomfortable; There were guests who failed to follow and obey the rules of the hotel management; and guests who have other ideas of stealing rooms items such as iron boxes, slippers, bed sheets and towels among others. Comparatively, Chia and Muiz (2021) also established that major challenges of guest houses included theft of room items from guests, adamant guests who failed to follow laid down rules and regulations, and abuse of drugs and substances. Further, Ng'oriarita (2020) also noted that missionary-based guest houses had a major challenge in ensuring that the guests promoted Christian values while on the premises of the guest houses. This was due to increased cases of violence and abuse of drugs and substances.

## 4.6 Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

The study conducted multiple regression analyses to assess the relationship between the price tariffs of a Christian-affiliated guesthouse and customer choice behavior in Nairobi County. The hypothesized relationships involved examining the direct influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable using a multiple linear regression model. Consequently, a multiple regression model was obtained and the output was used to test the corresponding hypothesis as provided in Table 5.

**Table 5: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis** 

Model Summary								
R	$\mathbb{R}^2$	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Erro	or F Cha	nge	Sig.		
.732	.536	.527	2.99339	28.4	83	.000		
Regression Coefficients								
			Beta	Std. Error	t-statistics	Sig.		
(Constant)	)		0.051	0.057	0.895	.992		
Price Tari	iffs (X <sub>1</sub> )		1.317	0.630	2.090	.005		
ANOVA								
		Sum of squares	Df	Mean Squar	es F-statist	ic Sig.		
Regression	n	74.307	4	18.	577 28.4	.000		
Residual		131.744	202	0.0	652			
Total		206.051	206					
Dependent Variable: Customer Choice Behavior								
Predictors: (Constant) Price Tariffs								

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The findings in Table 5 reveal an R2 value of 0.536 and a corresponding F-statistic of 28.483. value of 0.536 implied that the independent variables accounted for up to 53.6% of the total variation in the behavior of customers in choosing Christian-affiliated guesthouses. The standard error was found to be 2.99339. This explained variation was found to be significant since the corresponding p-value was less than 0.05. The regression coefficients section shows that all the independent variables have a positive have a positive influence on the behavior of customers in choosing Christian-affiliated guesthouses.

This is evidenced by the positive regression coefficients for all predictor variables. Price Tariffs was significant since the ( $\beta$  = 1.317) and p-values were less than 0.05. Results in the ANOVA section showed that the obtained regression model of customers' guesthouse choice behavior on the price tariffs was a significant fit. This was shown by the obtained F-statistic of 28.483 with p-value = 0.000. Since p-value < 0.05, it implied that the model correctly fitted the data collected and described how Price Tariffs influenced customers' guesthouse choice behavior. Significance of model fit in regression analysis was also examined by comparing the F-ratio (28.483) and tabulated F value of 3.03.

## 4.7 Summary

The highest mean score was observed on the dimension of mode of payment which had an average score of 4.22. This observation implied that one of the reasons that could be attracting guests to remain loyal to a particular guesthouse is a mode of payment of bills the guesthouse has adopted. The least mean rating was observed on fair price tariffs, with an average score of 4.22. This is an indication that fairness in the price tariffs, as a dimension of Price Tariff, is not such an important factor when it comes to choosing a guesthouse. Again, this rolls back to service provisions. That is, an individual would be more willing to pay more as long as the service will meet his/her expectations. Nonetheless, the fact that the fairness of price tariffs was not such an important factor, the overall mean response of 3.9.

#### 5.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that price tariffs had a positive influence on customer choice behavior. This was based on the fact that versatility of modes of paying bills ensured that there was efficiency and convenience in payments. The clients were also keen on benefiting from economic packages that promoted discounts and offers. However, fairness in price tariffs did not seem to attract the attention of the guests since what mattered to them was getting value for money.

#### **6.0 Recommendation**

The study recommends that more attention should be paid by the management to payment modes such as mobile money since it promotes security and convenience to the guests. Further, the management of the guest houses should also ensure that they align their price tariffs with the market rates to benefit most from new businesses and referrals. Notably, to succeed in this venture, the management should implement policy frameworks that offer discounts to repeat guests and also offers during special calendar days.

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