

THE ROLE OF BREAKFAST IN HOTEL SELECTION, SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO RETURN: A TWO-FOLD APPROACH LOOKING AT GUESTS AND MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: To determine the importance guests give to breakfast when choosing and returning hotels and hotel managers' perception on this topic. Relevance of consumer behavior and satisfaction for marketing in hospitality. Two different online questionnaires sent to hotel guests (n=626) and to European managers (n=112). Namely for European guests, breakfast is among the 3 main attributes when choosing a hotel. Online information about breakfast influences breakfast's ranking and the prospect of returning. Most managers recognize breakfast as important for guests' choosing process. Breakfast is valued by hotel guests when they travel and managers should convey more descriptions of breakfast online. This is the first assessment both of travelers and managers regarding the value of breakfast for choosing and returning to hotels.

Key words: Food marketing, breakfast, hotel selection, guests, behavioural intention

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has grown significantly on a yearly basis and the hotel industry, remarkably, has not only kept up with this growth but has also surpassed itself in this sector (Spoerr, 2020). Choosing accommodation is not an unthinking act. The choice of a hotel involves intrinsic issues such as individual preferences, cultural issues, motivations, travel companions and available services, among other attributes considered important for a guest. The choice of a hotel is the first phase of a sequence of events, including accommodation, satisfaction and/or exceeding expectations, which, followed by behavioural intention, can generate customer loyalty. The hotel's food service can be one of the decisive attributes for a guest not only to choose a hotel, but also to be satisfied with their stay and to remain loyal to it. In fact, gastronomy is considered a tourist product and increasingly related to the selection of tourist destinations (Gheorghe et al., 2014; Jiménez-Beltrán, et al., 2016). In the hotel industry, food and restaurants are also very relevant attributes for and are thus important when evaluating hotels. Specifically, breakfast has a significant nutritional relevance, but more than that, for a guest, it may have an additional importance because it is the first meal of the day and is often included in the daily rate. Moreover, this meal can become a gastronomic experience, and depending on the context of the trip, and the cultural elements involved, it can represent a complete meal considering the uncertainty of daily activities that will follow throughout the day (Trancoso et al., 2010). However, few studies consider hotel breakfast as an important attribute for guests (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019) and, as far as we are aware, no study was conducted to determine breakfast as a significant determinant influencing the selection of hotels, guests' satisfaction and intention to return. As such, this hampers the potential that breakfast may assume in hotels' strategic options, positioning and communication actions. Bearing this in mind, we aimed to determine if breakfast is a relevant attribute when guests select hotels and decide on their return, to understand the way guests search for information about this meal, and to clarify factors guests consider as the most relevant as it may influence their loyalty, enable marketing actions and lead to success. In addition to the theoretical contribution, practical implications can be foreseen. To Moreover, this study also presents significant information about the hotels managers' perspectives on this topic. This manuscript includes an introduction; a literature review that provides our hypotheses and a summary of food, gastronomy and experiences, breakfast when choosing a hotel and the importance of satisfaction to return and hospitality, management and breakfast; methods describing data collection procedures and analysis; and finally, discussion and conclusions.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of food and breakfast when selecting a hotel

For the success of the enterprise and for its placement regarding the competition, it is fundamental to understand what a guest prioritizes among the various services and hotel attributes when choosing a hotel (Cobanoglu *et al.*, 2003); some amenities can be important factors in influencing this choice (Neal, 1999). The attributes that directly influence the process of choosing a hotel are called determining indicators and can become the factor of customer loyalty and differentiation of the hotel in relation to the competition, as well as a negative comment may negatively influence options for a hotel (Alpert, 1971, Aradhana and Mohan, 2022). The choice of a hotel involves several factors. Guests choose hotels that meet their needs depending on their motivation, company on the trip (alone, group of friends, children, among others) and services offered by the accommodation, among other features, including the food service (Lopes and Da Silva, 2011). Even though not very often studied, food services in hotels can be a crucial factor when considering guests' choice. According to Santich (2004), one of the meanings of hospitality is the act of welcoming guests, ensuring comfort, and meeting their needs not only for accommodation, but also for food and drink. This concept is also shared by Brotherton (1999) who says that hospitality comes from the exchange between people to improve their well-being with the provision of accommodation, food, and drink.

Food is essential for a guest, not only because of the intrinsic value of eating, but because it includes important questions for those who have been away from home for a while and are subject to new gastronomic experiences. The importance of the food service is also very important for the hotel itself, as by this means it can create a reference in this sector, impress guests, differentiate itself from the competition and stand out in the market. Therefore, as previously summarized, food and beverages can be a valued attribute for clients in hotels, but rarely breakfast has been studied determining guests' options when choosing their accommodation. Breakfast is a meal that is part of the hotel's food service and that can be decisive in choosing one accommodation unit over another according to Mun and Seo (2020), in addition to which a good breakfast can positively affect other services provided by the hotels (Tophotelnews, 2021).

Also, in 2015, a publication on Hospitalitynet.org showed that breakfast was in second place in the attributes considered the most important by guests. This meal can also change according to different personal characteristics as Kucukusta (2017) showed that the older tourists attribute greater importance to breakfast, and that this preference also varies in relation to gender, because according to the author men give more importance at breakfast than women. Therefore, developing research on how breakfast can be fundamental to guests, or to specific group of guests, during their selection process and returning intentions, will influence marketing options and potential gains over competition. Therefore, the following research hypotheses were proposed for the present study:

H1: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel

How the online information about the hotel's breakfast influences the selection process

As stated above, choosing a hotel involves several aspects. This process is another intrinsic issue that undergoes constant modification on the part of customers who update their information sources, either through direct access to hotel websites, often complemented by access to online guest comments, or via the hotel itself. The evolution of the choice process comes from the modification of demand and the expectation of the product (Otto and Ritchie, 1996).

The internet has become essential for consumers, adding information to them (Yilmaz, 2020), whether for buying or selling products and services, and hospitality is no different. More and more hotel sales are made on online platforms, where the characteristics of the accommodations, photos and online reviews from users are presented. This has become a complete source of information that facilitates decision-making and the process of choosing a hotel; that is, the process of choice and also post-purchase is made with analysis of various sources of information available online that help the guest make their decisions (Chan *et al.*, 2017; Hlee and Koo, 2018). According to Milan (2007), online opinions and comments are much more credible when it comes to choosing a hotel than its own characteristics, which is in line with Chittiprolu *et al.* (2021), who say that customers check reviews online before booking a hotel. The topic of breakfast in the hotel industry does not seem to be considered very often by researchers (Trancoso *et al.*, 2010; Leite-Pereira *et al.*, 2019). Nevertheless, it is one of the most frequent attributes in online comments made by guests on hotel sales platforms. According to Leite-Pereira *et al.* (2020) more than half of online comments (56%) about four- and five-star hotels are about breakfast, and the reasons are diverse, such as: being the first meal of the day, because it is often included in the daily rate, or due to being a moment of gastronomic experience, presenting local foods, among other characteristics. In the same study, we showed that when images or texts related to breakfast are published, either on hotel websites or online sales platforms, comments about that meal are more frequent (Leite-Pereira *et al.*, 2020). Helvig (2022) in their study also about online comments by guests in hotels' platforms from found that one of the four topics most cited, both positively and negatively, was breakfast. However, in this study guests were only from hotels located at airports. In another study, addressing online comments as well, Wang *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that online reviews from customers of three-star hotels report more about the breakfast meal than customers of other hotels ranking, despite not checking other guest characteristics. Therefore, the choice of a hotel can be combined with the choice of accommodation with a good breakfast if it identifies that meal with comments or photos. If breakfast is important for the customer looking for accommodation, this information will make a difference at the time of booking. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H2: Information on breakfast on online platforms influences the selection of a hotel

Customer satisfaction with hotel meals and their behavioural intention

Customer satisfaction has been a very important part of administrative marketing as satisfying customers can bring

benefits such as loyalty and increased revenues (Liu and Jang, 2009). Satisfaction refers to the difference between expectation and perception after consumption, meaning that when the performance reaches the expectation it generates satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). For Poon and Low (2005), consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the result of the interaction between expectations in the pre-purchase phase and the evaluation in post-purchase. When the experience results in positive feelings, tourists are satisfied and this makes them recommend the service and make positive comments about the destination (Chen and Chen, 2010; Bam and Kunwar (2020). Buying behaviour and customer decisions depend on a satisfactory assessment of their affective experiences about a product or service (Han and Hyun, 2017).

In catering services, the customer's perception of quality must be positive so that satisfaction and the intention of positive behaviour is achieved (Ha and Jang, 2010). Still on the theme of catering, Han and Ryu (2007) found that improving the level of customer satisfaction is essential to increasing intentions of return and recommendation and to Choe et al. (2018) and to Yoon and Chung (2018) the satisfaction had significantly positive effect on behavioral intention.

Customer loyalty has become an essential factor for the success of hotel ventures. According to Oliver (1999), loyalty is the repeated purchase of the same product or service, ignoring external influences and also is the intention of reacquiring a product or service based on one's positive experiences combined with future needs (Lee and Cunningham (2001).

Some authors agree that the food and beverage services in the hotel are responsible for the satisfaction and loyalty of guests (Parasuraman et al., 1988), and for good reviews of the establishment (AbuKhalifeh and Som, 2012), even though specific studies on breakfast are rare. More specifically, in restaurant services, quality is also extremely important. The quality of the food does in fact seem to be decisive for a gastronomic experience, in addition to being the essential product in choosing a restaurant and customer loyalty, followed by the quality of the service (Mattila, 2001). On the other hand, customer dissatisfaction is also related to the lack of quality of food, recognized by Yang and Mattila (2012) as the "failure in the central service", which calls into question the customer's relationship with the service in a definitive way.

For Han and Hyun (2017), in the restaurant area, the quality of a product, in addition to the physical part (food and facilities), encompasses intangible experiences. Tangible factors refer to physical aspects, such as the environment (or facilities) and the quality of food, while intangibles include quality of service, that is, service, characteristics of employees and prices, among others (Ryu and Lee, 2017). The catering service of a hotel offers several meals (breakfasts, lunches, sometimes snacks and dinners) and, as such, it can easily promote local food and gastronomy.

The inclusion of local products in hotels' food services in all meals, not only at breakfast, increases the local producers' efficiency and therefore local economy. This, together with activities and promotions, help in the promotion of a tourist destination and in the sustainability of its accommodation network (Brunori and Rossi, 2000; Alonso and Liu, 2012).

Food, besides being essential for guests, can be a differentiating feature of the accommodation, adding to a good customer experience and bringing comfort to one's stay. Particularly, breakfast, as the first meal, may well provoke this in a guest. If guests are pleased with breakfast, e.g., food's variety and quality, this will be decisive to their satisfaction and subsequently, their intention to return. Knowing the customers and providing targeted products that not only please but surprise them brings satisfaction, exceeds expectations, and as a consequence generates a positive experience (Oh et al., 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Breakfast as part of hotel catering can be another attribute which can generate satisfaction and influencing the return and loyalty of customers. As such, taking this into account, the following hypothesis was thus considered feasible:

H3: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention

Hospitality, management, and breakfast

Among the actions of hotel managers, being aware of constant changes in market trends and acting proactively so that their accommodation always meets the needs of customers is essential to adequately position the hotel in the market and to achieve advantages over competitors. Managers' attention to these factors can also bring focus to investments as they keep up with market demands (Nebel and Ghei, 2007). Attracting customers is an essential factor for the hotel business and has reinvented itself with the increasingly essential use of digital platforms. With the use of social networks, new ways of attracting customers have emerged, and using these digital media to obtain new customers and retain them is an increasingly used form of marketing strategy, with low costs and very positive results (Gomes and Mondo, 2016). Another advantage of social networks is the dissemination of the brand and services, rapid communication and wide reach.

Access to or knowledge of online comments from hotel sales platforms is a way to determine the guest demand and customer (dis)satisfaction factors as it is known that positive comments greatly influence the hotel's rating and acquisition of new guests. Meeting or exceeding guests' expectations and satisfying them is a very important factor for hotel businesses. According to Bettman et al. (2008), knowing the choices and promoting satisfaction is fundamental for the success of a hotel. Therefore, knowing what guests look for and what is of value at breakfast, a meal which is so important for these clients, is fundamental for the hotel. The authors Lee et al. (2018) in a study on breakfast food preferences suggests that hotel managers should add guests' favorite foods to attract them. According to Kuhn et al. (2018), breakfast is one of the services provided by hotels that stands out the most, exerting great influence on the choice of hotel, in addition to being a service that can impress and surprise the customer at breakfast, both with the level of product quality as well as service. It is also a unique moment for the hotelier to attract guests (Kuhn et al., 2018; Trancoso, 2008). In summary, by better understanding consumers we may improve strategies to attract them, satisfy their expectations and enhance loyalty. To achieve this, managers have at their disposal several tools namely social media and internet, where guests may describe their experiences and comments. By focusing on breakfast as a relevant attribute, marketing processes may well lead to gains over other competitors.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

Two online questionnaires (one directed at hotel guests, and another applied to hotel managers) were developed specifically for this study. LimeSurvey software was used for that purpose.

The survey applied to guests was developed according to references in the field of tourism and hospitality (Illum et al., 2010; McCarthy et al., 2010), a method which has also been used in studies in the area of gastronomy (Lee et al., 2015).

This questionnaire includes 30 questions designed to answer the hypotheses and it includes 4 groups of questions:

- The first part is related to information about the last stay in a hotel where breakfast was served (motivation and companions during travel, reasons to select and to return to the hotel, location and ranking of the hotel, and length of stay and travel);
- The second part consists of specific questions about breakfast and on whether breakfast is considered important both in life and when choosing hotels and on breakfast quality;
- The third part was developed to understand the importance of services related to gastronomy, namely breakfast;
- The last part concerned personal information, with questions related to age, sex and nationality, among others.

In table 1 we can verify the relationship between the research hypotheses and the questions used in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Relation between research hypothesis and the survey questions

Hypothesis	Questions
H1: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel	Why did you choose that hotel? Please select the 3 top reasons. If the breakfast was important or very important to choose this hotel, please indicate how did you know about it? How would you rank the importance you gave the breakfast when choosing the last hotel you stayed in?
H2: Information on breakfast in online platforms influences the selection of a hotel	If the breakfast was important or very important to choose this hotel, please indicate how did you know about it.
H3: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention	In your opinion, please rank from 1 to 5 (1=very bad to 5=very good) the breakfast at this hotel? Would you return to that hotel because of breakfast?

Most of the answers to the questions were made using five-point Likert scales or with scales that varied between “not important at all” and “extremely important” (Nemoto and Beglar, 2014). Multiple choice questions were also included when applicable. Most responses were mandatory, except for open questions, of which there were only three, and in the form of suggestions. This questionnaire was developed both in Portuguese and in English and validated after an initial test with 15 responses, having undergone minor modifications, namely in terms of translation. A second questionnaire was sent by email to hotel managers including a link to the built survey. This includes personal information, hotel information and specific questions about breakfast. At the end of the questionnaire, an open question was asked about promotion strategies or investments in breakfast.

Participants

For the first survey and as stated above, the LimeSurvey program was used to prepare the questionnaire and the link to it was sent using participants' social networks (WhatsApp, Facebook) and email between 05/29/2020 and 08/14/2020. The defined population was unknown and a non-probabilistic sample (by convenience); a total of 626 fully completed questionnaires was collected and analysed. The second survey was sent to all managers on the list of European four- and five-star hotels (n = 112) used in a previous publication (Leite-Pereira et al., 2020) between 09/01/2020 and 16/06/2020. The email available on the hotels' websites was used. Nine questionnaires were retrieved (7%) and analysed.

List of variables and statistical analysis

The questionnaire data were exported and computed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programme. Proportions were used to describe dichotomic ordinal and nominal variables. Chi-square testing was used for comparing distributions and stepwise logistic regression was used to estimate interaction between factors and the importance given to the hotel.

Hypotheses

For hypothesis **H1**: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel, the statistical analysis was planned to determine the proportion of guests a) considering breakfast in the top three attributes when choosing a hotel, b) the importance (high or extreme importance) given to breakfast in hotels and c) specifically at the last hotel where that guest stayed. **H2**: Information on breakfast on online platforms influences the selection of a hotel, was assessed by determining the proportion of sources which provided information about breakfast and how this leads breakfast to be considered among the top three attributes when choosing a hotel. By determining the proportions of guests returning to the same hotel according to their perspective regarding breakfast, **H3**: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention, was evaluated.

RESULTS

Guests' perspectives

In Table 2, the main characteristics of guests participating in our study are summarized. A total of 626 questionnaires were analysed. Forty-four percent were participants with ages between 35 and 54 years old and 431 were completed by women (69%). Most participants were married (48%). Sixty-two percent were living in Europe or were Europeans (57%). Among non-Europeans, an important proportion was from South America (42%). Thirty-three percent had an annual income between €1001 and €3500. As concerns the travel itself, 77% of guests answered that the reason for staying in the last hotel they visited was leisure or vacations and 57% were couples (32% without and 25% with children). 57% of trips were made to four- or five-star hotels.

Table 2. Characteristics of sample and the relative distribution according to the importance gives to breakfast (n=626) (*chi-square)

		Breakfast									
		Top 3	<i>p</i> *	Importance in hotels (high or extremely important)	<i>p</i> *	Importance in the last hotel (high or extremely important)	<i>p</i> *	Breakfast in last hotel (good or very good)	<i>p</i> *	Reason to return	<i>p</i> *
		157 (25)		438 (70)		298 (48)		469 (75)		401 (64)	
Age (years) n (%)			0.622		0.043		0.027		0.032		0.417
18-34	227 (36)	62 (27)		153 (67)		99 (44)		158 (70)		144 (63)	
35-54	272 (44)	65 (24)		204 (72)		146 (54)		218 (80)		181 (66)	
≥55	127 (20)	30 (24)		81 (64)		54 (42)		94 (74)		76 (60)	
Gender n (%)			0.169		<0.001		<0.001		0.013		0.002
Male	195 (31)	511 (73)		295 (23)		395 (46)		290 (42)		333 (32)	
Female	431 (69)	115(27)		331 (77)		231 (54)		336 (58)		293 (68)	
Marital status n(%)			0.618		0.182		0.029		0.929		0.315
Single	221 (35)	58 (26)		149 (67)		91 (41)		162 (73)		143 (65)	
Married	294 (48)	69 (23)		216 (74)		157 (53)		221 (75)		189 (64)	
Consensual union	59 (9)	19 (32)		42 (71)		28 (48)		45 (76)		36 (61)	
Divorced	41 (6,5)	9 (22)		23 (56)		15 (37)		32 (78)		29 (71)	
Other	11 (2)	2 (18)		8 (73)		7 (64)		9 (82)		4 (36)	
Region of residence n(%)			0.074		0.771		0.482		0.850		0.100
European	385 (61,5)	106 (28)		271 (70)		179 (46)		287 (75)		237 (62)	
Non-European	241 (38,5)	51 (22)		167 (69)		119 (49)		182 (76)		164 (68)	
Monthly individual income (€) n(%)			0.948		0.224		0.969		0.043		0.066
<600	64 (10)	17 (27)		45 (70)		30 (47)		48 (75)		39 (61)	
600-750	40 (6)	9 (23)		28 (70)		18 (45)		26 (65)		31 (78)	
751-1000	98 (16)	27 (26)		64 (65)		43 (44)		63 (64)		63 (64)	
1001-3500	207 (33)	53 (26)		155 (75)		101 (49)		160 (77)		123 (59)	
>3500	84 (13)	18 (21)		51 (61)		41 (49)		64 (76)		49 (58)	
Do not know	133 (21)	33 (25)		95 (71)		65 (49)		108 (81)		96 (72)	

Table 3: Characteristics of guest's last stay and the relative distribution according to the importance given to breakfast (*chi-square)

		Breakfast									
		Top 3	<i>p</i> *	Importance in hotels (high or extremely important)	<i>p</i> *	Importance in the last hotel (high or extremely important)	<i>p</i> *	Breakfast in last hotel (good or very good)	<i>p</i> *	Reason to return	<i>p</i> *
		157 (25)		438 (70)		298 (48)		469 (75)		401 (64)	
Motivation n (%)			0.032		0.195		0.278		0.422		0.792
Vacations or pleasure	482 (77)	135 (28)		351 (73)		243 (50)		364 (76)		312 (65)	
Working/business	64 (10)	6 (9)		39 (61)		24 (38)		48 (75)		43 (67)	
Congresses or exhibitions	25 (4)	4 (16)		17 (68)		10 (40)		14 (56)		13 (52)	
Study	13 (2)	2 (15)		6 (46)		4 (31)		9 (69)		7 (54)	
Health	2 (0)	0		1 (50)		1 (50)		2 (100)		1 (50)	
Visiting family or friends	34 (5)	8 (24)		20 (59)		12 (35)		27 (79)		22 (65)	
Religion	2 (0)	0		1 (50)		1(50)		1 (50)		1(50)	
Gastronomy	1 (0)	0		1 (100)		1(100)		1 (100)		1(100)	
Other	3 (0,5)	2 (68)		2 (68)		2 (68)		3 (100)		1 (33)	
Companions n (%)			0.042		0.026		0.002		0.009		0.398
Couple with no children	199 (32)	62 (31)		138 (69)		92 (46)		138 (69)		120 (60)	
Couple with children	159 (25)	38 (24)		123 (77)		96 (60)		128 (81)		105 (66)	
Single	75 (12)	10 (13)		43 (57)		27 (36)		49 (65)		46 (61)	
Group	122 (19,5)	28 (23)		88 (72)		56 (46)		101 (19)		86 (70)	
Other	71 (11)	19 (27)		46 (68)		27 (38)		18 (75)		44 (62)	
Location of hotel n (%)			0.021		0.710		0.902		0.344		0.15
European	386 (62)	109 (28)		268 (69)		183 (47)		284 (74)		233 (60)	
Non-European	240 (38)	48 (20)		170 (71)		115 (48)		185 (77)		168 (70)	
Ranking n (%)			0.254		<0.001		0.001		<0.001		0.070
1-3*	235 (43)	59 (25)		141 (60)		86 (36)		144		138 (58)	
4*	277 (44)	72 (26)		216 (78)		149 (54)		232 (84)		185 (67)	
5*	83 (13)	17 (20)		64 (77)		48 (58)		76 (92)		57 (69)	
Other	31 (5)	9 (29)		17 (55)		11 (36)		17 (55)		21 (68)	
Number of nights	5,29; 3 (1-151)										
			0.269		0.834		0.272		0.017		0.017
≤ 3		86 (27)		222 (70)		145 (45)		226 (71)		190 (60)	
>3		71 (23)		216 (70)		153 (50)		243 (79)		211 (69)	

Validation of hypotheses

H1: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel

In Figure 1, the attributes most sought after by guests when choosing a hotel were: location (81%), price (60%) and facilities (49%). Twenty-five percent of participants considered breakfast in the top three attributes when choosing a hotel (Figure 1 and Table 3). Also, 70% of respondents find breakfast very or extremely important when staying in a hotel and 48% considered it very or extremely important in the last hotel (Table 3), which allows us to confirm H1. Twenty-eight percent of guests on vacation or pleasure trips considered breakfast in the top three attributes when choosing a hotel, as did 24% among those visiting family or friends, whereas between 9% for those travelling for business and 16% for congresses prioritize breakfast ($p = 0.032$). In multivariate analysis, women seem to give higher importance to the breakfast at the last hotel than men (Odds Ratio (OR) 2.094 (1.452-3.021) and those tourists travelling as a family (OR 2.394 (1.343-4.270)). There is a trend that a greater number of days a guest stays in a hotel, the greater the possibility of returning to the hotel. Guests of four- (44%) and five-star (13%) hotels find breakfast very or extremely important when choosing a hotel and rated the breakfast as good or very good in the last hotel where they stayed. Couples with children seem to be independently related, considering the breakfast in the last hotel as good or very good (OR 2.439 (1.257-4.733)).

H2: Information on breakfast on online platforms influences the selection of a hotel

Most tourists booked on online booking platforms (40.8%), among which Booking.com stood out with 36.4% of bookings made. The sources of information to access the breakfast features were

obtained mostly from online reviews (23%) and from photos on the online booking platforms (45%) (Table 4). Guests that access information about breakfast through online review or ranks of breakfast on booking platforms seem to consider returning to the hotel because of breakfast ($p < 0.001$). Also, travellers considering breakfast in top 3 seem to seek information in booking platform pictures and online reviews more often – Figure 2. This confirms H2.

H3: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention

Sixty-four percent of guests stated that they would return to that hotel because of its breakfast, with 44% and 31% considering the breakfast in their last hotel good and very good respectively. Among these, 76% ($n = 358$) would return to that hotel because of breakfast (confirming H3, that is, satisfaction with breakfast hotels leads them to return to this service). In multivariate analysis, being a woman seems to be the sole fact influencing return (OR 1.710 (1.208-2.421)).

Managers' perspectives

Among managers, 67% think breakfast is important, very important or extremely important for guests when they make a hotel reservation (see Table 5). 84% of managers belong to five-star hotels and are mostly men between the ages of 35 and 44. All hotel managers agreed that online comments are the most important way to inform guests about the hotel's breakfast. When asked about what guests value in that meal, managers who considered breakfast important to guests (67%) think that

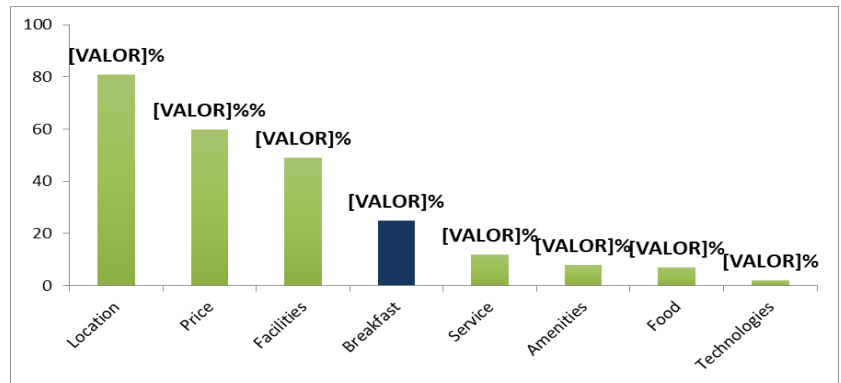


Figure 1. Attributes that were considered more relevant by guests when choosing a hotel (percentage of respondents)

Table 4. Source of information among guests that considered breakfast important or very important when choosing an hotel and among those that considered breakfast a reason to return to that hotel (*chi-square)

Source of information regarding the breakfast n (%)		Reason to return 401 (64)	p^*
Pictures, hotel website	136 (22)	93 (68)	<0.001
Pictures, booking platforms	140 (22)	80 (57)	
Online reviews	144 (23)	102 (71)	
Ranks of breakfast, booking platforms	42 (7)	35 (83)	
Previous experience	70 (11)	55 (73)	
Other	94 (15)	40 (43)	

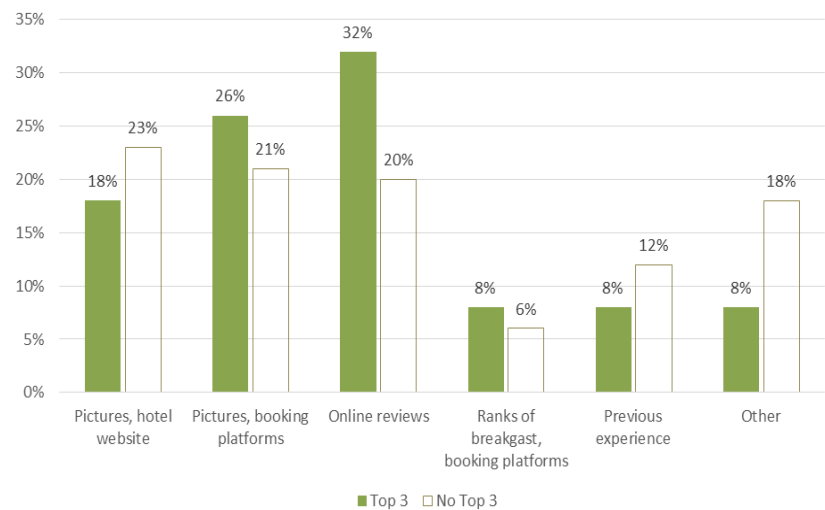


Figure 2. The source of information about breakfast when guests considering breakfast in top 3 (percentage of respondents)

service and quality are the most valued attributes, whereas for managers who responded that breakfast was not an important meal for guests, 100% belong to four-star hotels and think that variety is the most important factor for guests at that meal.

Table 5. Characteristics about hotels' managers and their responses about clients and breakfast (# <25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-64 years old; **)

	Global N=9	importance of breakfast for your costumers before they make a reservation in any hotel ?	
		Low importance (n=3)	Important/very important /extremely important (n=6)
Age # (median, years)	35-44	35-44	35-44
Gender (male/female)	4/4	0/3	4/1
Academic background (bachelor/master)	5/4	2/1	3/3
Experience ** (median, years)	2-5	2-5	5-11
Hotels (4*/5*)	4/5	3/0	1/5
Booking (platform, hotel site, phone)	53/25/18	53/15/18	52/31/17
Important of online comments (important / very important / extremely important)	2/2/5	1/1/1	1/1/4
Features of your hotel's breakfast			
Variety	4	2	2
Quality	4	1	3
Service	4	1	3
Free	1	1	0
Other	2	0	2

DISCUSSION

The hotel industry is constantly updating according to the demand of guests that search for service innovations meeting and satisfying their needs. These services have been undergoing modifications and improving in hotel activity (Aradhana and Mohan, 2022). Food services are one of the most important parts of the tourism industry, it really is not easy to think about hospitality and not include food and breakfast (Carvão, 2010; Zampollo, 2013). In addition, the food and beverage departments generate relevant revenue in hospitality businesses, in addition to positively affecting customer loyalty and satisfaction with the hotel (Ozan, 2018). Breakfast is not often studied in the field of tourism and hospitality, but it can be a differential service to attract customers and retain them. Results have demonstrated that 25% of respondents would rank breakfast among the top 3 most important attributes when choosing a hotel. Some recent studies, even though not specifically addressing breakfast, mention this meal an attribute referred by guests, demonstrating a trend about this topic and justifying why it is relevant to further increase our understanding on factors determining guests' motivations and perspectives (Padma and Ahn, 2020; Peres and Paladini, 2022).

This research also concludes that among the surveyed guests, 70% believe that breakfast in hotels is very or extremely important, and 48% consider very or extremely important to consider this meal when choosing a hotel. Of the respondents, 64% would return to the hotel because of breakfast, which shows that guests value this meal.

The results have also allowed to confirm that the importance of this meal in hotels is three times higher for women than for men, which demonstrates that there are gendered differences in the perspective towards food.

In what gender is concerned, the study reveals that among women, the importance that breakfast had in the last hotel they stayed in is twice as high as among men and even more if the trip includes children. The greater concern of women with food, specifically with breakfast, can be seen in Siro et al. (2008), who mention women as being more interested in food issues and nutrition. Campbell (2013) also cited the importance that women give to the quality of children's food.

What makes tourists intend to return and retain the hotel is satisfaction or surpassing it. Tourists' satisfaction with the hotel accommodations where they stay is very important, as it represents a positive experience and their well-being (Furtado et al., 2022). Well-proportioned positive experiences, in addition to the intention to return, cause positive publicity on the part of the client (Tung and Ritchie, 2011). Therefore, a breakfast that satisfies and impresses a customer, in addition to creating a positive experience, can be an attribute that causes loyalty and can generate positive online comments.

The attributes that hotel guests most value in breakfast is the quality of the food (80%). This was referred to as the most important attribute of that meal. Mattila (2001) also cited this attribute as one of the most important criteria even when choosing restaurants, a fact also verified by Ryu and Han (2010), who cited the importance of food quality in the satisfaction of customers. It was also found that guests who place breakfast among the most important attributes of a hotel seek information about that meal through the photos on the hotel sales platforms and also in the online reviews of former guests, which confirms the importance of these comments for hotels. This was confirmed by da Silva Freitas (2017), who reports that 60% of users consulted online comments before making a purchase decision. Moreover, the content of online comments is also responsible for the sustainability of a hotel, as they describe content that managers are often unable to modify, creating the hotel's reputation (Peres and Paladini, 2022). However, when asked, 67% of managers replied that breakfast was an important meal for guests, which perhaps shows the lack of knowledge on the part of these professionals about the tendency and priorities of guests. According to Petrocchi (2003), among the areas of hotel management, services related to food are those that require greater attention and effective administration to serve customers.

This is in agreement with Pilis et al. (2022) that reports that guests are increasingly demanding and influencing gastronomy itself and consequently the management of tourism businesses. In a previous systematic review (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019), only two studies published in recent years referred to breakfast as a relevant attribute to guests. After that, Kuhn et al. (2018) also cite breakfast as a key characteristic when choosing a hotel. Also, recently, the

importance of breakfast was reported by Leite-Pereira et al. (2020) due to the considerable presence of online reviews on this dimension. In this study of online comments on a hotel sales platform, breakfast was cited by 56% of guests. With this study we confirm breakfast as an important factor and a tendency in hospitality.

CONCLUSION

The food services of the lodging facilities are a way of understanding the relationship that is established between the company and its consumer – the tourist. After all, the quality, variety and promptness of these services are a parameter to understand the ways in which the tourist is served, the structure that the means of accommodation offer, and the relationship that is established between these two centres.

Knowing what attributes guests seek and value at breakfast, a meal so important to the customer, therefore seems essential for the hotel as it favours the choice of accommodation. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study assessing both guests and managers; for hotel managers, knowing the profile of customers, their preferences, what they value, what they seek and what they prioritize in a hotel, can be determining factors in satisfaction, which is essential for clients' loyalty. This has clear impacts in its competitiveness and success.

In conclusion, hotel guests value breakfast significantly when they travel, particularly women and tourists travelling with children. Managers should give more attention to breakfast in their hotel's description on online platforms as this seems to significantly influence the source of information about breakfast by guests and the choice of and return to hotels.

Guests' loyalty is one of the most important factors in hotels' sustainability, as it generates greater competitiveness, leading to the success and market sharing of a specific hotel. The economic sustainability of a hotel is also responsible for the increase in local economy as it contributes to a higher dynamic in local and traditional commerce, jobs creation, increase in family income and also in tax contribution (Mitchell et al., 2015; So et al., 2016)

This research's results can provide the basis for the development of more assertive marketing initiatives in hosting offering customer loyalty, by creating a better knowledge of the clients' profile, motivations and preferences. The subject of this research relates primarily to health and well-being issues and with the relevance of lived experiences in travel and tourism. The consumer profile has changed significantly in this sense with the covid-19 pandemic, making tourists more concerned with their health and well-being (Bajpai et al., 2022) Therefore, it is believed that the present study may bring even more relevant results for hotel companies and tourism organizations.

Practical Implications

To completely understand guests is an asset for a hotel, as it enables the establishment to satisfy and retain them. From this study, we know the attributes that guests prioritize when choosing a hotel and that breakfast is present among them. In addition, to know how guests seek information about this meal, and how it influences the return and/or loyalty to the establishment may be relevant to managers. Moreover, managers can adapt to their guests, prioritizing the attributes that they value most to please them and stand out from the competition. The questionnaires to the managers give the same information if they are correctly focusing on the priorities of the guests and the possibility of adjusting to these needs. Ultimately, the satisfaction of guests with a very important part of their stay, for those who value breakfast, will certainly bring positive impacts also for recommendation (both traditional and electronic word-of-mouth), upgrading the establishments competitive position in the market. In summary, this study increases the knowledge about guests' profiling and brings significant insights on the changes in marketing strategies that will potentially determine clients' satisfaction and loyalty.

Theoretical Implications

This is the first study about breakfast assessing both guests and managers, in addition to being specifically focused on that meal as an attribute that influences guests' choice of hotels and their return.

Moreover, we sent the survey to worldwide guests (different from previous studies, that were focused on Asian tourists (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019) and European managers from all European capitals in four- and five-star hotels.

Limitations and Future Research

This study presented a perspective of hotel managers on the importance of breakfast for guests. However, these data should be considered with caution, due to the limited number of responses received in this survey. This is in fact the main limitation of our manuscript. We have provided a solid assessment of guests' perspective on breakfast when booking a hotel for the first time, but also when they return. The choice of an online survey can be criticized, as it may include memory bias. However, in order not to expose guests directly to the researcher (that is, versus direct questionnaires or phone calls), during an important meal, we think we were able to circumvent the bias. Studies on the characteristics of breakfast or guests' preference for that meal should be performed, bringing even more information to hotel managers in its preparation and service. Also, studies with a greater number of managers would further increase the degree of information they have about this meal. Considering that this study was mainly developed before the covid-19 pandemic, it is suggested that it can be replicated alongside the post-covid tourists, to analyze the evolution of the importance of breakfast before and after the pandemic, as well as the main changes in operations related to breakfast management in this context.

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