

## **The Effect of Hotel Attributes on Length of Stay and Hotel choices in Coastal Cities: Aqaba as a Case Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Choosing the hotel is one of the most important purchase decisions for travelers where the motives of choice are built on certain features. In coastal cities, the hotel attributes and location (offshore or on the beach) are important factors in choosing the hotel and the length of stay. This study aims at identifying the effect of hotel attributes and location in the coastal cities on the process of the tourists' choice of a hotel and the relationship between the hotel attributes and length of stay. A sample of 286 tourists in the coastal city of Aqaba in Jordan were collected from different hotels on the beach and within the city. The results showed that the staff, image, and reputation of the hotel have affected tourists' length of stay. The study revealed that young tourists prefer city hotels whereas females and old people prefer beach hotels. This study is an attempt to suggest managerial implications for hotels in coastal cities to meet the needs and demands of their potential guests and to increase the rate of their stay.

**Keywords:** Attributes, Location, Selecting, Coastal City, Jordan, Aqaba.

### **Introduction**

Coastal cities are destinations for millions of tourists worldwide. Thus, these cities should customize their services to what the different tourists are seeking (Hallmann, Feiler & Breuer, 2012). Tourist destination is the geographic area which a tourist goes to. It consists of the infrastructure and superstructure that provide commodity and services to tourists to fulfill their needs and demands (Del chiappa, 2008; Mazanec, Wober & Zins, 2007). Hu and Ritchie (1993) defined the attributes of a tourist destination as being all the elements which are not available at the residence and which attract the tourist. Page and Connell (2006) classified the tourist destination attributes to six attributes (six As): Amenities, Affordability, Ancillary services, Accessibility, Attractions and Activities. As part of the tourist destination, hotels have

their own attributes that may affect the destination choice. The motivations of choosing a tourist destination are obvious as they are generally restricted to recreational tourism or business tourism, but the motives or the mechanism of choosing the hotel are not always clear as in the purpose of visit. Therefore, several studies focused

on the identification of the tourist's motives to choose the tourist destination (Rosentraub & Joo, 2009; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Kelly & Nankervis, 2001; Go & Govers, 1999), tourist destination attributes (Lee & Back, 2007; Hu & Ritchie, 1993), importance of attributes and tourists satisfaction (Bodet, Anaba & Boauchet, 2017; Shanka & Taylor, 2004), importance of hotel attributes from the perspective of business travelers (Chui & Ananzeh, 2012; Dolnicar, 2002; Dube & Renaghan, 1999), the perspective of marketing managers (Wei, Ruys & Muller, 1999), the effect of hotel attributes on the occupancy rate (Kim, 2010). Others focused on the effect of location and co-location on hotel's pricing strategy (Zhang et al., 2011; Enz, Canina & Liu, 2008, Wie, Ruys & Miller, 1999), the importance of hotel location from the perspective of the hotels' owners (Adam & Amuquandoh, 2014), the negative effect of hotel location (Lee & Jang, 2012). Guests are mostly attracted by hotel location (Horak, 1997), and hotel attributes (Dolnicar, 2002). The previous studies have undertaken the importance of hotels' attributes in selecting the hotel and not on the length of stay. Moreover, studying the hotel location (off shore hotels or beach hotels) has been given little attention.

Thus, this study aims at identifying the most important hotel attributes which affect the tourist in

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choosing the hotel in Aqaba as a coastal city based on hotel attributes that location is one of them. It aims also to identify the effect of hotel attributes on tourists' length of stay. The differences among the respondents in terms of their demographic factors and the choice of the hotel or and their length of stay were determined.

## **Literature Review**

### **Hotel attributes in the process of choice decision making:**

Hotel attributes could be categorized by: image, physical features, price and value, location, and staff. Jones & Chen (2010) determined the main features of choosing the hotel by a specific category of tourists (recreational tourists). The study identified some previous studies which discussed some characteristics and attributes that relate to the destination choice and the methodology followed by former researchers to attain their data. Lewis (1984) pointed out that quality and hygiene were the most important hotel attributes that affect tourist's satisfaction and hotel choices. Wei, Ruys & Muller (1999) showed that the process of delivering good service quality should match the way customers view quality. Consumer satisfaction is the interest of all managers in hospitality industry (Bodet, Anaba & Boauchet, 2017). There is a strong relationship between hotel attributes and revisit intention (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000).

The study of (Chu & Choi, 2000) was conducted to identify the factors of choosing six hotels in Hong Kong city through a comparison between business tourists and recreational tourists. The study showed that there are no differences between tourists' perceptions towards service quality, business facilities, physical value, room service, front offices food and entertainment and finally security. The study referred to the physical value paid by the tourist against accommodation, food and drink followed by service quality, security, comfort and cleanliness. In the last rank of importance came business facilities, food and entertainment. Gustin and Weaver (1993) found that cleanliness, accessibility, price, and parking were the most important attributes when choosing a hotel for old aged people. Xue & Cox

(2008) showed that the front office service was the most important attribute for business tourists followed by image, security, facilities and bathrooms. In another study, personal interaction and room rates were the most important attributes for leisure tourists (Marshall, 1993).

Choorichom (2012) pointed out that security and safety were the most important attributes followed by the physical aspect then service quality and finally the location and room-service quality. Tourists are interested in the aesthetic aspects of the hotel in addition to the vastness of public places, guest rooms, hotel chain and location (Kumer & Singh, 2014). The location in the first place, relatives and travel agents' recommendations, price, personal experience, promotion and amenities played an important role in the choice of the hotel in the study of (Baruca & Civre, 2012). Wong & Chi-Yung (2002) revealed that the most important hotel attributes for the tourists visiting Hong Kong were the prices of the rooms followed by the hotel class, hotel location, and finally the type of rooms. In a comparison between the managers and hotel guests' assessments to the most important attributes in the hotel choosing process, Lockyer (2002) showed that the managers focused on certain attributes such as staff readiness, while the guests concentrated on the bathroom, shower then the amenity of bed mattresses and pillows. The environmental aspect and the hygiene of the hotel were the most important influential factor of the study of (Svec et al., 2012). Chan and Wang (2006) found that, beside the price, the good location and excellent service were the main factors that affected the final choice of the hotel by individual tourists while business tourists asserted the former experience, good service, amenities and companies' recommendation. The following figure summarizes the majority of hotel attributes by importance based on a review study (Dolnicar & Utter, 2003).

### **Hotel Location**

Location is critical for business and has a competitive advantage for firms (Lee & Jang, 2012; Enz, Canina & Liu, 2008). The process of defining the hotel location is critical for hotel owners. Accordingly, a careful analysis of hotel operation scale must be considered (Adam & Amuquandoh, 2014). The importance of hotel attributes to the customers, the challenges that could face the hotel operation on the long term and short term, the proximity of the hotel to particular places, the targeted customer, the reasons to select a particular hotel, and other factors are essential points for hotel managers to consider (Shoval, 2006; Lewis, 1984). Business travelers consider the hotel location as a key factor in their hotel selection (McCleary et al., 1993). Beside the hotel location, the room location is one of the most important attributes of a hotel (Lee &

Jang, 2012). Shoval et al (2011) concluded that hotel location has a significant effect on tourist movements, with a large share of the total tourist time budget spent in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. The study illustrated the effect of geomorphic barriers on guests' movements.

However, the lack of studies about the impact of hotel location on the hotel choice (Shoval et al, 2011) and especially on the length of stay is a major justification to conduct the current study.

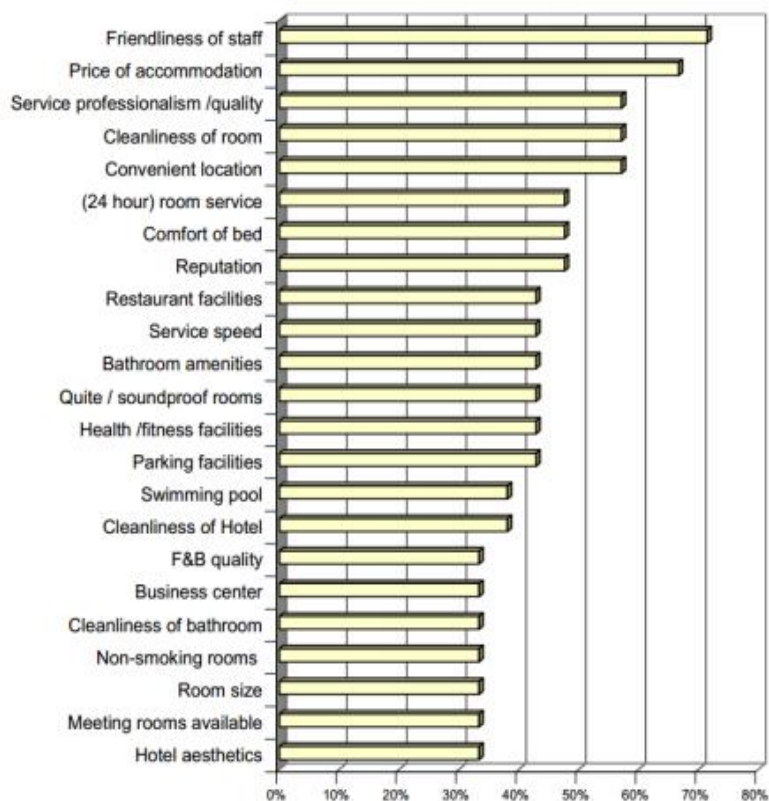


FIGURE 10: 23 Hotel items ranking (source: Dolnicar and Utter, 2003, p. 8)

## Research Methodology

### 1. Study Area

The study was conducted in Aqaba; the second largest city in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the number of hotels and the only sea port located on Aqaba Gulf in north of the Red Sea which has recently witnessed a dramatic expansion in its scope (Al-Rewashdeh, 2016). It has 43 classified offshore and beach hotels. Aqaba luxury hotels represent tourist attractions and show modern images through continuous promotional campaigns in the visual, auditory and written media. For that reason, the hotel sector in Aqaba witnessed tangible development in the last five years in terms of quality, numbers, and occupancy (MoTA, 2016). Table (1) shows the numbers of hotels, hotel apartments, and suites in Aqaba.

Table (1): The numbers of hotels. Rooms and beds in Aqaba in (2016).

Aqaba	No. of Hotel	Room	Bed
Five Stars	6	1,567	2,771
Four Stars	4	682	1,318
Three Stars	8	598	1,288
Two Stars	15	734	1,833
One stars	10	222	522
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3,803</b>	<b>7,732</b>
Apartments C	2	97	302
Suites C	2	77	154
Unclassified Hotels	17	297	762
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>4,274</b>	<b>8,950</b>

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2016).

## 2. Population and Sampling:

The study was conducted on six 5-star hotels. To get a balanced sample, the organized random methodology was followed whereupon three beach hotels and three downtown hotels. The six hotels are listed in the business of a number of travel agencies in Aqaba. The study population are all the western tourists visiting Aqaba in 2016 through a number of travel agencies (package tours) and staying in the six five

star hotels in Aqaba. The study sample consists of 312 tourists who visited Aqaba and stayed in the same hotels during September, October, and November 2016. Permission was sought from the general managers of these hotels. Guests were randomly selected from these six hotels. The questionnaires were distributed in cooperation with a number of travel agencies in Aqaba dealing mainly with western nationalities after making sure that these tourists are given a number of choices regarding the hotels. The study respondents consisted of international (western) tourists visiting Aqaba within groups. Hotels' receptionists and housekeepers assisted in making the questionnaires available to the guests in their rooms and during their checkout. 312 questionnaires were distributed, and 286 questionnaires were retrieved at the rate of (%92.3). 26 questionnaires were excluded because of incomplete responses and the unwillingness of some respondents to give the questionnaire back. The number of questionnaires valid for analysis was at the rate of (%88.5) and was suitable for statistical analysis to produce factual results for this type of studies.

## 3. The Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was designed to collect demographic data and touristic information from the study sample. The second part contained five main factors of the general characteristics or attributes of the hotel. Those factors included 48 clauses based on a review of previous related studies (Caber & Albayrak, 2014; Shanka & Taylor, 2004; Dolnicar & Otter, 2003; Choi & Chu, 2001; Chu & Choi, 2000; Gustin & Weaver, 1993). Some of these studies are conceptual and include some analytical issues of the effect of hotel attributes on the choice and length of stay. Therefore, some items of the questionnaire were derived from these studies. The questionnaire was reviewed by some academic experts in the field of tourism and managers and specialists in the hotel sector. 5-point Likert scale (very important to not at all important) was used to measure the importance of these

characteristics.

## Data Analysis: Interpretation and Discussion

In order to explore the effect of hotel attributes on tourists' choices of the hotels, five factors; image and reputation, price and value, hygiene and quality, facility, and staff, were chosen and measured using 5-points Likert scale that varies between not at all important =1 and very important =5. Also, reliability, validity, and descriptive analyses were used. In addition, t-test, ANOVA, Chi-square, and a multiple regression analysis were employed to test the research hypotheses

### 1. Reliability Analysis:

In order to ensure the reliability (Test R. test) of the study, tool has been applied twice a week with a time lag on the exploratory sample consisting of (20) respondents who, have been selected from outside the original sample. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the two applications to extract the reliability by (Test R. test). Also, in order to ensure the reliability of the study, Cronbach Alpha was calculated as shown in table (2).

**Table (2): The result of reliability (Cronbach Alpha)**

No	Factor	Cronbach	Correlation
		Alpha	Test R. test
1	Image and Reputation	0.90	0.91
2	Price and Value	0.82	0.83
3	Hygiene and Quality	0.86	0.85
4	Facilities	0.86	0.84
5	Staff	0.91	0.92
Total study tool		0.89	0.90

Table (2) shows that the highest Cronbach' alpha value reached (0.91) for the factor "Staff ". And the lowest alpha value was (0.82) for the factor "Price and Value but the total alpha values of "study tool" reached (0.89) this indicates to accept reliability.

### 2. Respondents Demographic Profile

As indicated in Table (3), nominal and ordinal scales were utilized to analyze the demographic variables of the respondents. The demographic profile of the respondents for this study showed that the males exceed significantly the females. Most of them are less than 40 years old, single, with less than 1000 (US\$), with Diploma degrees, and with a little travel experience. The length of stay average is around three nights.

**Table (3): distribution of the sample according to the personal information (n=286)**

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	189	66.08
	Female	97	33.92
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>
Income per Month (US \$)	<1000	131	45.80
	1001-2000	87	30.42
	2001-3000	38	13.29
	3001-4000	30	10.49
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	< 30	90	31.47
	31-40	111	38.81
	41-50	52	18.18
	51-60	33	11.54
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>
Education level	High School	70	24.48
	Diploma	90	31.47
	Bachelors degree	78	27.27
	Master degree	30	10.49
	Doctoral degree	18	6.29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>
Travel experience:	An inexperienced tourist	86	30.07
	Not very experienced as a tourist	112	39.16
	An experienced tourist	53	18.53
	A very experienced tourist	35	12.24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>
Hotel Location:	In the city	156	54.55
	on the beach	130	45.45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>
No. of nights spent in the hotel:	1 night	83	29.02
	2-3nights	98	34.27
	4-5nights	94	32.87
	5-6 nights	7	2.45
	7 nights and more	4	1.40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

**2. Descriptive Analysis**

For the descriptive analysis, the mean and the standard deviation were calculated to show the central tendency of the data and to measure the dispersion which offers an index of the spread or variability in the data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The level of each item was determined by the following formula: (highest point in Likert scale - lowest point in Likert scale): the number of the levels used =  $(5-1) / 5 = 0.80$ , where 1-1.80 reflected by “very low”, 1.81-2.60 reflected by “low”, 2.61-3.40 reflected by “moderate”, 3.41-4.20 reflected by “high”, and 4.21-5 reflected by “very high”. Then the items were being ordered based on their means.

Table (4) shows that the highest means reached (4.63) out of (5) for the factor " Hygiene and Quality " by high agreement degree, followed by the factor " Staff " (means

4.58), then the factors " Image and Reputation" and "Price and Value", and the lowest means was (4.26) for the factor " facilities ".

**Table (4): Means and standard deviation for each factor of "hotel attributes" and total means of them (n=286)**

No	Items	Mean	SD
1	Image and Reputation	4.54	.366
2	Price and Value	4.54	.292
3	Hygiene and Quality	4.63	.339
4	Facilities	4.26	.411
5	Staff	4.58	.452
Total Means		4.49	.206

The total means for the factors of hotel attributes" reached (4.49) by High agreement degree.

**Table (5): Means and standard deviation for hotel attributes "Image and Reputation, Price and Value, Hygiene and Quality, Facilities, Staff" factor items and total means of them (n=286)**

<b>Image and Reputation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Soundproof rooms	4.64	.604
Its safety and security	4.50	.664
Mature-specific attributes	4.37	.682
Reputation of hotel	4.65	.559
star rating and room type	4.44	.731
Hotel is part of a reputable chain	4.63	.588
Women-only floor	4.31	.797
Recommendation of friends/ tourist agency	4.78	.438
Security of hotel and surrounding area	4.40	.746
Hotel interests in environment	4.60	.605
Green gardens around the hotel.	4.67	.520
Quietness (internal & external)	4.50	.637
Manager is seen to be available for guests	4.53	.584
<b>Price and Value</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Business services and facilities	4.60	.760
Special discounts available	4.78	.500
Hotel reward programme	4.52	.653
Hotel food and beverage is value for money	4.80	.467
Hotel room is value for money	4.91	.283
No surcharge on long distance calls	3.20	.753
Incentives such as being a member of the hotel's frequent traveler Programme	4.65	.602
<b>Hygiene and Quality</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Clean rooms	4.95	.239
Comfortable mattresses and pillows	4.45	.558
Good quality towels	4.57	.598
Availability of a range of food service outlets	4.56	.605
Availability of relaxing lounge or bar	4.43	.633
In-room temperature control is of high quality	4.65	.578
Hotel food and beverage are of high quality	4.88	.328
Quality of food service equipment, linen, cutlery, glass	4.61	.523
Attractiveness and informative of the hotel's website	4.58	.592
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Fitness facilities	4.46	.613
Availability of non-smoking bedrooms,	4.36	.653
Business-related meeting rooms are available	4.42	.680
Décor of public areas, décor of bedroom	4.23	.666
Hotel check-in/check-out service are efficient	4.25	.680
Hotel food and beverage facilities are of great variety	4.38	.631
Guest room accessories,	4.40	.628
Leisure facilities are available	4.30	.615
Availability of advanced technology sets	4.38	.699
Children leisure facilities available	4.29	.760
Availability of parking	4.43	.633

Staff	Mean	SD
Well-mannered staff	3.50	.705
Staff provide efficient services	4.58	.598
Staff have multi-lingual skills	4.39	.615
Sympathetic handling of complaints	4.53	.630
Staff recognize returning customers	4.59	.607
Staff cleanliness and hygiene	4.67	.545
Staff are polite and friendly	4.69	.480
Sensitive care for handicapped people and old guests	4.62	.548

Table (5) shows that the most important attributes regarding **image and reputation** of the hotel as perceived by the respondents was the item "Recommendation of friends/ tourist agency", with the highest mean (4.78) out of (5), then the item "Green gardens around the hotel", then "reputation of hotel", then for item "soundproof rooms". The lowest means was for the item "Women-only floor". Kachiewsak (2006) reported that nine out of ten guests choose their tourist destination based on the recommendation of friends and relatives. Recommendation from relatives and friends are one of the most sought tools for those who are interested in a destination or hotel (Svec et al., 2012). Chan and Wang (2006) concluded that business tourists rely more on their own experience and the recommendation of the company, while those tourists with a little experience appreciate the travel agents' recommendation. WOM was found to affect significantly tourists' choices of a coastal destination (Isa & Ramli, 2014). Whereas, the findings contradicted with the study of Kasim (2004) who pretended that tourists do not consider the environmental issues as an important criterion when they choose a hotel. The study's findings of Juwaheer (2004), on the other hand, supports the findings of this study arguing that room attractiveness, hotel surrounding, and interest in environment were the most important hotel attributes.

The highest means for the factor "**Price and value**" reached (4.91) out of (5) for the item "Hotel room is value for money" by high agreement degree, followed by the item "Hotel food and beverage is value for money". The least important attribute with the mean (3.20) was for item "No surcharge on long distance calls". Whereas, the highest means for the factor "**Hygiene and Quality**" with (4.95) out of (5) was for the item "clean rooms" by high agreement degree, then for the item "Hotel food and beverage are of high quality", then for the item "In-room temperature control is of high quality". The lowest

means was (4.43) for the item "availability of relaxing lounge or bar" by High agreement degree. The findings of this study contradicted with that of Kim (2010) who claimed that the price of the room has no effect on hotel choice. while Zhang, Ye and Law (2011) found that there is a strong relationship between the room's quality and location and its price and a weak effect of cleanliness. Heung (2000) assured that the lack of hygiene is a prime reason for diverting tourists from a hotel. Room quality, cleanliness, and the comfort of mattress and pillow are the most important attributes that create loyalty and encourage travelers to repeat the visit (Choi & Chu, 2001). Moreover, the findings of this study

revealed that travelers rated the cleanliness of room first, followed by hotel room value for money. Lewis (1985) confirmed that room price and value are the most important attributes for leisure travellers. In this regard, hoteliers need to ensure that their hotels consider the hygienic environment as their first priority to reflect their vision. The competitive price was the second priority to reflect commitment for tourist satisfaction.

For the factor "**Facilities**", the highest means reached (4.46) out of (5) for the item "fitness facilities" by high agreement degree, then for the item "Availability of parking", then for the item "Business-related meeting rooms are available". The lowest means was (4.23) for the item "décor of public areas, décor of bedroom" by medium agreement degree. Shanka and Taylor (2004) pointed out that travelers care more of the availability of parking when they think of a hotel. Meanwhile, the highest means for the factor "**Staff**" reached (4.69) out of (5) for item "Staff are polite and friendly" by high agreement degree, followed by "Staff cleanliness and hygiene", the "Sensitive care for handicapped people and old guests", then for the item "Staff recognize returning customers". The lowest means was (4.39) for the item "Staff have multi-lingual skills". Previous studies assured

that friendly staff was the most important attributes as perceived by the hotel customers (Shanka & Taylor, 2004; Kasim, 2004; Choi & Chu, 2001).

**3. Hypotheses Testing Results**

The first hypothesis: **There is no difference in tourists’ perception to the importance of hotel attributes in terms of gender and Age.**

To test this hypothesis, frequency distribution,

percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the importance of hotel attributes. T-test was utilised to show the differences between females and males participants’ perceptions of hotel attributes. A summary of the test of differences is shown in Table 6. Thus, t-test analysis was conducted for Gender variable while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for Age and Total study tool.

**Table (6): t-test due to Gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Df	p-value
Image and Reputation	MALE	189	4.55	.411	.573	284	.567
	FEMALE	97	4.52	.255			
Price and Value	MALE	189	4.57	.321	3.106	284	.002
	FEMALE	97	4.46	.204			
Hygiene and Quality	MALE	189	4.59	.337	-3.081	284	.002
	FEMALE	97	4.72	.328			
Facilities	MALE	189	4.14	.405	-7.809	284	.000
	FEMALE	97	4.50	.300			
Staff	MALE	189	4.44	.445	-7.833	284	.000
	FEMALE	97	4.84	.332			
All items	MALE	189	4.44	.210	-6.293	284	.000
	FEMALE	97	4.59	.157			

The statistical analysis showed that Hygiene and Quality (t = -3.081, p =.002), Facilities (t = -7.809, p =.000), and Staff (t = -7.833, p =.000) were significant. For these factors, female respondents tend to have more positive perceptions of hotel attributes than male respondents. Based on these findings, it could be concluded that there were significant differences in the perspective of the importance of hotel attributes between male and females. It was found that male tourists

perceive the importance of Image and Reputation, Price, and Value over other attributes, while female tourists perceived the importance of Hygiene and Quality, Facilities, and staff over the other attributes. Chan and Wang (2006) confirmed that male visitors, especially repeat visitors, value hotel image, and reputation than female visitors. Waters (1988) confirmed that women have started to dominate the tourism market, they have been taking holidays as men or sometimes more than



men. Women, nowadays, have different needs, preferences, expectations, and attitude toward travel and destination attributes than men, and sometimes they prefer to travel solo (Bond, 2005; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2005; Hawes, 1988; Baraban, 1986). Ntimane and Tichaawa (2017) pointed out that tourists are more concerned about the friendliness and politeness of the hotel staff. Kashyap and Bojanic (2000) assured that there is a relationship between tourists' perception of a hotel

and the staff of that hotel. Omar et al., (2014) declared that female travellers are more interested in safety and quality of accommodation than men.

Table (7) shows that there are variance between variables (Age) means. Therefore, Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were calculated to test if differences in the perceptions of hotel attributes between age groups exist as shown in table (7).

**Table (7): Means and standard deviation for Total study tool" attributes" of them were extracted due to the demographic variable (Age)**

Variable	Categories	Means	Standard.
			Deviation
Age	< 30	4.44	.204
	31-40	4.47	.207
	41-50	4.63	.148
	51-60	4.51	.204
	<b>Total</b>	4.49	.206

**Table (8): The results of (ANOVA) to explore the difference of total study tool "attributes" due to the demographic variable (Age)**

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
Image and Reputation	Between Groups	2.430	3	.810	6.404	.000
	Within Groups	35.673	282	.126		
	Total	38.103	285			
Price and Value	Between Groups	2.585	3	.862	11.224	.000
	Within Groups	21.648	282	.077		
	Total	24.233	285			
Hygiene and Quality	Between Groups	.229	3	.076	.660	.577
	Within Groups	32.566	282	.115		
	Total	32.795	285			
Facilities	Between Groups	1.126	3	.375	2.256	.082
	Within Groups	46.924	282	.166		
	Total	48.051	285			
Staff	Between Groups	18.805	3	6.268	44.875	.000
	Within Groups	39.391	282	.140		
	Total	58.196	285			
All items	Between Groups	1.252	3	.417	10.809	.000
	Within Groups	10.884	282	.039		
	Total	12.135	285			

Table (8) shows that there are statistic significant differences due to Age variable in “image and reputation (F= 6.404, p =.000), price and value (F= 11.224, p =.000), and staff (F=44.875, p =.000)” in total study tool" attributes", F value (10. 809) by sig (.000).

Post hoc test (scheffe) analyses to the variance

(ANOVA) were calculated for the hotel attributes which produced significant differences by conducting pairwise comparison to identify which age group perceived hotel attributes most strongly.

Table (9) shows that there are statistically significant differences between 41-50 from one side and each of <

30 and 31-40 from the other side, in favor of each of -41-50. And between 51-60 and 41-50, in favor of 41-50 in

“Image and Reputation”. The age between 41 and 50 is considered the age of wisdom and experience.

**Table (9): the results of (scheffe) for "total study tool" due to (age) variable**

Age		Mean	< 30	31-40	41-50	51-60
Image and Reputation	< 30	4.49				
	31-40	4.54	-.05			
	41-50	4.72	-.23(*)	-.18(*)		
	51-60	4.42	.07	.12	.30(*)	
Price and Value	< 30	4.64				
	31-40	4.52	.12(*)			
	41-50	4.54	.10	-.02		
	51-60	4.32	.32(*)	.20(*)	.22(*)	
Staff	< 30	4.33				
	31-40	4.48	-.15			
	41-50	4.97	-.64(*)	-.50(*)		
	51-60	4.93	-.60(*)	-.45(*)	.04	
All items	< 30	4.44				
	31-40	4.47	-.04			
	41-50	4.63	-.19(*)	-.15(*)		
	51-60	4.51	-.07	-.04	.12	

\* The mean difference is significant at the ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) level.

There are statistically significant differences between < 30 and 31-40, in favor of < 30, and between 51-60 from one side and each of < 30, 31-40 and 41-50 from the other side, in favor of each of < 30, 31-40 and 41-50 in “**Price and Value**”. The older group did not consider price and value as an important dimension, whereas for the other three groups this variable was important. Ananth et al., (1992) divided travellers into two groups (young and old) and found that there were no significant differences between those two segments’ rating for price. Also, there are statistically significant differences between 41-50 from one side and each of < 30 and 31-40 from the other side, in favor of 41-50. And between 51-60 from one side and each of < 30 and 31-40 from the other side, in favor of 51-60 in “**Staff**”. The older group considers staff variable as an important dimension over other age groups. Older groups seek more sensitive care and attention. The results of this study contradict with results of Wie, Ruys and Miller (1999) which revealed that old people are more price sensitive. Meanwhile, Çizel et al., (2015) declared that hotel staff is the second important attribute for the hotel choice. This study revealed that older people do not care about price as much as they need better treatment and attention from the staff. Generally, there are statistically

significant differences between 41-50 from one side and each of < 30 and 31-40 from the other side, in favor of 41-50 for all items.

The second hypothesis: **There is no difference in tourists’ preferences of hotel location based on gender and Age**

To test this hypothesis, frequencies and percentage for hotel location and tourists’ socio-demographic characteristics, (Chi-square) were calculated to explore the differences between tourists’ preferences of hotel location based on their socio-demographic characteristics as shown in table (10).

Table (10) shows that there are statistically significant differences between hotel location and gender variable, Chi-Square value was (7.488) by sig (0.006.), in favor of (Male) category in location (In the city) by frequency (114). A possible explanation for this finding is that males prefer to discover the challenges and adventures of the city while the females prefer to relax on the beach and have sunbath. In addition, there are statistically significant differences between hotel location and age variable, Chi-Square value was (61.491) by sig (0.000). in favor of (< 30) category in location (In the city) by Frequency (71).

**Table (10): The results of (Chi-square) to explore differences between hotel location and tourists' socio demographic characteristics**

Variable	Categories	In the city	on the beach	Pearson Chi-Square	sig
Gender	Male	114	75	7.488	0.006
	Female	42	55		
Age	< 30	71	19	61.491	0.000
	31-40	58	53		
	41-50	27	25		
	51-60	0	33		

The third hypothesis: **There is no relationship between the No. of nights spent in the hotel and the hotel attributes.**

To test this hypothesis and to detect the relationship

between the number of nights spent in the hotel and the hotel attributes, the Multiple Regression analysis was used as shown in table (11).

**Table (11): Result of the (Multiple Regressions) analysis to detect the effect of hotel attributes on the No. of nights spent in the hotel (n=286)**

Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig (f)	B	T	Sig (t)
Image and Reputation	0.199	0.040	2.308	0.045	-.119	-1.995	.047
Price and Value					-.002	-.039	.969
Hygiene and Quality					-.041	-.680	.497
Facilities					-.096	-1.473	.142
Staff					.152	2.260	.025

a Predictors: (Constant), Staff, Image and Reputation, Hygiene and Quality, Price and Value, Facilities

b Dependent Variable: No. of Nights

Table (11) shows that there are significant relationship between the number of nights spent in the hotel and the hotel attributes, whenever "F" value was (2.308) by sig (0.045), image and reputation factor and Staff factor and have positive impact on the number of nights spent in the hotel (t= t1.996, sig 0.047, t = 2.260, sig 0.025) respectively. However, other factors haven't impact on the number of nights spent in the hotel.

**Conclusions**

This study is an attempt to explore the most important characteristics and attributes of the coastal cities' hotels that affect the hotel choice and length of stay. Understanding the important hotel attributes enables managers to ensure guests' satisfaction and the service quality. Hoteliers must have knowledge about the most important hotel attributes as perceived by guests (Chang & Wang, 2006). The findings of the study showed a strong relationship between hotel's employees and visitors' length of stay. As the way the hotel staff deal with the guests is crucial, hotels should invest in their

employees first. Guests' perception and satisfaction create a level of loyalty by recommending friends and relatives and repeat purchasing. Here, hotel attributes are the key success. Based on the current study's findings and many previous studies, it could be argued that cleanness, quietness, design, value for money, employees' qualification, and hygiene are important factors that affect the image and reputation of the hotel.

The findings of this exploratory study revealed statistically significant differences between tourists regarding the age and gender in their responses to the hotel attributes. It was found that male respondents focused more on the image and reputation and price and value than on the other attributes, while female respondents focused more on the importance of hygiene, quality, facilities, and staff than on the other attributes. Females care more than the males about the attributes and characteristics of the hotel. Tourists aged between 40-51 perceived image and reputation as the most important factor of hotel attributes, while the 51-60 group perceived staff as the most important one. In order to meet the needs and expectations of their visitors, hotels of Aqaba could apply the theory of market segmentation. Male visitors and of less than 30 years old prefer offshore hotels while female tourists and old aged tourists prefer beach hotels. The finding of this study is relatively consistent with the study of Aljasser (2017) who assured that female tourist prefer coastal cities to spend their vacations.

#### **Managerial Implications:**

The results of this study could be beneficial for a number of managerial implications. Based on the results, this study recommends the stakeholders in the hotel sector and tourism planners to invest in their employees. Hotel staff have a great effect on increasing the length of stay and repeat visitation. In addition, hoteliers should devote special attention to hygiene and cleanliness. In this context, it would be a good promotional tool to show the hygiene procedures through brochures and videos as an attempt to create clients' loyalty. For the offshore hotels, it would be recommended to care about fitness and entertainment and other facilities for young guests since

one of the findings was that young respondents prefer this kind of hotels. On the other hand, and based on the result that female respondents prefer beach hotels, specific facilities and services for females could be provided. Furthermore, offshore hotels must revise their pricing policies to attract potential tourists with lower income. As for the beach hotels providing facilities to businessmen and caring about service quality and novelty are recommended. Employees should receive great care as the study found that the tourists' length of stay increases with due to the employees' professionalism. This factor is arguably necessary to create guests' loyalty. Overall, hotels' managers should adopt a mechanism to recognize guests' behavioral intention by revising such studies to comprehend specific attributes for better service quality to keep or increase their market share.

#### **Theoretical Implications:**

The study also presents recommendations to the researchers in in this area. The findings of the study showed that there are other variables that could affect the hotel choice and length of stay and may be explored in future studies. Thus, it was suggested for other researchers to expand this study and look for more factors that could affect visitors' length of stay and the level of satisfaction in coastal cities such as guests' financial resources, free time, period of the year, and weather. For this purpose, models such as the survival model could be adopted in addition to other predictive factors. For more meaningful results, using a mixed method by, for example, interviewing a number of travel agents to talk about their experience could be beneficial. Further studies on coastal cities could be conducted to verify the policies and strategies initiated by off-shore hotels and beach hotels to attract visitors and their effects on tourists' responses. In addition, this type of study could be conducted on 3 or 4-star hotels, or different food establishments. Finally, as the current study deals with non-Arab tourists due to the work nature of the selected travel agencies, it would be recommended for future studies to conduct similar ones dealing with Arab tourists.

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## أثر الخصائص الفندقية على مدة الإقامة واختيار الفندق في المدن الساحلية: دراسة حالة العقبة

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### ملخص

عملية اختيار الفندق هي احدى اهم القرارات الشرائية للمسافرين حيث ان محفزات الاختيار مبنية على مجموعة من العوامل، حيث تعتبر خصائص الفندق والموقع (على الشاطئ او في المدينة) في المدن الساحلية من العوامل المهمة في اختيار الفندق ومدة الإقامة بالنسبة للسائح. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحديد أثر الخصائص الفندقية والموقع في المدن الساحلية على اختيار السائح للفندق وايضا العلاقة ما بين الخصائص الفندقية ومدة الإقامة. تم جمع عينة الدراسة من مجموعة من السياح المقيمين في عدد من الفنادق في مدينة العقبة الاردنية حيث بلغ حجم العينة 286 سائح. اظهرت النتائج ان هنالك أثر للعاملين في الفنادق، والصورة الذهنية، وسمعة الفندق على مدة اقامة السائح. كما توصلت الدراسة ان السياح الشباب يفضلون الإقامة في الفنادق التي تقع في داخل المدينة بينما يفضل كبار السن والاناث الفنادق التي تقع على الشاطئ. هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتقديم مجموعة من الاقتراحات الادارية لفنادق المدن الساحلية للتوافق مع حاجات ومتطلبات الزوار المحتملين وزيادة مدة اقامتهم.

الكلمات الدالة: الخصائص، الموقع، الاختيار، المدينة الساحلية، العقبة، الاردن.

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