

## Ranking the Importance of Hotel Selection Attributes for Senior Tourists in Egyptian Resorts: A Comparison among Three Markets

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### Abstract

Although there have been a number of researches investigating the needs of senior tourists, the existing tourism and hospitality literature is still limited in some area. In fact, the issue whether the senior tourists' importance ratings of hotel attributes are similar across the different nationalities is an underexplored topic. Therefore, the current study aims to identify the importance of hotel attributes to Egyptian, British, and Russian senior tourists when selecting a hotel. Specifically, the current study presents the findings of a quantitative study of 108 Egyptian, 82 British, and 96 Russian senior tourists in terms of hotel selection attributes in three 5-star international resort hotels in Sharm El-Sheikh. The study employed the means and the factor analysis to rank the importance of 38-hotel attributes across the three nationalities. The variance analysis was also used to determine whether significant differences existed among the three sets of respondents in relation to the hotel selection attributes. The present study intends to contribute to the literature on senior tourist market by underlying the importance of hotel attributes to the aforementioned three market segments, particularly in a destination such as Egypt. Furthermore, acknowledging the importance of hotel selection attributes to senior tourists could potentially help hotels meet the needs of such a lucrative market in a way that satisfies their needs and increase repeat business.

**Keywords;** Hotel selection attributes; senior tourists; Egyptian tourist market; British tourist market; Russian tourist market.

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### INTRODUCTION

Seniors are healthier and wealthier than antecedent generations, and they are more flexible in their travel periods than other categories of travellers. Hence, tourism providers will have to adapt their product range to the needs and preferences of senior travellers.<sup>(1)</sup> The Senior market trend is a global one with an increasing existence in all the continents and in every type of country, from the most advanced to developing countries.<sup>(2)</sup> Demographic estimations reveal that the importance of the senior market has been growing to services industries, including tourism and hospitality, because the share of seniors in the world population is continuously increasing, and this trend is expected to be constant in the future.<sup>(3)</sup> The population of senior citizens has increased steadily over the past decades from 8% in 1950 to 11% in 2001 and is expected to reach 22% by 2050.<sup>(4)</sup> This suggests that worldwide the senior travellers market would become a substantial and increasingly important segment.<sup>(5)</sup> These clients have time to travel during the year whenever they want, independent of the official holiday and school-break periods.<sup>(6)</sup> Furthermore, time flexibility after retirement makes the senior market more attractive to tourism businesses that suffer from seasonal demand fluctuations.<sup>(7)</sup> The longer lifespan and greater numbers of seniors who are educated, healthy and self-sufficient members of society, together with the larger discretionary income, may motivate them to take part in society and leisure activities such as overseas travel.<sup>(8)</sup> The senior market has been thus cited as one of the most important consumer segments of the tourism industry.<sup>(9-10)</sup>

Although "calendar age" is the most common criterion for distinguishing senior people, no consensus exists especially about when this period of life begins.<sup>(3)</sup> A number of researchers<sup>(11-14)</sup> stated that seniors are people who are 55 years of age and above; other researchers<sup>(15-18)</sup> suggested that people who are 50 years of age and above should be considered "seniors". Moreover, while some researchers<sup>(19)</sup> distinguished two categories of this age-group, namely pre-senior (between 50 and 64 years) and senior ( $\geq 65$  years), the World Health Organisation<sup>(20)</sup> identified people aged  $\geq 65$  years as seniors. In the present study, in line with several researchers,<sup>(11-14)</sup> we consider people aged 55 years and above as seniors. Such an age choice was also made in an attempt to be in harmony with other scholarly researchers who suggested that people who are  $\geq 50$  or  $\geq 65$  should be regarded as seniors.

In fact, several scholarly researchers<sup>(21-24)</sup> in the general consumer behavior literature have stated that the older consumer market has become more heterogeneous than younger consumers in terms of preferences, motives, and spending power. Such evidence is also found in the hospitality and tourism literature, and it echoes the importance of acknowledging seniors' travel intentions to marketers who attempt to target such a lucrative market.<sup>(25)</sup> Basically, a tourism demand is growing around the senior tourist markets, and if destinations, especially those visited for sun, sea and sand motivations, efficiently cater to the needs of the senior market, they can shift tourism flows from peak to low seasons.<sup>(26)</sup>

Although there have been a number of researches investigating the needs of senior travellers, the existing tourism and hospitality literature is still limited in some area.<sup>(3)</sup> In fact, the issue whether the senior travellers' importance ratings of hotel attributes are similar across the different age segments or nationalities is an underexplored topic.<sup>(12,27)</sup> therefore, this study aims to identify the importance of hotel attributes for Egyptian, British, and Russian senior tourists when selecting a hotel. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study in Egypt that sought to investigate the importance of hotel attributes for senior tourists across several nationalities, thereby filling a gap in the empirical data regarding this important market. The findings of the study could be beneficial to senior travellers because they would help hotels in the proper tailoring of their products and services in a way that satisfies the needs of such a market.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In a previous study,<sup>(28)</sup> using 53 hotel attributes, it was discovered that "cleanliness," "convenience of location," "room price," "easy access from main roads," "security systems," and "parking lot lighting" were the most important attributes when selecting a hotel for senior travellers. Another study<sup>(29)</sup> compared the importance ratings of 57 hotel attributes between two segments of senior and younger travellers by using median age of 59 years old. The results revealed no significant differences between senior and younger travellers' ratings for "price and quality," "security and convenience of location," and "room amenities". However, some attributes such as "night light in bathroom," "legible, large printing on schedules, information, menus," "small food portions," and "grab-bars, supports in bathrooms" were rated as more important by seniors than younger travellers. Another study<sup>(30)</sup> compared older people's and marketing managers' perceptions of hotel attributes. The results reflected that "hotel facilities" was the most important attribute, while "perceived price" was moderately important and "front-desk efficiency" was the least important to seniors.

In a later study,<sup>(12)</sup> 104 senior British travellers were surveyed and asked to rate the importance of 38 hotel attributes when selecting a hotel. In accordance with the results of another study,<sup>(28)</sup> "cleanliness" was found to be the most important to senior British tourists. This was followed by "value for money" that emerged as the second most important hotel attribute to senior customers. In accordance with this, it was revealed that "value for money" had a significant influence on loyalty behavior of the senior travellers in the hospitality context.<sup>(31)</sup> Similarly, other researchers<sup>(32)</sup> also identified "value" as the most important factor to senior tourists. Other important hotel attributes embraced "comfort of bedroom," "politeness of staff," "efficiency of service," "safety and security," "responsiveness of staff," "promptness of service," "friendliness of staff," "location," "services provided as ordered," "well lit bedroom," and "standard of hotel maintenance".<sup>(12)</sup> Interestingly, it was found that British seniors were happy with staying at the same hotel with other customers from different age-groups in terms of rating "aimed specifically at mature age-group" as an unimportant attribute.<sup>(12)</sup> Additional unimportant attributes included "availability of organized entertainment in hotel," "special dietary menus," "availability of jacuzzi, sauna," and "availability of gym".

Regarding the room quality, it was found that "room attractiveness and décor," and "hotel surroundings and environment" as important predictors of hotel recommendation behaviors of seniors.<sup>(33)</sup> Similarly, "room quality" was the most influential factor on senior customers' willingness to pay for an economy hotel.<sup>(34)</sup> In addition, "tangibility" (which refers to the elements of physical attributes of hotels such as facilities in the room, accessibility and quality of the facilities) was identified as an important attribute to the senior market.<sup>(35)</sup>

A more recent study<sup>(3)</sup> aimed to identify the importance of hotel attributes to pre-senior and senior British, German, and Dutch tourists when selecting a hotel, "cleanliness" was the most important attribute considered by all respondents (except Dutch) in their hotel choices. This finding meshes well with the results of earlier studies<sup>(12, 28)</sup> relating senior tourists' importance ratings to their choices. The "politeness of staff and friendliness of staff" were relatively rated as more important and positioned among the five most important

hotel attributes to all nationality and age-groups. The “comfort of the bedroom” was found to be the second most important hotel attribute for pre-senior and senior Dutch and British respondents, yet, it was ranked third by pre-senior Germans.<sup>(3)</sup> In contrast to another study<sup>(12)</sup>, the “aimed specifically at mature age-group” was considered a relatively important attribute to senior British tourists. Moreover, pre-senior and senior Dutch tourists importantly concerned the “small food portions” and “special dietary menus”. Nevertheless, pre-senior and senior British tourists ascribed more importance to the “availability of organized entertainment in the hotel” than did other nationalities. On the other hand, for pre-senior and senior German tourists, the “reputation of the hotel” was one of the least important attributes.<sup>(3)</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

### Selection of Senior Markets

The survey of this study was conducted in Sharm El-Sheikh, which is a popular resort destination in Egypt. International tourists appear to visit Sharm El Sheikh for the 3S’s: sea, sand, and sun. Due to the fact that no specific data could be found about the age distributions of the foreign tourists visiting Sharm El Sheikh based on their nationalities, the authors decided to base their sample selection on general statistics of tourist arrivals to Egypt. The data provided by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) reflected that the top five major markets for arrivals of tourists to Egypt in the first half of 2014 were: Russia, UK, Germany, Ukraine, and Italy.<sup>(36)</sup> Based on such data, it was found that Russian and British tourists constituted the top two markets and hence, were chosen among the target samples of the current study. Additionally, the International Market Research Firm said in its latest report that the government’s efforts to promote domestic tourism have resulted in an increase in the number of domestic trips to 15 million trips in 2013, compared to 12.4 million in 2009.<sup>(37)</sup> Therefore, the authors decided to include the domestic market of Egyptians in the current research as the third market segment.

### Instrument Development

The ultimate purpose of the data collection technique is to produce trustworthy evidence that is relevant to the research question asked.<sup>(38)</sup> A self-administered questionnaire was adopted as the most appropriate data collection means. The questionnaire aimed to determine the relative importance that Egyptian, British, and Russian senior tourists would attach to attributes when selecting a resort hotel. The current study uses Callan and Bowman’s<sup>(12)</sup> scale to identify the importance of hotel attributes to senior tourists (i.e. 38 hotel attributes). The same scale was also adopted by others<sup>(3)</sup> who stated that such a scale has fewer numbers of items than other existing scales<sup>(28,29,39)</sup> which have been specifically offered to the senior market. The British senior tourists completed the original English version of the scale. Nevertheless, two translations were made; one from English to Arabic and another one from English to Russian. The English-Arabic translation was made by the authors, whereas the English-Russian translation was undertaken by a professional translation office. Moreover, a native Russian-speaking tour leader checked the comprehensibility of translation to ensure no item is mistranslated in the Russian version of the questionnaire. The importance of the attributes was measured by a five-point Likert scale where “1” was very unimportant and “5” was very important. The respondents were also asked about their gender.

### Sample and Procedures

In this study, three five-star hotels in Sharm El-Sheikh were selected partly on a convenience basis, as the authors had an easy access to the front-office managers there and partly because they were long-established operations associated with renowned brands. The authors made contact with the three front-office managers to explain the nature and purpose of the research. The questionnaires were handed out to senior tourists at check-in, so that they could take it away and complete it in their own time then return it to the reception. The front-office managers explained to their staff the nature and purpose of the survey. A convenience sampling was used for this study. The power of convenience sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied.<sup>(40)</sup> Hence, only the British, Egyptian, and Russian senior tourists who had stayed at a hotel at least once over the past three years, and who aged  $\geq 55$  years were invited to participate in the current study. A total of 400 questionnaires were randomly distributed to the target senior tourists across the three hotels, whereas 286 usable questionnaires were returned (i.e. Egyptian=108; British=82; Russian=96), representing a return rate of 71.5%.

## Data Analysis

The SPSS computer software package for windows version 22 was used. The study employed the means and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify the importance of attributes across the three nationalities. The variance analysis was also used to determine the presence of significant differences among the three sets of respondents in relation to the hotel selection attributes.

## RESULTS

### Analysis of Means

Table 1 depicts the mean values of the 38 hotel attributes for each set of respondents embracing Egyptian, British and Russian participants. As shown in Table 1, the abbreviation IR stands for importance rank and it reveals the rank of the 38 hotel attributes from the most important (i.e. 1) to the least important (i.e. 38). Hence, the following section sheds light on some of the top and least hotel attributes chosen by each group of respondents.

#### Egyptian Respondents

Of the total number of Egyptian respondents, 59.2 per cent were male. Relying on the mean values, "cleanliness" was the most important hotel attribute to Egyptian respondents. This was followed by "responsiveness of staff" (4.71), "politeness of staff" (4.67), "attentiveness of staff" (4.67), "comfort of public areas" (4.66), "services provided as ordered" (4.59), "appearance of staff" (4.56), "reputation of hotel" (4.55), "standard of hotel maintenance" (4.54), and "promptness of service" (4.52). Interestingly, the least important attribute was "location" (1.89). The second least important attribute was "availability of parking" (3.80), followed by "aimed specifically at mature-age group" (3.81), "décor of bedroom" (3.82), "ambience of hotel" (3.92), "availability of discounts" (3.92), and "large print menus, signs and information" (3.94).

#### British Respondents

Similar to the Egyptian respondents, the majority of British participants were male (51.2%). "cleanliness" of the hotel was the top hotel attribute for British respondents (5.00). This was followed by "ambience of hotel" and "value for money" with a mean value of 4.88 for each attribute, "availability of swimming pool" (4.85), "services provided as ordered," "efficiency of services," and "promptness of service" with a mean rating of 4.74 for each attribute. These were followed by "safety and security," "comfort of bedroom" with a mean value of 4.72 for each attribute and "availability of organized entertainment" (4.71). Considering the mean values, "availability of parking" (2.02), "aimed specifically at mature age-group" (3.02), and "availability of discounts" (3.15) received the least importance ratings from the British respondents.

#### Russian Respondents

Interestingly, unlike the Egyptian and British respondents, the majority of Russian participants were female (54.1%). "Value for money" was the most importantly rated attribute by Russian participants (4.67). The second most important attribute was "availability of swimming pool" (4.59). "Cleanliness" of the hotel (4.52) was positioned as the third most important attribute, followed by "actual price" (4.51), "services provided as ordered" (4.50), "safety and security" (4.42), "comfort of bedroom" (4.40), "friendliness of staff" (4.36), and "politeness of staff" (4.34). The least important hotel attribute was "availability of parking" (1.84), followed by "aimed specifically at mature age-group" (2.48) and "availability of non-smoking bedrooms" (3.16).

#### Cross-national Comparisons of the 38-hotel Attribute Importance

Table 1 also illustrates the results of variance analysis, which compares the importance of hotel attributes to senior respondents by nationality. Variance analysis results showed statistically significant differences among 34 hotel attributes out of 38 (i.e.  $P < 0.05$ ). Consequently, no significant differences were detected between the three nationalities regarding four attributes including "early dining hours," "large print menus, signs and information," "friendliness of staff," and "services provided as ordered". Senior Egyptian respondents attached more importance to "reputation of hotel", "ease of transportability around hotel", "well-lit public areas", "comfort of public areas", "standard of hotel maintenance", and "well-lit bedroom"

than did the British and Russian participants. They also rated “availability of range of food-service outlets”, “special dietary menus”, and “food portions” as more important than did other nationalities.

Hotel attributes such as “location,” “ambience of hotel,” “décor of public areas,” “cleanliness,” “safety and security,” and “comfort of bedroom” showed to be more important to senior British respondents than to senior Egyptian and Russian respondents. Interestingly, the “location” was found to be the least important attribute to Egyptian respondents (1.84), however it was given more importance by the British and Russian respondents (4.40 and 3.79, respectively). “Actual price” was the only attribute that was given more importance by the Russian respondents (4.51) as compared to the Egyptian and British respondents (4.31 and 3.71, respectively). In other words, with the exception of the “actual price” attribute, the Russian respondents have rated all other remaining attributes with significant differences as less important than did other participants.

**Table 1: Comparison of the 38-hotel attribute importance to senior respondents (by nationality)**

Hotel attributes	Egyptian		British		Russian		P	Differences
	Mean	IR	Mean	IR	Mean	IR		
Location	1.84	38	4.40	20	3.79	22	0.000*	E<B, E<R, B>R
Reputation of hotel	4.55	8	4.46	17	4.03	16	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Ease of transportability around hotel	4.23	24	3.73	29	3.28	35	0.000*	E>B, E>R, B>R
Ambience of hotel	3.92	34	4.88	3	4.03	15	0.000*	E<B, B>R
Well-lit public areas	4.31	21	4.12	23	3.40	34	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Decor of public areas	4.42	14	4.44	19	3.70	26	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Comfort of public areas	4.66	5	4.56	16	3.96	18	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Cleanliness	4.73	1	5.00	1	4.52	3	0.000*	E<B, E>R, B>R
Safety and security	4.38	15	4.72	9	4.42	6	0.012*	E<B, B>R
Standard of hotel maintenance	4.54	9	3.98	27	3.83	20	0.000*	E>B, E>R
Comfort of bedroom	4.31	20	4.72	8	4.40	7	0.000*	E<B, B>R
Spaciousness of bedroom	4.36	16	3.57	33	3.40	33	0.000*	E>B, E>R,
Decor of bedroom	3.82	35	4.00	24	3.45	31	0.000*	E<B, E>R, B>R
Well-lit bedroom	4.22	26	3.56	34	3.43	32	0.000*	E>B, E>R
Availability of non-smoking bedrooms	4.08	28	3.61	32	3.16	36	0.000*	E>B, E>R, B>R
Availability of range of food-service outlets	4.33	17	4.32	22	3.59	27	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Special dietary menus	4.25	23	3.18	35	3.54	29	0.000*	E>B, E>R, B<R
Food portions	4.46	12	3.85	28	3.71	24	0.000*	E>B, E>R
Early dining hours	4.10	27	3.71	31	3.79	21	0.067	

Availability of relaxing lounge or bar	4.43	13	4.33	21	3.50	30	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Large print menus, signs and information	3.94	32	3.99	26	3.70	25	0.088	
Friendliness of staff	4.22	25	4.44	18	4.36	8	0.370	
Politeness of staff	4.67	4	4.59	15	4.34	9	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Attentiveness of staff	4.67	3	4.59	14	4.11	14	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Appearance of staff	4.56	7	4.59	13	3.97	17	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Responsiveness of staff	4.71	2	4.59	12	4.29	11	0.000*	E>B, E>R, B>R
Services provided as ordered	4.59	6	4.74	7	4.50	5	0.055	
Efficiency of service	4.47	11	4.74	6	4.24	12	0.000*	E<B, E>R, B>R
Promptness of service	4.52	10	4.74	5	4.20	13	0.000*	E<B, E>R, B>R
Actual price	4.31	19	3.71	30	4.51	4	0.000*	E>B, E<R, B<R
Value for money	4.31	18	4.88	2	4.67	1	0.000*	E<B, E<R, B>R
Availability of discounts	3.92	33	3.15	36	3.72	23	0.000*	E>B, B<R
Availability of swimming pool	4.28	22	4.85	4	4.59	2	0.000*	E<B, E<R, B>R
Availability of Jacuzzi, sauna	4.04	30	4.60	11	3.92	19	0.000*	E<B, B>R
Availability of gym	4.03	31	3.99	25	3.56	28	0.001*	E>R, B>R
Availability of organized entertainment	4.06	29	4.71	10	4.33	10	0.000*	E<B, E<R, B>R
Aimed specifically at mature age-group	3.81	36	3.02	37	2.48	37	0.000*	E>B, E>R, B>R
Availability of parking	3.80	37	2.02	38	1.84	38	0.000*	E>B, E>R

**Notes:** \*Significant difference; IR: Importance rank; E: Egyptian; B: British; R: Russian

### Exploratory Factor Analysis(E f A)

EFA was conducted on the 38 attributes with orthogonal rotation (i.e. varimax). The KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .809 which is 'great'; all KMO values for individual attributes were > .712, which is well above the acceptable limit of .5.<sup>(41)</sup> For Bartlett's test of Sphericity,  $\chi^2 = 8352.704$  with 703 degrees of freedom,  $p < .001$ , indicating that correlations among items were sufficiently large for EFA. An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each component in the data. Seven components had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 62.77 percent of the total variance. Only factor loadings with an absolute value greater than 0.5 were retained.<sup>(42)</sup> Accordingly, five attributes were removed, namely "friendliness of staff," "availability of non-smoking bedrooms," "availability of range of food-service outlets," "availability of parking," and "ease of transportability around hotel". Table 2 shows the factor loadings after rotation. The items that cluster to the same components suggest that component 1 represent 'staff, S', component 2 'atmosphere and safety, AS', component 3 'recreation, R', component 4 'image and cleanliness, IC', component 5 'price and value, PV', component 6 'food and beverage, FB' and component 7 'other facilities, OF'. The overall Cronbach's  $\alpha$  score of the scale (0.838) exceeds the minimum acceptable value of 0.7<sup>(43)</sup> with the individual Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for each of the

seven subscales ranging from 0.804 to 0.899, indicating good internal consistency among the items within each subscale.

**Cross-national Comparisons after Factor Analysis**

Based on the mean values presented in Table 3, “staff,” “image and cleanliness,” and “food and beverage” were the most important hotel attributes for the senior Egyptian respondents when selecting a hotel (4.60, 4.60 and 4.31, respectively). For the British respondents, “staff” (4.65), “recreation” (4.54), and “image and cleanliness” (4.48) were the most important attributes. Meanwhile, “price and value” (4.30), “staff” (4.24) and “image and cleanliness” (4.13) were the most important attributes for the Russian respondents. Additionally, the moderately important hotel attributes were “atmosphere and safety” and “price and value” both for the Egyptian (4.27 and 4.18, respectively) and British (4.29 and 3.91, respectively) respondents. However, “recreation” (4.10) and “atmosphere and safety” (3.80) were of moderate importance to the Russian respondents. The least important hotel attributes were “food and beverage” and “other facilities” both for the British (3.77 and 3.80, respectively) and Russian (3.64 and 3.32, respectively) respondents. Meanwhile, “other facilities” (3.19), and “recreation” (4.10) were the least important attributes for the Egyptian.

**Table 2: The rotated component matrix of a 38-hotel attribute, seven-factor solution (N=286)**

Hotel factors/attributes	Rotated Factor Loadings						
	S	AS	R	IC	PV	FB	OF
<b>Staff (S)</b>							
Politeness of staff	<b>.774</b>	.150	.378	-.113	.161	.123	.032
Responsiveness of staff	<b>.751</b>	.177	.312	-.114	.064	-.016	.161
Attentiveness of staff	<b>.695</b>	.216	.406	-.096	.135	-.057	.246
Appearance of staff	<b>.676</b>	.212	.407	-.061	.048	.010	.390
Services provided as ordered	<b>.586</b>	.127	-.028	.135	.156	.175	.017
Efficiency of service	<b>.534</b>	.115	-.040	.061	.277	-.038	.395
Promptness of service	<b>.525</b>	.128	-.019	.199	.301	-.156	.366
<b>Atmosphere and safety (AS)</b>							
Decor of bedroom	.123	<b>.674</b>	.181	-.015	.485	.143	.044
Comfort of bedroom	.123	<b>.670</b>	.280	-.001	.122	.161	-.030
Spaciousness of bedroom	-.019	<b>.612</b>	.475	.227	-.017	-.190	.144

Well-lit bedroom	.050	<b>.600</b>	.138	-.097	.124	.195	.076
Ambience of hotel	.268	<b>.538</b>	.114	-.095	.042	-.302	.106
Well-lit public areas	.315	<b>.528</b>	-.016	-.177	.101	-.163	.194
Decor of public areas	.341	<b>.528</b>	-.050	-.045	.037	.185	.208
Safety and security	.266	<b>.523</b>	.137	.227	-.093	-.090	.382
Comfort of public areas	.377	<b>.504</b>	-.023	-.001	.130	.186	.082
<b>Recreation (R)</b>							
Availability of organized entertainment	.041	-.121	<b>.842</b>	.178	-.053	.090	.015
Availability of swimming pool	.010	-.006	<b>.799</b>	.173	-.164	-.110	.229
Availability of Jacuzzi, sauna	.385	.054	<b>.792</b>	.038	.005	-.172	.117
Availability of gym	.136	.084	<b>.727</b>	-.239	.203	.073	.099
<b>Image and cleanliness (IC)</b>							
Reputation of hotel	.214	.100	-.012	<b>.723</b>	.084	.049	.004
Cleanliness	.184	.147	.104	<b>.679</b>	.087	-.015	.259
Standard of hotel maintenance	.264	.198	.282	<b>.438</b>	-.274	-.099	.011
<b>Price and value (PV)</b>							
Actual price	.076	.064	-.314	-.116	<b>.799</b>	-.229	.058
Availability of discounts	.067	.016	.088	-.212	<b>.707</b>	-.117	-.039
Value for money	.264	-.189	-.180	.143	<b>.512</b>	-.030	-.097
<b>Food and beverage (FB)</b>							
Availability of relaxing lounge	.210	.186	.226	-.153	.126	<b>.609</b>	.216
Early dining hours	.124	-.092	-.045	-.119	-.001	<b>.573</b>	.24

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Food portions	.352	.362	-.089	.172	.186	<b>.542</b>	.040
Special dietary menus	.032	-.212	.146	.090	.087	<b>.528</b>	.131
<b>Other facilities (OF)</b>							
Location	.050	-.364	-.335	-.011	.016	.130	<b>.699</b>
Large print menus, signs and information	.182	.221	-.173	-.172	.130	.011	<b>.665</b>
Aimed specifically at mature age-group	.159	.070	-.233	.085	.185	.058	<b>.642</b>
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	10.776	4.775	3.809	2.633	2.066	1.824	1.576
<b>% of variance</b>	24.492	10.853	8.657	5.985	4.695	4.146	3.944
<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	0.899	0.808	0.850	0.840	0.832	0.835	0.804

**Notes:** Factor loadings over .50 appear in bold; S: Staff; AS: Atmosphere and Safety; R: Recreation; IC: Image and Cleanliness; PV: Price and Value; FB: Food and Beverage; OF: Other Facilities.

In addition, Table 3 shows the importance of the hotel attributes for the three nationalities. Generally, “staff,” “image and cleanliness,” and “recreation” were the most importantly rated hotel attributes by the three nationalities (4.49, 4.41, and 4.23, respectively). These attributes were followed by “price and value” (4.14) and “atmosphere and safety” (4.11). The least important attributes were “food and beverage” (3.93) and “other facilities” (3.41).

Moreover, Table 3 depicts the results of the variance analysis after conducting factor analysis, which compares the importance of the major seven factors when selecting a hotel by nationalities. The results of the variance analysis showed statistically significant differences among the seven factors. More specifically, the senior British respondents gave more importance to four factors when selecting a hotel, namely “staff,” “atmosphere and safety,” recreation,” and “other facilities”. Again, “image and cleanliness,” and “food and beverage” factors received high importance ratings from the Egyptian respondents. Meanwhile, Russian seniors’ importance rating for “price and value” was significantly higher than the other two nationalities’ ratings.

**Table 3: Comparison of the main 7-hotel attribute importance to senior respondents (by nationality)**

Hotel factors	Egyptian		British		Russian		Total		P	Differences
	Mean	IR	Mean	IR	Mean	IR	Mean	IR		
Staff	4.60	1	4.65	1	4.24	2	4.49	1	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Atmosphere and safety	4.27	4	4.29	4	3.80	5	4.11	5	0.000*	E>R, B>R
Recreation	4.10	6	4.54	2	4.10	4	4.23	3	0.000*	E<B, B>R
Image and cleanliness	4.60	2	4.48	3	4.13	3	4.41	2	0.000*	E>B, E>R, B>R
Price and value	4.18	5	3.91	5	4.30	1	4.14	4	0.000*	E>B, E<R, B<R
Food and beverage	4.31	3	3.77	7	3.64	6	3.93	6	0.000*	E>B, E>R
Other facilities	3.19	7	3.80	6	3.32	7	3.41	7	0.000*	E<B, B>R

**Notes:** \*Significant difference; IR: Importance rank; E: Egyptian; B: British; R: Russian

## DISCUSSION

In the current study, “cleanliness” was the most important attribute considered by the senior Egyptian and British respondents in their hotel choices. This finding is consistent with a previous study,<sup>(28)</sup> in which “cleanliness” was the top attribute when selecting a hotel for senior travellers. In this research work, the same attribute was ranked third by senior Russians. In this study, “value for money” was the second most important hotel attribute to British respondents. This finding meshes well with a previous study<sup>(12)</sup>, in which “value for money” emerged as the second most important hotel attribute to senior British customers. Interestingly, in the present study, the senior Russian respondents rated “value for money” as their most important attribute in hotel selection. Similarly, other researchers<sup>(32)</sup> also identified “value for money” as the most important factor to senior tourists.

The “availability of parking” was the least important attribute to British and Russian respondents. Such a finding goes hand in hand with the results of a previous study<sup>(3)</sup>. In which, the same attribute was placed 37<sup>th</sup> by the Egyptians. The reason for this, as indicated elsewhere<sup>(3)</sup> might be the preferred form of transport for senior tourists who mostly favour traveling long distances by airplane, rather than driving or renting a car. In this study, “responsiveness of staff,” “attentiveness of staff,” and “politeness of staff” were positioned among the five most important hotel attributes to Egyptians. Such attributes were also found to be highly important by others<sup>(3, 33)</sup>. This finding urges hotels to place a great emphasis on their staff attitude. It is worth noting that the “availability of swimming pool” was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> by the Russian and British respondents, respectively. Yet, the same attribute was given less importance in another study<sup>(3)</sup>. “Location” was found to be the least important attribute by Egyptians and was placed 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> by the British and Russian respondents, respectively. Interestingly, the same attribute was found among the most important attributes in an earlier study<sup>(28)</sup>. This implies that convenience of hotel’s location represents no problem to senior travellers and that they are highly flexible with respect to such an issue.

This study used a convenience sampling method with a specific focus on three hotels only and hence, the results obtained may not be generalized to the overall 5-star hotels in Sharm El-Sheikh. Also, the study sample may be considered relatively small and therefore, the results may not truly reflect the actual motivations of the surveyed senior tourists to select a hotel. Future research may include a comparative study of a larger sample of senior travellers to provide more meaningful results. Moreover, it would be more useful to examine travel motivations of Egyptian, British, and Russian senior tourists to other destinations to compare and cross-validate what this study has found.

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, this is the first study in Egypt that sought to investigate the importance of hotel attributes to senior tourists across some nationalities, thereby filling a gap in the empirical data

regarding this important market. The findings of the study could be beneficial to senior travellers because they would help hotels in the proper tailoring of their product offerings in a way that improves customer service, market share and profitability.

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ترتيب أهمية العناصر التي تحدد اختيار فندق بواسطة السياح كبار السن بالمنتجعات المصرية: مقارنة بين ثلاث أسواق سياحية

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#### الملخص

بالرغم من وجود عدد من الدراسات السابقة التي تناولت إحتياجات السياح كبار السن من الخدمات الفندقية، إلا أن معظم هذه الدراسات ركزت على عدد محدود من الجنسيات وخصوصا في الدول المتقدمة. لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى ترتيب العناصر التي تحدد اختيار فندق بواسطة ثلاث أسواق سياحية مختلفة من كبار السن (السياح المصريون، البريطانيون، والروس) في منتجع شرم الشيخ للتعرف على إحتياجاتهم عند اختيار فندق الإقامة. تم تصميم استمارة استقصاء تحتوى على 38 عنصرا. تم توزيع 400 استمارة بين الثلاث جنسيات في ثلاثة فنادق خمس نجوم بمنتجع شرم الشيخ. تم تحليل عدد 286 استمارة استقصاء (108 مصريين، 82 بريطانيين، 96 روس) باستخدام المتوسط الحسابي وأسلوب تحليل العوامل لتحديد ترتيب عناصر اختيار الفندق لكل جنسية على حدة. كذلك تم استخدام أسلوب تحليل التباين للتعرف على الإختلافات بين إحتياجات السياح كبار السن للجنسيات الثلاث عند اختيار فندق. أوضحت النتائج وجود عدد من الإختلافات بين إحتياجات السياح كبار السن من الثلاث جنسيات. تلخصت الإختلافات في السمات المطلوبة للعاملين بالفندق، والجو العام للفندق ودرجة الأمان، وسائل الترفيه بالفندق، ونظافة وسمعة الفندق، وأسعار الخدمات الفندقية، وتوافر خدمات الأغذية والمشروبات، وموقع الفندق. وبناء عليه قد تساعد نتائج هذه الدراسة مدراء الفنادق بالمنتجعات المصرية على تلبية إحتياجات السياح المصريين والبريطانيين والروس من كبار السن.