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Portuguese Consumer Perception of Fair Pricing Strategies in the Hotel Industry

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Master in Economics

Supervisor

PhD Nácia Nogueira Simões Crespo, Associate Professor with Habilitation

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October, 2024



BUSINESS
SCHOOL

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À minha família, que tornou tudo possível e sempre acreditou no meu potencial.

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Resumo

Esta pesquisa investiga como os consumidores portugueses percebem a justiça dos preços na indústria hoteleira, particularmente no contexto das estratégias de preços dinâmicos empregadas por hotéis e plataformas de reservas online.

O estudo aborda os principais fatores que influenciam as percepções dos consumidores, incluindo a transparência nas estratégias de preços, a frequência de reservas em hotéis e o uso de ferramentas de comparação de preços. Foi realizado um inquérito quantitativo com 303 participantes, permitindo uma análise empírica de como esses fatores afetam a confiança dos consumidores e as percepções de justiça.

Os resultados sugerem que a transparência nos preços desempenha um papel significativo na construção da confiança dos consumidores, com utilizadores frequentes de plataformas de reservas a mostrarem maior aceitação face às flutuações de preços. Por outro lado, os consumidores mais velhos e aqueles menos familiarizados com plataformas online têm maior tendência a considerar os preços dinâmicos injustos. O estudo também destaca a importância da localização, das avaliações dos clientes e da segurança nas decisões de reserva, onde esses fatores podem justificar preços mais elevados, desde que sejam percebidos como agregando valor.

Esta pesquisa oferece contribuições significativas. Teoricamente, revela a relação entre flutuações de preços e percepções de justiça no setor hoteleiro português, enriquecendo a compreensão do comportamento do consumidor no turismo. Praticamente, fornece recomendações para gestores de hotéis, enfatizando a importância de comunicações transparentes para aumentar a confiança e lealdade dos consumidores. Também destaca a necessidade de adaptar as comunicações sobre preços a diferentes grupos demográficos, especialmente os consumidores mais velhos, mais sensíveis às variações de preços. Ao focar num contexto cultural específico, a pesquisa aprofunda a compreensão da justiça de preços na gestão hoteleira.

Palavras-chave: Confiança do Consumidor, Ferramentas de Comparação de Preços, Indústria Hoteleira, Justiça no Preço, Percepções do Consumidor, Plataformas de Reservas, Preços Dinâmicos

JEL Classification: D12, D91

Abstract

This research investigates how Portuguese consumers perceive price fairness in the hotel industry, particularly in the context of dynamic pricing strategies employed by hotels and online booking platforms. The study addresses key factors that influence consumer perceptions, including transparency in pricing strategies, frequency of hotel bookings, and the use of price comparison tools. A quantitative survey was conducted with 303 participants, allowing for an empirical analysis of how these factors affect consumer trust and fairness perceptions.

The findings suggest that transparency in pricing plays a significant role in shaping consumer trust, with frequent users of booking platforms being more accepting of price fluctuations. Conversely, older consumers and those less familiar with online platforms are more likely to perceive dynamic pricing as unfair. The study also highlights the importance of location, customer reviews, and security in consumer decision-making, where these factors can justify higher prices if perceived as adding value.

This research makes several key contributions. Theoretically, it offers insights into the relationship between price fluctuations and fairness perceptions in the Portuguese hotel sector, adding to the body of knowledge on consumer behavior in the tourism industry. Practically, it provides actionable recommendations for hotel managers, including the need for transparent communication strategies to enhance consumer trust and loyalty. The study also addresses the importance of tailoring pricing communications to different demographic groups, particularly older consumers who may be more sensitive to price variations. By focusing on a specific cultural context, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of price fairness in hotel management.

Keywords: Booking Platforms, Consumer Perceptions, Customer Trust, Dynamic Pricing, Hotel Industry, Price Comparison Tools, Price Fairness

JEL Classification: D12, D91

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1.Introduction

1.1. Framework

In a contemporary world characterized by constant change, it is more imperative than ever to adapt the right strategies to attract consumers and their diverse choices.

Globalization has significantly impacted multinational corporations, leading to the spread of economic crises across borders. This dynamic has compelled these companies to develop various strategic business models and pricing approaches to remain competitive in a fiercely contested market. However, optimizing revenue through effective pricing strategies while ensuring customer loyalty presents a considerable challenge. The complexity lies in determining a product's price that maximizes profitability without negatively affecting consumers' perceptions of value (Victor et al.,2019).

A company's approach to pricing plays a crucial role in how it assigns value to its products and has significant repercussions for various stakeholders, namely the consumer. Pricing strategies not only capture the perceived value from the customers' viewpoint but also serve as a strategic mechanism for the company to navigate its competitive environment, aiming to generate revenue and achieve profitability in line with its business model. (Lancioni et al., 2004)

The pricing strategy plays a significant role in influencing customer perception and customer behavior. The price of a product or service often influences how customers perceive the value and quality of the product. Consumers' perceptions of price fairness in online shopping play a pivotal role in shaping their emotional responses. When individuals believe that prices are justifiable, they are more likely to experience positive feelings such as joy and satisfaction. In contrast, when pricing is perceived as unfair, it can evoke negative emotions like anger and disappointment. These emotional reactions function as intermediaries in the relationship between price fairness and consumer behavior, indicating that emotions significantly influence how consumers respond to various pricing strategies. Research has shown that understanding these emotional dynamics is essential for businesses looking to optimize their pricing approaches and enhance customer loyalty (Lii & Sy , 2009).

Therefore, understanding the right price strategy to apply to a certain business is important, because different strategies lead to different outcomes.

Based on the results of the Survey on the use of Information and Communication Technologies by Families in Portugal, conducted by the Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE, 2022) 88.2% of households have internet access at home and 84.6% have a broadband connection, while in 2021 these figures were slightly lower. The increase of 0.9 percentage points in internet connection and 0.5 percentage points in broadband connection compared to the previous year suggests that internet access is becoming more widespread and that more families are opting for broadband connections, which generally offer faster speeds and a more satisfying online experience. This indicates a promising

scenario in terms of internet availability and quality for the Portuguese, contributing to greater digital inclusion and enabling access to a variety of online services and opportunities.

This expanding connectivity not only enhances digital inclusion but also influences various aspects of society. One notable example is the growth of e-commerce, which relies on advancements in technology and internet infrastructure. E-commerce is transforming the market, offering numerous benefits and creating new purchasing behaviors. The evolution of e-commerce highlights the positive impact of improved internet access, opening new opportunities for businesses and consumers alike (Amorim, 2023).

Recent developments in technology and the rise of online platforms have significantly transformed the travel industry. This evolution necessitates that businesses within this sector demonstrate a high degree of adaptability to keep pace with ongoing changes. Furthermore, it is essential for all industry stakeholders to remain informed about the latest trends and innovations to maintain their competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic market environment (Zafiroopoulos & Vrana, 2006).

The hotel industry exemplifies this shift. Advanced technology and the rise of online booking platforms have transformed traditional models, allowing hotels to employ dynamic pricing strategies that adjust prices based on demand fluctuations, competition, and other market variables. However, these dynamic strategies necessitate that consumers perceive them as fair to maintain trust and loyalty. Research underscores the importance of transparency in these pricing practices, as consumers are more inclined to accept price fluctuations when they understand that such adjustments align with operational needs rather than exploitative motives (Kahneman et al., 1986; Xia et al., 2004).

1.2. Research Objectives

As internet access becomes more widespread and e-commerce continues to evolve, understanding how Portuguese consumers perceive fair pricing in the online hotel sector becomes increasingly critical. Through the implementation of an online questionnaire, this study seeks to interpret consumer perceptions of pricing fairness specifically within the online hotel industry. The insights gained will contribute to the development of effective pricing strategies in this rapidly expanding market.

In this matter the research aims to address the following three questions:

- How do consumers perceive the fairness of pricing strategies employed by hotels and online booking platforms, and what factors influence their perceptions?
- To what extent do consumers' attitudes towards hotel pricing fairness impact their booking decisions and loyalty to specific booking channels?

- What strategies can be recommended for hotels and online booking platforms to enhance consumers' perceptions of pricing fairness, particularly in the context of price fluctuations?

1.3. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into three principal sections, each comprising a total of five chapters. The first section is introduced in Chapter 1, which establishes the foundational framework for the research.

In this chapter, essential background information is provided to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the topic under investigation. Specifically, this chapter presents a thorough contextualization of the subject, outlining the theoretical framework and methodology guiding the study. Additionally, it discusses the key research objectives and provides an overview of how the dissertation is structured.

The second section encompasses Chapters 2, 3, and 4, which provide the core content of this dissertation. Chapter 2 delves into the discourse prevalent in the literature concerning the definition and evolutionary trajectory of e-commerce, highlighting its importance in both the global market and within Portugal. It reviews key contributions from various authors and offers insights into the current state of research on e-commerce.

In Chapter 3, I will outline the quantitative approach used to investigate Portuguese consumers' perceptions of fair pricing strategies in the online retail industry, with a specific focus on the hotel sector. The methodology involves the development and implementation of an online questionnaire to gather data directly from participants, allowing for a robust analysis of consumer behavior and attitudes.

Moving to Chapter 4, the results from the collected data will be discussed. This chapter will focus on interpreting and analyzing the findings, linking them to the broader academic discourse, and identifying patterns that emerge from the data regarding pricing perceptions and consumer behavior in the hotel industry.

The third section, comprising Chapter 5, will present the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the collected data. In addition to summarizing the key findings, Chapter 5 will also highlight the limitations of this research and provide recommendations for future studies within the same area of inquiry.

2.Literature Review

In the following section, I will delve into the discourse prevalent in the literature concerning the definition and evolutionary trajectory of e-commerce as well as its importance in the global market and in Portugal.

2.1 E-commerce Definition

In numerous articles, diverse definitions aim to clarify electronic commerce, also known as online commerce or e-commerce (Carvalho & Mamede, 2018). This variety of interpretations underscores the intricate and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. As scholars navigate the evolving landscape of digital transactions, it becomes crucial to explore and synthesize these perspectives for a comprehensive understanding of e-commerce and its implications.

E-commerce, or electronic commerce, involves the buying and selling of goods or services over the Internet or other electronic networks (Mendonça, 2016) It encompasses online retailing, electronic payments, and product information searches (Xiao, 2016). Additionally, Nogueira (2018) suggests that e-commerce extends beyond mere transactions, encompassing the entire business value chain within an electronic domain, heavily reliant on information and communication technologies (ICT) to achieve business objectives.

E-commerce eliminates the need for physical storefronts, enabling businesses to reach a global audience and facilitate transactions without geographical constraints. Its distinctiveness lies in its approach to information exchange, utilizing digital networks and electronic channels like email, web platforms, and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) instead of traditional face-to-face interactions (Fernandes et al., 2008).

2.1.2 E-commerce Historical Context

The integration of the Internet into consumer purchasing patterns has transformed the dynamics between buyers and sellers, enabling diverse market exchanges previously restricted. This technological shift, noted by Khan et al. (2015), has opened new avenues for businesses and investors, facilitating participation in previously inaccessible markets.

The concept of e-commerce finds its roots in the late 1960s, introduced by Doody and Davidson, as noted by Venkatesh et al. (2022) though some scholars like Mendonça (2016) suggest its foundational principles emerged in the 1970s. Notably, Michael Aldrich, an entrepreneur from England, revolutionized retail in 1979 by pioneering online commerce, as acknowledged by Ankush and Jadhav (2020, 2021) , de Andrade & Silva (2017), and Mendonça (2016) .His technology facilitated

transaction processing, e-messaging, and information retrieval, laying the groundwork for modern e-business.

E-commerce, enabled by the Internet and IT like EDI, revolves around internet vendor websites facilitating direct exchanges of goods or services with users, supported by wireless shopping carts and various payment methods (Jain et al., 2021). This evolution is evident globally, including Portugal, as illustrated by a recent survey indicating a surge in household internet access and broadband connections, reflecting enhanced digital inclusion, and expanding interactive capabilities (Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015a).

2.1.2 The significance of E-Commerce in the Market and its Trends

Globalization, driven by advancements in information technology (IT), has reshaped business operations worldwide. To stay competitive in this digitally interconnected landscape, organizations must embrace innovative technologies and adapt their strategies (Jain et al., 2021). E-commerce, exemplified by its impact in India, serves as a vital bridge between smaller towns and larger cities, granting access to diverse products and services (Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015a).

The global shift towards electronic commerce, facilitated by widespread internet adoption, empowers consumers to compare prices, explore alternatives, and adapt swiftly to market dynamics (Jain et al., 2021)). This trend has led to significant growth in e-commerce worldwide, with an increasing number of consumers making online purchases and businesses adopting this model (Amorim, 2023).

Despite geopolitical challenges, the European e-commerce market continues to thrive, with sustained growth projected in the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) sector (EUROPEAN E-COMMERCE REPORT ,2023) In Portugal, e-commerce's impact is evident, with projected revenue growth and increasing adoption rates among individuals and businesses (Associação do Comércio Eletrónico e da Publicidade Interativa [ACEPI], 2023).While 62% of Portuguese companies maintain an online presence, only 16% utilize these platforms for sales, indicating untapped potential in online channels. Notably, sectors like clothing, electronics, and beauty products witnessed significant growth in online purchases, underscoring the expanding influence and importance of e-commerce both locally and globally (ACEPI, 2023).

2.2 The Intersection of Dynamic Pricing and Consumer Perceptions of Fairness

In this section, the focus is on the interplay between dynamic pricing and consumer perceptions of fairness. A concise overview of dynamic pricing's significance across sectors is provided, emphasizing

its role in driving competitiveness and revenue optimization. Subsequently, the importance of consumer perception of fairness in dynamic pricing strategies is explored, acknowledging its influence on consumer behavior and market dynamics.

2.2.1 Dynamic Prices

The advent of the Internet has revolutionized the dissemination of price information, granting consumers unprecedented access to pricing data from many retailers with just a few clicks. This enhanced price transparency has catalysed intense competition among online retailers, necessitating continuous real-time monitoring and swift responses to competitive pricing dynamics. As a result, the rise of information technologies, e-commerce, and the internet has ushered in an era where dynamic pricing tools have become integral to revenue management systems. These tools leverage digital data processing capabilities to efficiently gather and utilize valuable information in real time, enabling businesses to adapt pricing strategies dynamically based on factors such as demand, inventory availability, and competitor prices. The elimination of costs associated with manual price adjustments, coupled with the ease with which customers can track price changes online, further drives the adoption of dynamic pricing strategies (Bandalouski et al., 2018; Fisher et al., 2015).

Dynamic pricing, also called yield management or revenue management, constitutes a suite of pricing strategies engineered to enhance profitability. Its efficacy is particularly pronounced when two fundamental product attributes intersect: a fixed expiration point for the product and a constant capacity until close to the expiration time, with augmentation only possible at a relatively high marginal cost. The coexistence of these characteristics engenders significant fluctuations in the opportunity cost of sale. Dynamic pricing involves forecasting this value by considering current sales data and available capacity. In essence, it aims to optimize pricing dynamically based on real-time demand and supply dynamics, thereby maximizing revenue within time-limited products and fixed capacity constraints (Mcafee & Te Velde, 2006).

Mcafee & Te Velde (2006) distinguishes between dynamic price discrimination and dynamic pricing based on the approach to charging customers. Dynamic price discrimination entails applying varied markups over marginal costs to different customers contingent on the timing of their purchases. However, when this pricing strategy is considered efficient, maximizing the expected present value of trade gains is termed dynamic pricing. This subtle differentiation underscores the efficiency and optimization goals associated with dynamic pricing strategies.

According to Seetharaman (2009) , when companies pricing strategies acknowledge the future ramifications, such as long-term effects on consumers and competitors, dynamic pricing is deemed to be in effect. This underscores the company's need to extend its focus beyond immediate gains,

acknowledging the consequential long-term implications of its pricing strategies. Through such comprehensive deliberations, companies are empowered to render more astute pricing determinations, thereby advancing their enduring aspirations. Consequently, a meticulously orchestrated dynamic pricing strategy emerges as a formidable instrument for companies to realize their objectives while judiciously considering the enduring ramifications on both the market and consumers.

Research indicates that in the age of online retail, adopting dynamic pricing strategies has become essential. This has been driven by the evolution of the Internet and information technologies. The literature highlights that dynamic pricing, with its ability to adapt to real-time demand and supply dynamics, is crucial in maximizing revenue within time-limited products and fixed capacity constraints. It is essential to distinguish between dynamic price discrimination and dynamic pricing, which are both efficient and optimization-oriented strategies. The following sections of this document will explore the application of dynamic pricing across various industries with differing context.

2.2.2 Dynamic Prices in hotels

Revenue management and dynamic pricing are popular decision-making tools for enhancing profitability in various industries, including the hotel sector. The effective management of pricing has a significant influence on a business's profitability, particularly in industries like hotels, where pricing adjustments can promptly influence demand and inventory levels. By aligning prices with current demand levels and occupancy rates, hotels can optimize revenue and compete effectively in the market (Bandalouski et al., 2018). Dynamic pricing enables hotels to adjust prices in response to changing market conditions and offers a competitive edge over competitors using static pricing models, as evidenced by empirical studies highlighting its superiority.

To understand the evolution of hotel dynamic pricing, it's crucial to recognize its nascent stage in the late 1980s. During this period, major North American hotel chains like Marriott, Hilton, Holiday Inn, and Sheraton initiated what can be viewed as rudimentary revenue management systems. These early developments laid the foundation for the sophisticated dynamic pricing strategies employed in the hospitality industry today, specifically, dynamic pricing has gained traction within the hospitality and airline sectors due to their perishable inventories, segmented demand, advanced booking windows, and substantial demand fluctuations. This strategic adoption of dynamic pricing enables these industries to optimize revenue by adjusting prices in real time based on evolving market conditions and customer preferences. (Kimes, 1989)

Following an empirical examination, it has been discovered that hotel prices fluctuate significantly, with over 90% of prices changing during the study period. These fluctuations are influenced by

customer type and hotel star rating. Prices tend to drop on weekdays before stays, catering to business guests, while weekend prices rise for leisure travelers. Last-minute bookings show price differentials between high and low-star hotels, indicating strategic pricing. Demand shocks at the city level impact pricing, reflecting hotels' adaptive strategies (Abrate et al., 2012).

2.2.3 Dynamic Prices in Airlines

The genesis of dynamic pricing and revenue management techniques can be traced back to the late 1970s when they were first introduced in the passenger air service industry. (Bandalouski et al., 2018)

Airlines developed reservation systems in the 1950s to manage seat bookings and fares. Later, travel agents were allowed to access these systems. Following airline pricing deregulation in 1978, the systems became popular for pricing purposes. Robert Crandall, the former CEO of American Airlines, pioneered dynamically adjusted pricing in response to the emergence of the discount airline People's Express in the early 1980s. Over the years, airline pricing has become increasingly complex, posing a significant challenge for modern economic analysis (Mcafee & Te Velde, 2006).

Dynamic pricing in the airline industry plays a pivotal role in revenue optimization and strategic adaptation to the constantly evolving market landscape. By dynamically adjusting ticket prices in response to fluctuations in demand, supply, and competitive pressures, airlines can maximize revenue potential and capitalize on profit opportunities. This pricing strategy enables airlines to adapt to market conditions swiftly, ensuring efficient resource allocation and effective management of capacity constraints. Additionally, dynamic pricing allows airlines to cater to diverse customer segments with varying price sensitivities, enhancing market competitiveness and profitability. Embracing dynamic pricing strategies empowers airlines to navigate complexities, maintain operational agility, and sustain long-term viability in a fiercely competitive industry characterized by volatile demand patterns and dynamic pricing dynamics.

The aviation industry is a vital component of the global economy, and profitability within the airline industry is a formidable challenge. A 2013 study conducted by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) revealed that airlines' return on invested capital ranked lowest among the 30 industries analysed in the comparison study (IATA, 2013). This economic reality has prompted airlines to take strategic initiatives to enhance profitability. Airlines are expanding their offerings to boost financial performance. They now provide additional services like baggage allowances, seat reservations, meal options, and flexible features. They also incorporate third-party content for extra revenue. This shift highlights their commitment to generating revenue and overcoming industry challenges (Fiig et al., 2018).

2.2.4 Dynamic Pricing in Other Industries

In the telecommunication sector Dorgham et al. (2015) state that revenue management involves optimizing revenue by strategically managing the supply of products or services through dynamic control of pricing or quantity offered. In developing countries, the telecom market is highly competitive, and operators often use price reduction as their primary strategy to attract customers, which may lead to missed revenue opportunities. Revenue management techniques, widely applied in industries like airlines and hotels, aim to match the right product to the right customer at the right time and price. Dynamic pricing is increasingly in other sectors, and it is also an emerging area of research in the telecom sector with potential benefits such as revenue enhancement and congestion management.

In addition to the telecommunication sector, revenue management techniques can also be applied to the electricity sector. Dynamic pricing represents an evolving research focus within the retail electricity sector, serving as a demand-side management strategy aimed at mitigating peak loads through variable pricing based on demand fluctuations across different time periods. Retail electricity markets typically offer flat or block pricing structures, where prices remain constant regardless of demand or vary based on consumption tiers. However, these pricing models fail to accurately reflect electricity generation and distribution costs, particularly during peak demand periods. While flat rates offer predictable bills, they often result in costly capacity expansions. Despite its success in other sectors, dynamic pricing remains underutilized in retail electricity. This indicates a potential opportunity for the electricity industry to adopt dynamic pricing strategies to manage demand better and optimize revenue (Dutta & Mitra, 2017).

2.3 Exploring Consumer Perceptions of Pricing Fairness Across E-Commerce and Service Industries

In the subsequent sections, an exploration of the discourse present in the literature regarding the significance of understanding consumer perceptions of pricing fairness and its impact on e-commerce industries will be conducted. This will entail a review of theoretical frameworks pertinent to comprehending how consumers perceive fairness or unfairness in pricing within the context of e-commerce.

2.3.1 Consumer Perceptions of Pricing Fairness

A wide range of behavioral concepts and theories influence fairness perception.

In consumer behavior, individuals possess the capacity to perceive prices in terms of fairness or unfairness, as highlighted by (Xia et al., 2004). The concept of unfairness is usually more straightforward

and easily identifiable than fairness. Instances of unfairness are often clear, precise, and immediately recognizable, drawing upon tangible experiences. People can quickly recognize unfair situations when they encounter them, as they resonate with concrete examples. On the other hand, defining the specific aspects of fairness is more complex. It poses a cognitive challenge as individuals struggle to articulate the criteria that define fairness, which can vary depending on the context and perspective. In the assessment of prices, particularly regarding fairness, individuals naturally engage in comparative analyses. According to both equity theory and distributive justice theory, perceptions of fairness are elicited when individuals contrast their own outcomes with those of others. This comparative approach plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of fairness, underscoring the importance of contextual comparisons in influencing such judgments.

The authors further asserts that consumers express clearer opinions about perceived unfair prices compared to fair ones. Price fairness only becomes relevant when consumers perceive a price as unfair. Negative emotions, such as anger and outrage, accompany truly unfair perceptions, potentially leading to drastic actions against the seller. Distinguishing between "less fair" and outright "unfair" perceptions is crucial, as is understanding the range of negative emotions associated with price inequality. Contrary to traditional economic assumptions, (Kahneman et al., 1986b) argue that even profit-maximizing firms may behave in ways perceived as fair, especially if consumers resist unfair transactions and penalize unfair firms at personal cost.

According to (Kahneman et al., 1986a) corporations' pursuit of profit maximization is constrained by financial and legal restraints as well as community standards of justice. They present the idea of dual entitlement, which establishes community standards for justice. Within a reference transaction context, this idea grants established rights to both corporations and consumers. Customers follow reference prices in these transactions, and businesses keep a positive reference profit. It is unacceptable to increase earnings arbitrarily in order to violate the principle of dual entitlement. However, customers can view price rises as reasonable or justified if the reference profit is in jeopardy, as might be the case with growing costs. Their significant findings highlight the influence of social norms in governing perceptions of pricing fairness, ultimately shaping market behavior. Within the microeconomics of consumer behavior, pricing fairness emerges as a pivotal variable that commands attention. Moreover, their research underscores the multifaceted nature of pricing fairness, which can be characterized by various informal customer rights. This comprehensive understanding emphasizes the intricate interplay between societal norms, market dynamics, and consumer entitlements in shaping perceptions of pricing fairness.

Understanding consumer perceptions of pricing fairness is crucial for businesses navigating pricing strategies. Research findings suggest that consumers resist price increases perceived as unjust, particularly those aimed at augmenting firm profits rather than covering increased costs. Such

perceptions of unfair pricing can lead to adverse effects for firms, including decreased profits and legal ramifications, as evidenced by research (Campbell, 1999). Campbell's (1999) research demonstrates that when consumers evaluate the fairness of a price increase, they weigh not only supplier costs and profits, as proposed by Kahneman et al. (1986), but also the goals or objectives underlying the company's pricing decisions. Motives viewed as bad, such as taking advantage of a situation to increase profits, lead to feelings of unfairness and diminish the likelihood of purchase intention.

2.3.2 Fairness in E-commerce

When confronted with a multitude of choices, consumers often use price as a metric to filter out unsuitable choices, compare similar offerings, and ultimately arrive at a purchase decision. Price is a critical factor that helps buyers evaluate a product or service's value proposition, influencing their willingness to pay for it (Pan et al., 2013). The widespread availability of information facilitated by the Internet that has enabled consumers to access a wealth of information, thereby enhancing their ability to make informed purchasing decisions. As markets approach a state of perfect information, heightened competition is anticipated as a natural outcome. Consequently, this heightened competition leads to an increase in the price elasticity of demand, which refers to the percentage change in demand resulting from a percentage change in price. This phenomenon occurs because consumers are now equipped with the ability to compare offerings from various suppliers more effectively (Granados et al., 2012).

The issue of fairness in e-commerce is of utmost importance. The growth of e-commerce has granted retailers unparalleled power to understand individual customers and implement pricing strategies that may be discriminatory and disadvantageous to certain customer groups. As such, it is critical for retailers to ensure that their practices are fair and unbiased towards all customers. The issue of fairness is particularly critical in e-commerce. Indeed, the increasing prominence of e-commerce has given retailers unprecedented power to understand customers as individuals and to implement discriminatory pricing strategies that could be unfair to a specific customer group (Chen et al., 2021)

2.3.3 Perceptions of Pricing Fairness in the Hotel Industry

The travel sector has experienced substantial changes recently due to new technology and online platforms. This means that companies in this industry need to be able to adapt quickly to keep up with these changes. At the same time, everyone involved in the sector must remain current with the most recent advancements and innovations to make sure they remain relevant in this fast-paced market.

(Zafiropoulos & Vrana, 2006). The tourism industry has historically been an early adopter of technology compared to other industries (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

According to the European Commission, there has been a notable shift in the tourism industry towards using online platforms for booking accommodations. In fact, in 2014, over half of all trips taken by EU residents involved booking accommodations online, with the trend being even more prevalent for trips abroad. However, there are variations in this trend across EU member states, with residents of the Netherlands, France, and Luxembourg showing a greater preference for booking online compared to residents of Romania and Bulgaria. These statistics highlight the growing reliance on online platforms for arranging accommodations among European travelers (Comission, 2019) . The 2015 survey on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage in households shows that 39% of individuals aged 16 to 74 in Europe used the Internet for travel purposes in the three months leading up to the survey. Half of the Internet users utilized the Internet for travel-related activities, indicating a high level of engagement with online travel services. This data highlights the significance of online platforms in facilitating travel-related activities, emphasizing the need for businesses in the travel industry to maintain a robust online presence.

As explained by Pan et al.'s research, price plays a crucial role in helping consumers filter out unsuitable options and compare similar offerings, ultimately driving their purchasing decisions. Without a clear understanding of a product's value proposition, consumers may be hesitant to pay for it. Therefore, it is imperative for buyers to assess the value of a product or service in relation to its price. Despite the ongoing price fluctuations, many consumers remain perplexed and confounded. However, in the hospitality and tourism industry, enterprises have developed a high level of skill in navigating the intricacies of revenue management. This enables them to sustain and enhance revenue and profitability in a highly competitive market. (Fyall et al., 2013)

In various industries like hotels, customers may face different prices for similar services depending on when they make their reservations. This pricing strategy, influenced by supply and demand dynamics, product variations, and other factors, can lead to perceptions of unfairness among customers. For instance, customers utilizing the same service might be charged different prices based on these factors. This perception of unfairness may arise when customers perceive no discernible difference in the service provided despite paying varying prices for the same offering. Consequently, if customers deem yield management practices as unjust, any short-term revenue gains resulting from such strategies may be compromised. However, nearly all capacity-constrained service firms must consider implementing yield-management systems, provided they can effectively communicate to customers that these measures are equitable and fair (Kahneman et al., 1986a, 1986b; Kimes, 2002).

A study conducted by El Haddad et al. (2015) delved into the interplay between customers' perceptions of price fairness and their subsequent behavioral intentions in online hotel booking.

Empirically validating a model, the research highlights the significant impact of price fairness on consumer behavior. It elucidates that customers' views on pricing fairness significantly shape their purchase decisions and word-of-mouth recommendations, elucidating a significant portion of the variance in behavioral intentions. These findings underscore price fairness's pivotal role as a robust predictor of consumer behavior in the hotel industry. Furthermore, the study reveals that customers' familiarity with a hotel moderates the relationship between price fairness and their behavioral intentions. First-time customers exhibit higher price sensitivity and may perceive price fairness differently. Conversely, customers acquainted with a hotel's pricing policies tend to hold a more favorable perception of price fairness. Loyalty also plays a crucial role, as loyal customers demonstrate a more positive perception of price fairness, leading to repeat bookings, positive word-of-mouth, and referrals. Hence, hotels should prioritize initiatives to enhance customers' familiarity with their pricing structures and policies, such as offering comprehensive online information about available rates.

Additionally, the study's third hypothesis underscores that the customer's travel purpose influences the relationship between price fairness perceptions and behavioral intentions. Research confirms that leisure customers exhibit higher price sensitivity than business travelers, particularly during initial bookings. Previous studies corroborate these findings, for example (Chu & Choi, 2000), suggesting that leisure tourists prioritize room rates and value for money over business travelers. Business travelers, often sponsored by their organizations, harbor fewer negative perceptions of price fairness, resulting in varied behavioral intentions compared to leisure tourists.

2.3.4 Perceptions of Pricing Fairness in the Airline Industry

Dynamic pricing can lead to customers perceiving the prices as unfair. This happens when the price of a product or service, determined by dynamic pricing algorithms, does not match the price that customers expected to pay. In other words, customers may feel that the price changes deviate from their perception of a fair or reasonable price for the product or service (Škare & Gospić, 2015).

Yield management is gaining popularity in various service sectors. Airlines have been using yield management techniques for a longer time than other industries, and customers have become accustomed to varying fares for the same flight. Furthermore, customers understand that accepting specific fare restrictions comes with specific benefits, and they generally accept yield management practices within the airline industry. In essence, customers may notice differences in purchasing similar seats, but they may interpret the situation as acquiring different products due to the associated restrictions. This understanding highlights the complexity of customer reactions to yield management strategies in the airline sector (Kimes, 2002).

The rise of online distribution channels has brought both advantages and challenges to the airline industry when it comes to ticket pricing. On one hand, airlines can now easily and quickly adjust their prices without incurring significant expenses. On the other hand, the increased visibility of prices due to online comparison shopping presents difficulties (Zhang & Cooper, 2009). With the advancements in technology, there is a greater potential for price discrimination, which is the practice of adjusting the prices of products based on a customer's ability and willingness to pay (Vissers et al., 2014). The author discusses the various methods of online price discrimination such as browser cookies and device fingerprinting. The study emphasizes the significance of geographic factors such as IP addresses in determining prices. It provides an in-depth understanding of the implications of price discrimination for online market consumers. Many users have reported noticing price variations based on factors like past visits, search history, and location. These incidents highlight the widespread prevalence of price differentiation in online commerce.

A recent study on Indonesian airlines found that customer satisfaction can be achieved by maintaining price fairness and enhancing service quality. Airlines should ensure that prices are perceived as affordable by all customers. Passengers prioritize price fairness over service quality when building trust. Service quality, employee friendliness, and facilities also influence customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction emerges as the most significant factor influencing customer trust, emphasizing the critical role of providing a pleasurable experience for passengers through fair pricing and excellent service quality (Setiawan et al., 2020).

3. Empirical Study

3.1 Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach to investigate Portuguese consumers' perceptions of fair pricing strategies in the online retail industry, with a specific focus on hotel industry. The methodology adopted in this study involves conducting an online questionnaire to collect data directly from participants.

In order to answer our research questions, it is important to carefully choose and apply a set of methods and techniques that will enable us to execute our plan effectively. For this project, we chose quantitative research as our research strategy instead of qualitative research. This means that we will collect numerical data through questionnaires using Google Forms. The purpose of this approach is to establish patterns, relationships, and correlations between variables. Since we need a large population and will analyse the relationships between variables, quantitative research is the most appropriate choice (Santos & Henriques, 2021). Questionnaires were chosen as they are suitable for asking direct questions that are easily understood by the participants, and they do not require additional instructions. Moreover, respondents are more inclined to answer honestly owing to the assurance of anonymity of their responses.

Due to the international nature of the research and the official language of the thesis being English, the questionnaire was developed in this language. However, recognizing the importance of effectively communicating with the target audience, the questionnaire was translated into Portuguese to ensure that Portuguese participants could fully understand the questions and express their opinions accurately. The study sample will consist of Portuguese participants with experience in accommodations booked through online channels. Data collection will be conducted by distributing the questionnaire on social networks.

After data collection, we will perform a descriptive analysis of the results to identify patterns, trends, and relevant insights into Portuguese consumers' perceptions of fairness in pricing in the online retail industry, with a specific focus on the hotel industry. This analysis will provide a comprehensive overview of the data, allowing us to discuss the findings in a clear and accessible manner.

This methodological approach will enable an in-depth understanding of Portuguese consumers' perceptions regarding fair pricing, providing valuable insights for companies and professionals seeking to align their pricing strategies with consumer expectations and values.

3.2 Description of the research method

This study aims to comprehensively examine how consumers perceive hotel pricing strategies, specifically focusing on fairness and fluctuations. To achieve this, we have designed a meticulously crafted questionnaire comprising twenty-two questions that delve into various aspects of consumer behavior, preferences, and perceptions when booking hotels.

The questionnaire was inspired by previous studies from (El Haddad et al., 2015).

The questionnaire is divided into five groups to carefully examine several aspects of consumer behavior, preferences, and perceptions regarding hotel pricing. By organizing the questions into these groups, we aim to provide a structured approach for analysing and interpreting the vast data collected through the survey.

3.2.1 Group 1: Booking behavior and preferences

This group comprises questions aimed at understanding consumers' habits, preferences, and behaviors when it comes to booking hotel accommodations. It serves as the foundational segment of the questionnaire, providing insight into the primary methods individuals employ to make hotel reservations and the factors influencing their decision-making process.

Question number	Question	Response options
1	How often do you book hotel accommodations online?	Likert scale: Less than once a year (1) to More than 3 times a year (5)
2	Do you use price comparison websites like Trivago and Kayak?	Multiple choice: Yes; No
2.1	a) Briefly explain how your experience with these platforms influences your booking decisions.	Open response
3	How much time do you typically spend comparing prices across different websites before making a hotel reservation?	Likert scale: Less than an hour (1) to I continuously compare prices up until the day of check-in (5)

4	How often do you check prices after making a hotel reservation?	Likert scale: Never (1) to Always (5)
5	How does the seasonality of hotel prices impact your decision-making process when selecting travel dates?	Likert scale: No impact (1) to High impact (5)

Table 3.1: Group 1 - Booking behavior and preferences.

Description: This table presents the questions from Group 1 of the questionnaire, focused on understanding consumers' booking behavior and preferences. It covers online booking frequency, preferred booking methods, use of price comparison platforms, and the influence of price seasonality on decision-making.

Source: Prepared based on the conducted questionnaire.

3.2.2 Group 2: Pricing Perception

This set of questions explores respondents' perceptions of hotel pricing fairness and their attitudes toward various pricing strategies employed by hotels and online booking platforms.

Question number	Question	Response options
6	Have you ever experienced the perception of fair pricing (pricing that is perceived as reasonable, just, and equitable in relation to the value provided by a product or service.) changing after staying at a hotel?	Multiple choice: Yes; No
7	How fair do you believe hotels are when deciding how much to charge for their rooms? (For example, sometimes hotels adjust prices based on the time of year, such as charging more during peak seasons. They may also offer special deals or discounts, such as stay three nights and get one free. At other times, hotels might have loyalty programs where frequent guests receive better rates.) Do you consider these types of pricing strategies to be fair to customers?	Likert scale: Completely unfair (1) to Completely fair (5)
8	In your opinion, to what extent do you believe that the pricing strategies of	Likert scale: Completely unfair (1) to Completely fair (5)

	<p>online travel agencies are fair to consumers? (For example, online travel agencies may offer discounted rates or special deals for booking flights and accommodations together. They might also adjust prices based on demand, resulting in fluctuating rates throughout the booking process. Additionally, some online travel agencies may charge booking or service fees on top of the advertised price.) Do you consider these types of pricing strategies to be fair to customers?</p>	
9	<p>In your opinion, to what extent do you believe that the pricing strategies of booking websites are fair to consumers? (For example, booking websites may offer discounted rates or special promotions for certain destinations or hotels. They might also employ dynamic pricing, where prices change based on factors such as demand and availability. Additionally, some booking websites may charge additional fees, such as booking or service fees, on top of the advertised price.) Do you consider these types of pricing strategies to be fair to customers?</p>	<p>Likert scale: Completely unfair (1) to Completely fair (5)</p>
10	<p>How much do you trust the pricing information provided by online travel agencies such as Booking and Expedia?</p>	<p>Likert scale: Not at all (1) to Completely (5)</p>

Table 3.2: Group 2 - Consumers' Perception of Hotel Pricing Fairness

Description: This table summarizes the questions from Group 2 of the questionnaire, which investigates respondents' perceptions of pricing fairness and their attitudes toward various pricing strategies used by hotels and online booking platforms. The questions assess perceptions of fairness regarding hotel pricing, online travel agencies, and booking websites, as well as trust in the pricing information provided by these platforms.

Source: Prepared based on the conducted questionnaire.

3.2.3 Group 3: Importance of Price

These set of questions seek to investigate the role of price in the decision-making process of consumers when booking hotel accommodations. The study aims to gain an understanding of respondents' attitudes towards pricing as well as their perceptions of value for money.

Question number	Question	Response options
11	Have you ever paid more for a hotel than the average price for that location?	Multiple choice: Yes; No
11.1	If so, what were the reasons?	Open response
12	When searching for a hotel, if you're faced with higher prices in the city center compared to lower prices in the periphery, which option are you more inclined towards?	Multiple Choice: Prioritizing the convenience of a central location despite the higher cost; Opting for a more affordable option on the periphery even if it means sacrificing proximity to city attractions
13	How do you react when the price of a hotel you were considering booking suddenly increases?	Multiple Choice: Explore other hotel options to find a better deal; Book it anyway because that's the one you wanted; Change the dates of the stay to potentially find lower prices; Reach out to the hotel directly to inquire about the price change or negotiate a lower rate; Other (please specify)
14	When you search for hotels online, what factors do you prioritize, and how do you rank them in terms of importance when making your decision?	Rank options: Location; Price; Reviews; Amenities; Cancellation policy; Safety; Accessibility; Special Offers; Room size; Other (specify)
14.1	If there is another preference, please specify what it is and its level of importance, respectively.	Open response
15	How likely are you to recommend a hotel to others based on its price?	Likert scale: Very unlikely (1) to Very likely (5)

Table 3.3: The Importance of Price in Hotel Booking Decisions

Description: This table presents the questions from Group 3 of the questionnaire, which aims to explore the significance of price in consumers' decision-making processes when booking hotel accommodations. The questions assess respondents' attitudes toward pricing, their considerations of value for money, and their reactions to price changes during the booking process.

Source: Prepared based on the conducted questionnaire.

3.2.4 Group 4: Specific Situational Questions

This group of questions delves into respondents' reactions and perceptions in specific scenarios related to hotel pricing and booking experiences. These situational inquiries aim to capture nuanced insights into how consumers navigate pricing fluctuations and promotional offers.

Question number	Question	Response options
16	Consider a situation where there are two well-known hotels, Hotel X and Hotel Y, in a popular tourist destination. Hotel X announces temporary closure for maintenance. Previously, Hotel Y charged 150€ per night for a room. However, after Hotel X's closure, Hotel Y raises its room rate to 180€ per night. Do you believe this price increase is fair?	Likert scale: Very unfair (1) to Very fair (5)
17	Imagine you're logged into the Booking.com website to make a reservation for a hotel room. You discover that the platform offers discounted prices based on customers' booking history. Consequently, for a loyal customer, the price is 95€, whereas for a new customer, it's 105€. How fair do you perceive Booking.com's pricing strategy to be?	Likert scale: Very unfair (1) to Very fair (5)

Table 3.4: Group 4 - Specific Situational Questions Related to Hotel Pricing

Description: This table outlines the questions from Group 4 of the questionnaire, which focuses on respondents' reactions and perceptions in specific scenarios related to hotel pricing and booking experiences. The questions are designed to gather nuanced insights into how consumers respond to pricing fluctuations and promotional offers in different contexts.

Source: Prepared based on the conducted questionnaire.

3.2.5 Group 5: Demographic Questions

This group of questions aims to gather demographic data about the survey respondents. Understanding the demographic characteristics of the participants can provide valuable insights into how different groups perceive hotel pricing fairness and related topics.

Question number	Question	Response options
18	What's your age?	Multiple choice: Under 18 years old; 18-24 years old; 25-34 years old; 35-44 years

		old; 45-50 years old; 50> years old
19	What's your gender identity?	Multiple choice: Male; Female; Non-binary; Prefer not to say
20	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Multiple choice: Less than high school; High school diploma or equivalent; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Doctorate degree
21	What is your current employment status?	Multiple choice: Employed; Unemployed; Student; Other (Specify)
22	What is your professional field/occupation?	Open response

Table 3.5: Group 5 - Demographic Questions

Description: This table presents the questions from Group 5 of the questionnaire, aimed at gathering demographic data about the survey respondents. Understanding the demographic characteristics of the participants will provide valuable insights into how different groups perceive hotel pricing fairness and related topics.

Source: Prepared based on the conducted questionnaire.

3.3 Sample

The study's sample comprises 303 participants. Among all the 303 respondents, 182 are females, representing 60.1% of the total sample, and 121 are male, which is 39.9% of the sample.

In terms of age distribution, the largest segment consists of participants aged 18 to 24 years, totaling 96 individuals (31.7%). This is followed by the 25 to 34 age group, which includes 91 respondents (30%). The least represented age category is those under 18 years, with only 2 participants (0.7%). Additionally, the 35 to 44 and 45 to 50 age groups each have 23 responses, representing 7.6% of the total sample.

Regarding educational attainment, the most prevalent group consists of individuals holding a bachelor's degree, totaling 122 respondents (40%). This is followed by those with a high school diploma or equivalent. Conversely, the least represented categories are doctoral degree holders and individuals with less than a high school education, each comprising 5 respondents (2%) of the sample.

The majority of participants are employed (76%), followed by students (17%), while the unemployed represent the smallest segment at 2%.

Examining the professional sectors, the finance and management field employs the highest number of respondents, totaling 60 individuals. Students constitute the second largest group, with 51 participants, while the administration sector includes 24 respondents. In terms of professional distribution, the finance and management sector comprises 20% of the total respondents, followed by students at 17%, and the administration sector at 8%. The education and healthcare sectors account for 6% and 5%, respectively, while retirees also represent 5% of the participants.

Other sectors identified include engineering, technology, hospitality and tourism, logistics, communication and marketing, real estate, law, food services, commercial activities, and construction. An additional category labeled "other" encompasses 49 participants (16%), representing either less common professional fields or individuals who provided insufficient detail to be classified within a specific sector.

This distribution highlights the diverse professional backgrounds of the respondents, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sample's demographics.

3.3.1 Results

In this section, we will conduct a comprehensive descriptive analysis that focuses on several key areas related to consumer behavior in hotel bookings and perceptions of pricing fairness.

Our analysis will begin with an exploration of how frequently participants make hotel reservations, allowing us to identify patterns in their booking behaviors. Understanding these habits will provide valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer decisions in the hospitality industry.

Next, we will assess the utilization of price comparison platforms, examining how often participants turn to these resources when searching for accommodations. Additionally, we will evaluate the level of trust that respondents place in these platforms, as trust can significantly influence purchasing decisions and perceptions of fairness.

A critical aspect of our analysis will be the participants' perceptions of pricing fairness in hotels, alongside the strategies employed by online booking platforms. We will investigate how respondents view the fairness of hotel pricing, particularly in the context of dynamic pricing practices and promotional strategies. This exploration will shed light on the psychological factors that drive consumer reactions to perceived unfairness in pricing.

Furthermore, we will delve into how participants react to sudden price increases and their preferences regarding hotel locations. This will include an examination of their willingness to pay higher prices for accommodations in central locations versus more affordable options in peripheral areas. Understanding these preferences will provide context for the broader implications of pricing strategies in different geographical settings.

We will also analyze the priority factors that participants consider when selecting hotels. Key criteria, such as price, location, and available amenities, will be assessed to determine their relative importance in the decision-making process. This analysis will help us understand what drives consumer choices and how businesses can align their offerings with customer expectations.

In addition to these focal areas, we will provide a detailed breakdown of the demographic characteristics of survey respondents. By contextualizing our findings within the demographic

framework, we can better understand how different groups perceive pricing and make booking decisions.

Finally, we will analyze how demographic variables correlate with the other variables examined in the survey. This comparative analysis will reveal potential trends and differences in consumer behavior across various demographic segments, enhancing our understanding of the diverse factors that influence hotel booking decisions.

Through this structured approach, the descriptive analysis aims to uncover meaningful insights into consumer behavior within the hotel industry, with a particular emphasis on pricing perceptions and decision-making processes. By integrating findings from the literature review with empirical data from our survey, we seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of these dynamics in the context of e-commerce and hospitality.

3.3.1.1 Frequency of Hotel Accommodation Booking

The analysis of the frequency of hotel accommodation bookings, focused on perceptions of price fairness, is closely linked to the literature review on dynamic pricing and its relationship with consumer behavior. The literature emphasizes that the implementation of dynamic pricing strategies is essential in the hotel industry, particularly due to the perishable nature of the services offered and the need to maximize revenue in response to demand fluctuations and competition (Bandalouski et al., 2018; Kimes, 1989).

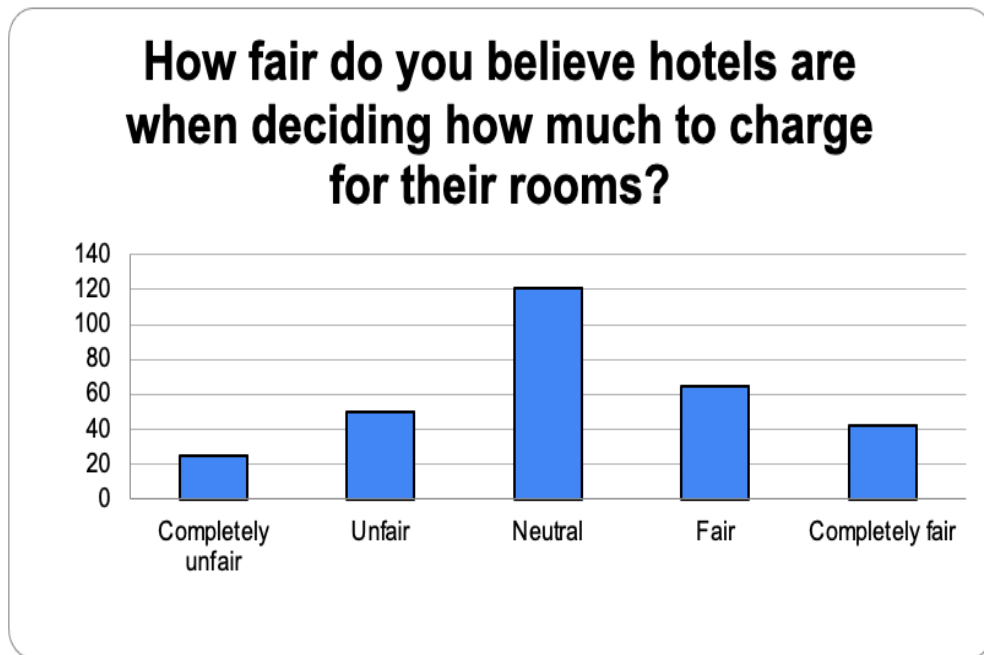
The review highlights how price transparency, driven by the Internet, alters consumer behavior, creating an intense competitive environment where consumers can easily compare prices (Granados et al., 2012). The first question in the survey— “How often do you book accommodation in hotels?”— helps identify behavioral patterns that may be influenced by price fairness perception, a central theme in Bandalouski et al. (2018), which argues that prices adjusted according to demand can directly affect occupancy rates and customer satisfaction.



*Figure 3.1: How often do you book hotel accommodations.
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)*

These findings highlight a prevalent trend towards moderate booking frequency, suggesting that most consumers engage with hotel services periodically rather than frequently. This observation aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes that consumer booking behaviors are influenced by perceptions of price fairness and the competitive nature of dynamic pricing strategies in the hotel industry. For instance, Kahneman et al. (1986a) and Kimes (2002) discuss how perceptions of fairness in pricing can significantly impact consumer behavior and decision-making.

The second question of the survey— “How fair do you think hotels are when deciding how much to charge for their rooms?”—highlights the importance of fairness perception in consumer decision-making. Previous studies have shown that perceptions of unfairness can lead to refusal to purchase and dissatisfaction (Kahneman et al., 1986a, 1986b). This relationship is particularly critical in the hotel industry, where pricing practices can directly influence customer loyalty and overall satisfaction.



*Figure 3.2: How fair do you believe hotels are when deciding how much to charge for their rooms?
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)*

With a substantial proportion (75 respondents) viewing hotel pricing as unfair or completely unfair, alongside a significant number of neutral responses (121), it becomes clear that many consumers are ambivalent about hotel pricing practices. This ambivalence can stem from the lack of transparency in dynamic pricing strategies, as discussed in the literature. As noted by Bandalouski et al., 2018; Fisher et al. (2015). The advent of the Internet has transformed price dissemination, granting consumers easy access to pricing data and intensifying competition among retailers. This transparency necessitates continuous real-time monitoring and swift responses to pricing dynamics. As a result, dynamic pricing tools have become essential for revenue management, allowing businesses to adjust prices based on demand, inventory, and competitor pricing while reducing manual adjustment costs.

Furthermore, El Haddad et al. (2015) establish that price fairness is a robust predictor of consumer behavior. When consumers perceive pricing practices as unfair, as indicated by the responses, it can lead to negative emotions such as anger and frustration, which have been shown to adversely affect customer loyalty (Xia et al., 2004). This highlights the need for hotels to not only adopt dynamic pricing strategies but to also ensure that these strategies are perceived as fair and justifiable.

The literature emphasizes the importance of establishing clear pricing policies that promote loyalty and satisfaction. For instance, Kahneman et al. (1986a) suggest that consumers are more likely to accept price increases if they perceive them as necessary to maintain a fair profit margin, rather than as attempts to exploit the situation for greater profit. Thus, communicating the rationale behind pricing decisions—such as operational costs and market demand—can mitigate perceptions of unfairness.

Moreover, the concept of dual entitlement presented by Kahneman et al. (1986b) suggests that both consumers and firms have rights that must be acknowledged in pricing strategies. If consumers perceive that their rights are being undermined by arbitrary price increases, their dissatisfaction is likely to increase. Therefore, hotels should focus on enhancing transparency in their pricing mechanisms to align with community standards of justice and fairness.

The third question— “Have you ever felt that your perception of a fair price changed after staying in a hotel?”—aims to explore how consumer experiences influence their perceptions over time. The results show that 184 respondents answered "yes," while 119 said "no."

These findings align with the literature, as highlighted by El Haddad et al. (2015), which examines the impact of past experiences and familiarity with a hotel’s pricing policies on fairness perceptions. Loyal and returning customers tend to have a more positive view of price fairness compared to new customers, who are more sensitive to price variations, particularly in booking contexts (Chu & Choi, 2000).

The 184 respondents who reported that their perception of fairness changed after their stay support the idea that direct experiences shape price evaluations. This suggests that, over time, consumers may develop a better understanding or acceptance of hotels’ revenue management practices, such as dynamic pricing. On the other hand, the 119 respondents who answered "no" could represent a group that maintains fixed expectations or has not experienced enough variability to alter their perceptions of price fairness.

Thus, these results emphasize the role of accumulated experience in shaping price fairness evaluations, suggesting that hotels should consider both loyal and new customers in their pricing strategies.

The fourth question of the research explores the relationship between the frequency of hotel reservations and the perception of fairness in pricing and it as a critical area of study in the context of dynamic pricing strategies. As hotels increasingly adopt these strategies to optimize revenue, concerns about price fairness among consumers have become more pronounced. Understanding how different reservation frequencies influence perceptions of fairness is essential, as frequent travelers may interpret price fluctuations differently than infrequent ones. This analysis explores how varying reservation frequencies impact perceptions of fairness, drawing on existing literature to provide insights into consumer behavior regarding dynamic pricing in the hotel sector.

According to the data, for customers who make 2 to 3 reservations a year, the majority (41.7%) position themselves as neutral regarding price fairness, while there is a significant divide between negative and positive perceptions. Among the analyzed customers, 16 consider the prices to be "completely unfair," 20 perceive them as "unfair," while 23 view them as "fair" and 8 as "completely fair." This distribution reveals that, although 41.7% of moderate customers express neutrality, the total

of those who deem the prices unfair (36.6%) exceeds those who consider them fair (22.1%). These data reflect the observations of El Haddad et al. (2015), who state that consumers who reserve moderately are generally more familiar with price fluctuations and would therefore be expected to have a higher acceptance of variations. However, the analysis of the data suggests that even with this familiarity, many customers still perceive prices as unfair, indicating that familiarity with pricing practices is not sufficient to ensure a positive perception of fairness. This discrepancy between the expectation of acceptance of price fluctuations and actual perceptions of fairness points to a need for better communication regarding the underlying motivations of dynamic pricing.

For customers who make more than 3 reservations per year (48), there is a clear trend towards more positive perceptions of pricing fairness. Specifically, 25% consider the prices to be "fair" (12 customers), and 8.33% classify them as "completely fair" (4 customers). In contrast, a lower percentage view the prices as "unfair" (8.33%, or 4 customers) or "completely unfair" (18.75%, or 9 customers). This trend is corroborated by the observations of El Haddad et al. (2015), who argue that familiarity with dynamic pricing strategies leads to greater acceptance among consumers. Understanding that customers who make reservations more frequently are more accustomed to these variations may explain why they are more receptive to pricing practices that, at first glance, might appear unjust. The accumulated experience allows these consumers to develop an expectation that dynamic pricing is a norm in the industry rather than an anomaly. Additionally, the dual entitlement theory, as discussed by Kahneman et al. (1986a), provides a theoretical basis for this acceptance. This theory suggests that consumers are more likely to accept price variations when they perceive these changes as justified by rational factors, such as capacity management and resource optimization, rather than arbitrary increases in profit margins. Thus, customers who become familiar with the logic behind dynamic pricing tend to perceive less injustice in prices, as they understand the context in which these variations occur.

Customers who make reservations less frequently demonstrate a significant sensitivity to pricing practices, reflecting a more pronounced negative perception. Among those who make fewer than one reservation per year, 32.79% (20 customers) classify prices as "unfair" or "completely unfair." A similar pattern is observed among those who make only one reservation annually, with 29.11% (23 customers) expressing the same opinion. These data highlight the tendency for less frequent or new consumers, lacking familiarity with the factors that justify price fluctuations, to perceive these changes more negatively. First-time customers, who are unfamiliar with a hotel's pricing policy, exhibit greater price sensitivity and may perceive price fairness differently. Conversely, customers who are familiar with a hotel's pricing policies tend to hold a more favorable perception of price fairness. Loyalty also plays a crucial role, as loyal customers demonstrate a more positive perception of price fairness, leading to repeat bookings, positive recommendations, and referrals.

As highlighted by El Haddad et al. (2015), a customer's familiarity with a hotel's pricing policy significantly influences their perception of price fairness. Therefore, hotels should prioritize initiatives to enhance customers' familiarity with their pricing structures and policies, such as offering comprehensive online information about available rates. Customers who reserve more frequently have a greater tolerance for price variations, especially since they view these practices as a normal strategy for maximizing profits by hotels without significantly harming them. This familiarity also generates trust, which mitigates perceptions of unfairness. This is reflected in the data: among customers who reserve more than three times a year, most consider prices to be "fair" or "completely fair," while those who reserve less frequently tend to classify prices as "unfair." Kahneman et al. (1986a, 1986b) also argues that consumers are more tolerant of price increases when they perceive these to be transparently justified.

Although the provided data does not distinguish between leisure and business customers, the literature by Chu & Choi (2000) suggests that perceptions of fairness may vary based on this factor. Leisure customers tend to be more price-sensitive than business customers, which could contribute to more negative perceptions of fairness among the former, especially among those who reserve less frequently. Leisure customers, by reserving less often and being less exposed to revenue management practices, may be more likely to consider price increases as unfair.

The analysis of the relationship between reservation frequency and price fairness perception reveals a clear trend: the higher the frequency of reservations, the greater the likelihood that customers will perceive prices as fair or neutral. Among customers who reserve 2 or 3 times a year, 20% classify the prices as fair, while 6.96% consider them "completely fair." This pattern is even more pronounced among customers who make more than 3 reservations a year, where the percentages of perceived fairness increase to 25% and 8.33%, respectively.

Interestingly, a contrasting trend emerges among customers who reserve less than once a year. Despite having infrequent booking habits, 36.08% of these customers classify the prices as fair or completely fair (24.59% fair and 11.48% completely fair). In comparison, among customers who reserve 2 or 3 times a year, only 26.96% perceive prices as fair or completely fair (20% fair and 6.96% completely fair). This finding suggests that, while infrequent customers may be sensitive to pricing practices, their perception of fairness may be influenced by their limited exposure to pricing fluctuations.

Among customers who make fewer than one reservation per year, 32.79% (20 customers) classify the prices as "unfair" or "completely unfair," with a similar pattern observed for those making only one reservation annually (29.11%, or 23 customers). This indicates that less frequent or new consumers, lacking familiarity with the factors justifying price variations, tend to perceive these fluctuations more negatively.

In addition, customer loyalty plays a crucial role in this context. Loyal customers demonstrate a more positive perception of price fairness, which leads to repeat bookings, positive recommendations, and referrals. Therefore, hotels should prioritize initiatives to enhance customers' familiarity with their pricing structures and policies, such as providing comprehensive online information about available rates. This approach can improve perceptions of price fairness and foster a stronger and more lasting relationship between hotels and their customers.

3.3.1.2 Utilization of Price Comparison Websites

The dissemination of price information through the Internet has transformed the way consumers access data about offers from various retailers. Literature highlights that this price transparency has intensified competition among online retailers, necessitating continuous monitoring and quick responses to competitive pricing dynamics (Bandalouski et al., 2018; Fisher et al., 2015). However, the analysis of the data obtained from the survey to the question "Do you use price comparison sites such as Trivago and Kayak?" data reveals that a significant portion of respondents (160 out of 303) do not utilize price comparison sites, contradicting the expectations created by this technological revolution.

Research indicates that consumers are more likely to resist price increases perceived as unjust, especially when they feel they are not receiving equivalent value (Kahneman et al., 1986a). If consumers believe that price comparison sites do not provide fair or accurate representations of value, they may choose to bypass them altogether. Thus, while the technology has the potential to enhance transparency, its effectiveness is contingent upon consumers' perceptions of fairness and value in their purchasing decisions.

The survey investigated the question, "To what extent do you trust the pricing information provided by online travel agencies, such as Booking and Expedia?"

How much do you trust the pricing information provided by online travel agencies such as Booking and Expedia?

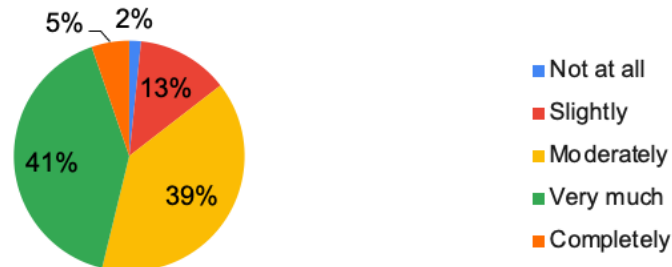


Figure 3.3: How much do you trust the pricing information provided by online travel agencies such as Booking and Expedia? Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

These findings indicate that a substantial 79.2% of respondents express at least moderate to considerable trust in the pricing information presented by these platforms. Specifically, this percentage is derived from the combination of those who reported "moderate," "considerable," and "complete" trust, which includes 119 + 124 + 16 respondents. This reflects a significant confidence in the reliability of online travel agencies (OTAs). Conversely, the lower trust levels, reflected in the 5 respondents who indicated "not at all" and the 39 who reported "slightly," account for approximately 14.6% of total responses. This suggests that while a minority express skepticism, the majority recognizes the value of the information provided.

This observation aligns with the literature on price transparency, which asserts that the advent of the Internet has significantly enhanced consumers' access to pricing information, thereby facilitating more effective comparisons across various retailers (Bandalouski et al., 2018; Fisher et al., 2015) The elevated trust levels identified in this study may be attributed to this enhanced transparency, which likely fosters increased consumer assurance in their purchasing decisions.

Moreover, the role of perceived pricing fairness is critical in understanding consumer trust. Xia et al. (2004) contend that consumers engage in comparative assessments when evaluating fairness, suggesting that trust in online travel agencies may arise from perceptions of equity in their pricing strategies. Supporting this assertion, Kahneman et al. (1986a) argue that consumers are more willing to accept price increases when such changes are perceived as justified.

Additionally, brand reputation is a significant factor contributing to consumer trust. Prominent online travel agencies, such as Booking and Expedia, have established substantial brand equity, which positively influences consumer perceptions (Chen et al., 2021). Nonetheless, concerns surrounding

dynamic pricing and potential price discrimination, as discussed by McAfee and Te Velde (2006), may explain the 44 respondents who reported low levels of trust.

In essence, the survey results reveal a compelling contrast between consumer trust and actual behavior concerning online travel agencies and price comparison sites. While a significant 79.2% of respondents express at least moderate trust in the pricing information provided by online travel agencies like Booking and Expedia, it is striking that a substantial portion (160 out of 303) do not engage with price comparison sites such as Trivago and Kayak. This discovery indicates a disconnect despite high levels of trust in the information from online travel agencies, many consumers appear hesitant or unwilling to leverage additional tools that could enhance their decision-making process. This finding prompts further exploration into the underlying reasons for this behavior, suggesting that factors such as awareness, perceived complexity, or reliance on established brands may inhibit the adoption of comparison sites. Ultimately, this highlights an intriguing gap between consumer confidence and the utilization of technological resources available in travel planning.

The survey question, "How much time do you normally spend comparing prices on different websites before making a hotel reservation?" yielded insightful results regarding consumer behavior in the context of dynamic pricing and perceived fairness. The responses reveal a diverse range of price comparison practices among respondents, highlighting the significant role of time investment in the decision-making process.

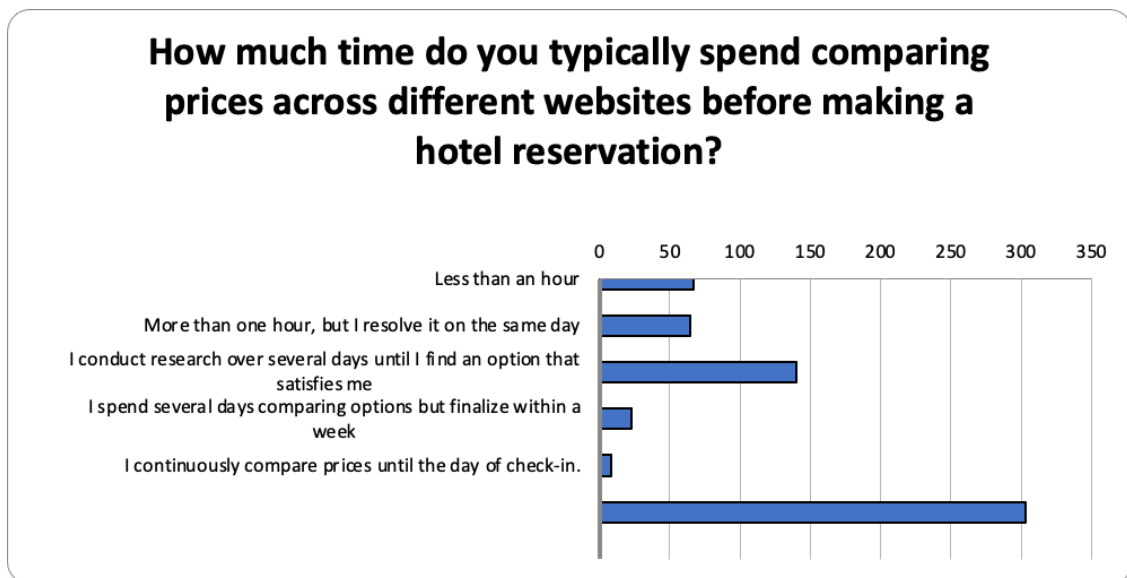


Figure 3.4: How much time do you typically spend comparing prices across different websites before making a hotel reservation?
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

Only 3% of respondents indicated they continuously compare prices until the day of check-in, reflecting a reactive approach to pricing in a competitive online market (Bandalouski et al., 2018).

A significant 21% reported spending over an hour but making a decision on the same day, indicating a more deliberate consideration of options. This aligns with literature suggesting consumers engage in thorough price comparisons to ensure they get the best value (Pan et al., 2013). In contrast, 22% took less than an hour, suggesting a quicker, less detailed evaluation process, which may reflect lower engagement with pricing nuances.

Moreover, 8% spent several days comparing prices before finalizing within a week, while 46% searched for days until finding a satisfactory option. This behavior emphasizes the importance of thorough decision-making, as consumers tend to resist perceived unfair pricing practices (Kahneman et al., 1986a).

The data reveals that while some consumers are price-sensitive and invest significant time in comparisons, others prefer a quicker decision-making process. This highlights the need for businesses to adopt transparent pricing models that cater to different consumer behaviors. Companies should effectively communicate the reasons behind price fluctuations to mitigate perceptions of unfairness (Kimes, 2002).

The time spent comparing prices significantly influences consumer behavior in the hotel industry. These findings align with equity and distributive justice theories, emphasizing the importance of perceived fairness in shaping purchase intentions (Xia et al., 2004). To enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction, businesses must implement transparent pricing strategies that address diverse consumer expectations.

3.3.1.3 Perception of Price Fairness

The data collected from the survey question, "How does hotel price seasonality affect your decision-making process when selecting travel dates?" provides valuable insights into consumer behavior in relation to pricing fluctuations.

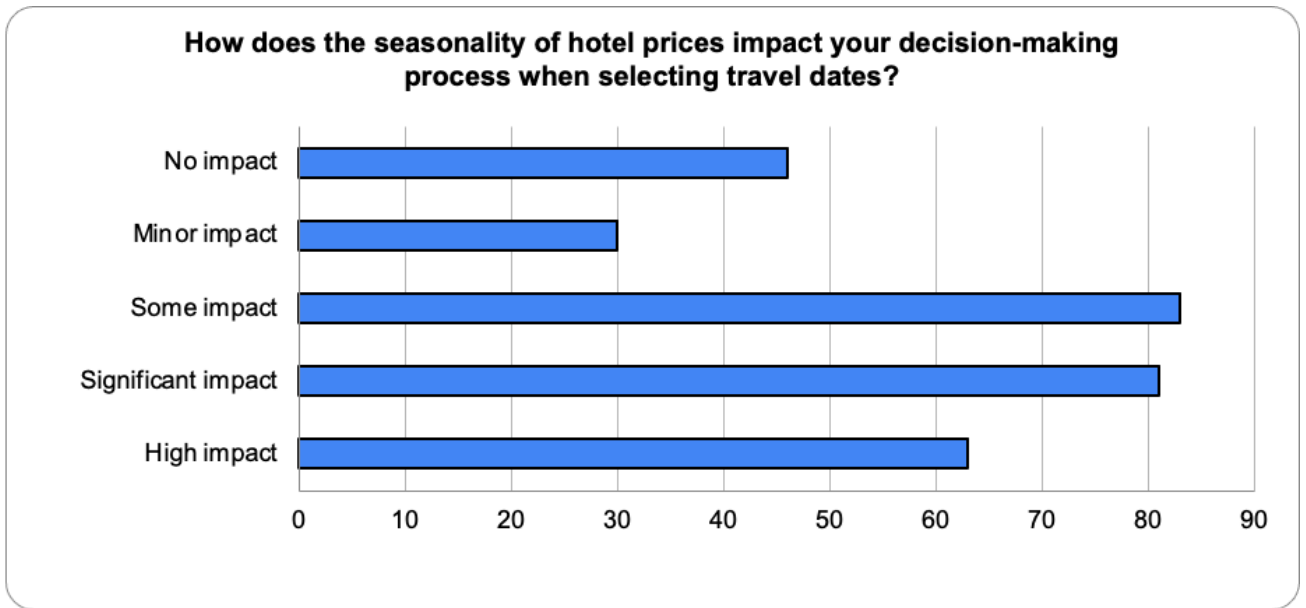


Figure 3.5: How does the seasonality of hotel prices impact your decision-making process when selecting travel dates?
 Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

The results show that a large portion of participants (227 out of 303) acknowledge that price seasonality affects their decision-making process to varying degrees, with the majority leaning towards moderate to high levels of impact.

Price seasonality is closely tied to the concept of dynamic pricing, which is a crucial factor in consumer decision-making in the hospitality industry. Previous studies have emphasized that price fluctuations are generally accepted by consumers if they are perceived as fair or justifiable. According to Kahneman et al. (1986), price acceptability is linked to perceived fairness, but the decision to alter travel plans based on seasonal pricing doesn't always reflect a sense of fairness. For instance, some travelers may begrudgingly shift their plans to avoid higher prices, while others may adjust their expectations or budgets accordingly, without directly questioning the fairness. Xia et al. (2004) highlight that perceived fairness in pricing can vary, with some consumers accepting price changes driven by external factors like demand, while others might feel exploited.

Thus, while price seasonality undeniably shapes consumer decisions, it is crucial to distinguish this behavioral response from their perceptions of fairness. Businesses should recognize that even when consumers adjust their decisions based on seasonal pricing, negative perceptions can still arise. Clear, transparent communication of pricing rationale and strategies is essential to managing both decision-making behavior and consumer trust.

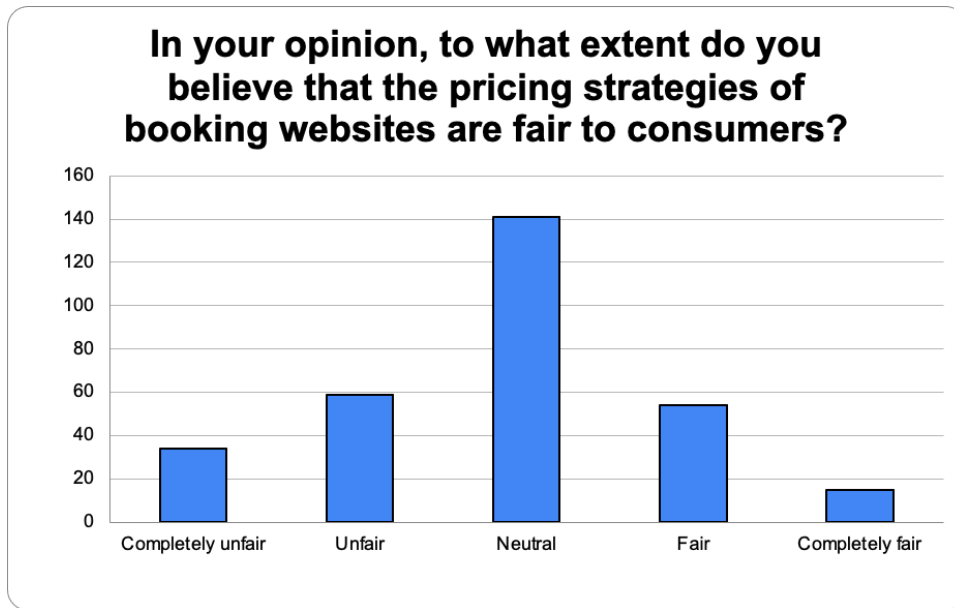


Figure 3.6: In your opinion, to what extent do you believe that the pricing strategies of booking websites are fair to consumers?
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

This distribution suggests that while some consumers recognize fairness in these practices, the majority are either indifferent or lean toward perceiving unfairness.

The concept of price transparency is crucial. According to Granados et al. (2012), increased transparency in digital markets allows consumers to more easily compare prices, which raises their sensitivity to perceived inequities. The large number of respondents who view the pricing strategies as unfair likely stems from a perceived lack of clarity in how prices are determined. Without sufficient information about why prices change, consumers may feel that the process is arbitrary or manipulative.

Dynamic pricing practices are another key factor contributing to consumer perceptions. As discussed by McAfee and Te Velde (2006), dynamic pricing is a common strategy in sectors like hospitality and travel, where prices fluctuate based on demand. However, consumers often struggle to understand these fluctuations, which can lead to a sense of unfairness, especially when prices vary within short periods. This lack of understanding could account for the 93 respondents who view the pricing strategies as either unfair or completely unfair. The unpredictable nature of dynamic pricing can create a perception of manipulation, especially if consumers believe they are not benefiting from the system.

In addition, both distributive justice theory and equity theory, explored by Xia et al. (2004), highlights that consumers' perceptions of fairness are shaped by their ability to compare prices with others. If consumers feel that they are paying more for the same service than someone else, they are more likely to perceive the pricing as unfair. This is particularly relevant in online booking platforms, where consumers can easily compare prices across multiple dates, locations, and even user profiles.

The perception of unequal pricing could explain why a substantial portion of respondents view these strategies as unjust, reflecting concerns about being treated unfairly in comparison to others.

This analysis addresses the question: "To what extent are the pricing strategies of online travel agencies perceived as fair by consumers?" and the results yielded insightful findings.

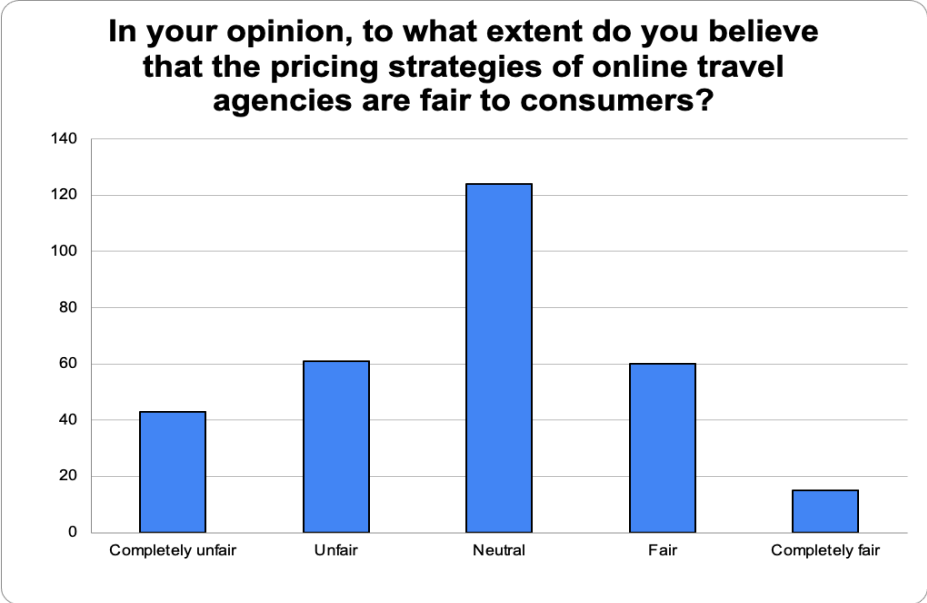


Figure 3.7: In your opinion, to what extent do you believe that the pricing strategies of online travel agencies are fair to consumers?
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

A significant portion of respondents, specifically 104 individuals (34.3%), perceived the pricing strategies as unfair. This indicates a prevailing sentiment among consumers that online travel agencies prioritize profit over fair pricing practices. These findings resonate with Kahneman et al. (1986), who assert that consumers are quick to identify exploitative pricing practices, particularly when they seem to benefit companies at the expense of the consumer.

Conversely, 75 respondents (24.8%) deemed the pricing strategies as fair, suggesting that a minority of consumers possess a positive perception of these practices. This may reflect a level of familiarity and trust in the pricing mechanisms employed by online travel agencies. El Haddad et al. (2015) highlight that familiarity with pricing structures can lead to more favorable perceptions of fairness, especially when consumers understand the rationale behind price fluctuations, such as demand and supply dynamics. However, this perspective highlights a contradiction: the large neutral group of 124 respondents (40.9%) indicates ambivalence or uncertainty about pricing fairness. This neutrality suggests that consumers may find it challenging to articulate the criteria for fairness, aligning with Xia et al. (2004), who note that perceptions of unfairness are often clearer than those of fairness.

The significant neutral responses also contradict the literature's expectation that transparency in pricing strategies should lead to decisive consumer opinions. The findings indicate that many consumers may struggle to reconcile their experiences with the complex pricing structures of online travel agencies. This challenge is further complicated by the literature on dynamic pricing, particularly in the hotel sector, where price fluctuations can lead to consumer frustration. Studies by Abrate et al. (2012), Kimes (2002) and Kahneman et al. (1986a, 1986b) document that consumers often perceive unfairness when they encounter varying prices for the same services without adequate justification. The survey responses align with this notion, suggesting that a lack of transparency in pricing strategies contributes to negative consumer perceptions.

Regarding the inquiry directed at participants: "Do you consider the price increase from €150 to €180 per night by Hotel Y, following the temporary closure of Hotel X for maintenance, to be fair?", the data collected concerning perceptions of price fairness yields significant insights into consumer behavior within the hospitality sector. The survey responses reflect a prevailing sentiment among participants concerning the equity of the price increase.

The results reveal that a substantial majority of respondents, specifically 93 individuals, labeled the price increase as "Very Unfair," while an additional 65 considered it "Unfair." Conversely, only 51 participants viewed the increase as "Fair," and a mere 13 deemed it "Very Fair." This data suggests a strong inclination towards disapproval of the price adjustment made by Hotel Y, indicating a negative sentiment regarding such pricing practices in a competitive market.

These findings align closely with several key theories discussed in the literature. Research by Kahneman et al. (1986) highlights that consumers are particularly sensitive to price increases that lack a proportional rise in value or justification. In this scenario, the abrupt increase of €30 in the price of Hotel Y, following the closure of its competitor, is likely perceived as an exploitation of limited consumer options rather than a reflection of increased costs or added value. This perspective resonates with the principle of fairness outlined by El Haddad et al. (2015), suggesting that perceived injustices in pricing can evoke negative emotional responses and erode consumer trust.

However, it is noteworthy that a significant number of respondents, specifically 81, chose a "Neutral" stance on the price increase. This indicates a more complex consumer sentiment, potentially reflecting ambivalence towards the situation or a nuanced understanding of market dynamics. Such neutrality may contradict the literature's assertion that consumers will uniformly reject perceived exploitation. It underscores that while a majority of consumers view the price increase as unfair, there remains a notable segment that may adopt a more lenient or pragmatic perspective regarding pricing strategies in the context of market conditions.

The pronounced perception of unfairness surrounding Hotel Y's price increase carries important implications for consumer behavior. According to equity theory and principles of distributive justice,

consumers typically compare their outcomes with those of others in similar situations. In this case, the lack of a clear rationale for the price increase leads consumers to perceive Hotel Y as capitalizing on the circumstances. Such perceptions can damage brand loyalty and reputation.

Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of transparency in pricing strategies. Effective communication regarding the rationale behind pricing decisions can help mitigate feelings of exploitation. As emphasized by Kahneman et al. (1986), the perception of fairness is closely tied to how price increases are framed and justified. Hotel Y's failure to justify its increase in rates may not only result in a short-term loss of revenue but could also hinder long-term customer retention.

In contrast, the presence of neutral responses suggests that some consumers may possess a nuanced understanding of the market, recognizing that price adjustments could be necessary in light of altered competitive landscapes. This perspective warrants further exploration to identify the characteristics of respondents who selected a neutral position, as they may represent a valuable segment of consumers who are less price-sensitive and more focused on the overall value proposition.

The analysis of the data reveals a strong consumer sentiment against the price increase implemented by Hotel Y, which aligns with the literature on price fairness. Nevertheless, the existence of neutral responses introduces a layer of complexity that requires further investigation. Understanding the underlying factors influencing these perceptions is crucial for hospitality businesses navigating competitive pressures, emphasizing the necessity of maintaining fairness and transparency in pricing strategies to foster consumer trust and loyalty.

3.3.1.4. Priority Factors in Hotel Selection

During the analysis of consumer preferences for online hotel bookings, nine factors were considered, among which the four that emerged as the most critical for consumers were location, price, reviews, and security. This analysis examines the importance of these four factors according to consumer responses and aligns their relevance with the existing literature on price fairness perception in the hospitality industry. It is important to note that for each factor, a few participants were excluded due to providing more than one response per factor, rendering their answers invalid.

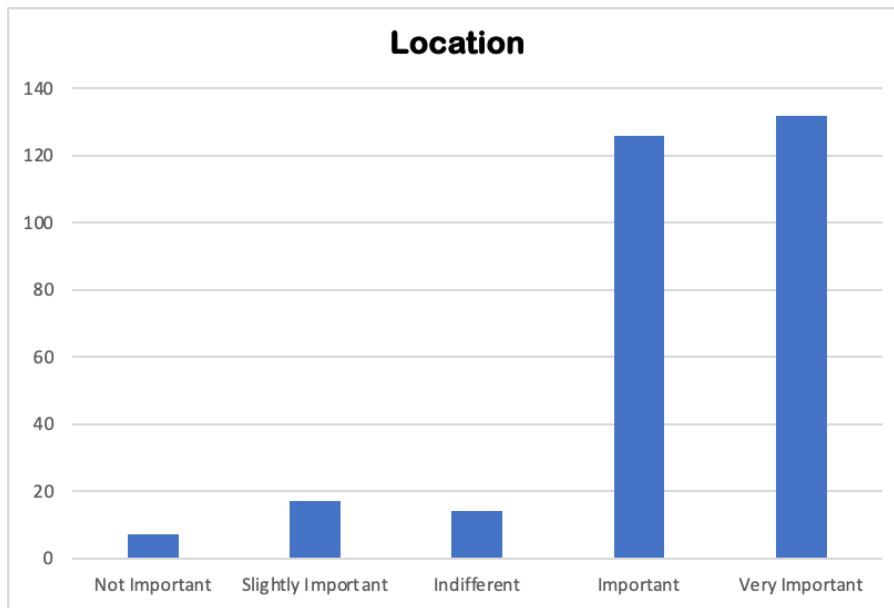


Figure 3.8: Priority factor – Location.
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

Relatively to location, it was rated as "Important" by 126 participants and "Very Important" by 132, totaling 258 consumers who prioritized this factor when booking hotels.

There is a consensus between consumer preferences and the literature. Both affirm that consumers prioritize location and are willing to pay more when it offers clear benefits. Consumers tend to compare prices based on their experiences and expectations regarding the location. For instance, a hotel situated in a central area or in proximity to tourist attractions can justify higher prices, provided that the experience and services offered meet consumer expectations. This aligns with the idea that customers weigh not only supplier costs and profits but also the motives behind pricing decisions, as highlighted by Campbell (1999). If consumers perceive that a hotel charges higher prices due to its advantageous location and the quality of service provided, this perception may be considered fair.

However, when location does not translate into added value or a differentiated experience, consumers may view price variations as unfair. The use of revenue management strategies can lead to different prices for similar services, creating a potential for perceptions of unfairness. As discussed by Granados et al. (2012), consumers' ability to access information about prices and services through the internet amplifies this perception. Therefore, customers who make reservations at different times may encounter significant price variations, even if the quality of service remains similar.

Thus, location should be considered not just as a geographical aspect but as a component that interacts with service quality and consumer experience. Hotels that can effectively communicate the value proposition associated with their location—aligning prices with what consumers value—will be better positioned to mitigate perceptions of unfairness and promote customer loyalty.



Figure 3.9: Priority Factor: Price
 Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

The results indicate a significant predominance of price as a critical factor in hotel selection.

The findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of price as a fundamental determinant in consumer decision-making, particularly in the hospitality industry. Prior studies (Kahneman et al., 1986) demonstrate that perceptions of price fairness play a critical role in customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. When consumers perceive a price as fair relative to the value received, they are more likely to make favorable purchasing decisions. The research by El Haddad et al. (2015) highlights that perceptions of price fairness significantly influence consumers' behavioral intentions. In this context, the high priority given to price in the current study may indicate consumers' heightened awareness of price fluctuations and the need to ensure good value, reflecting the increasing emphasis on competitive offerings.

Moreover, as noted by Pan et al. (2013), when confronted with a multitude of choices, customers often use price as a metric to filter out unsuitable options, compare similar offerings, and ultimately arrive at a purchase decision. This filtering role of price is evident in the results, revealing a significant disparity between price and other factors. Only 9 participants consider price as "indifferent," suggesting that, unlike other factors, price stands out as an essential decision-making factor.

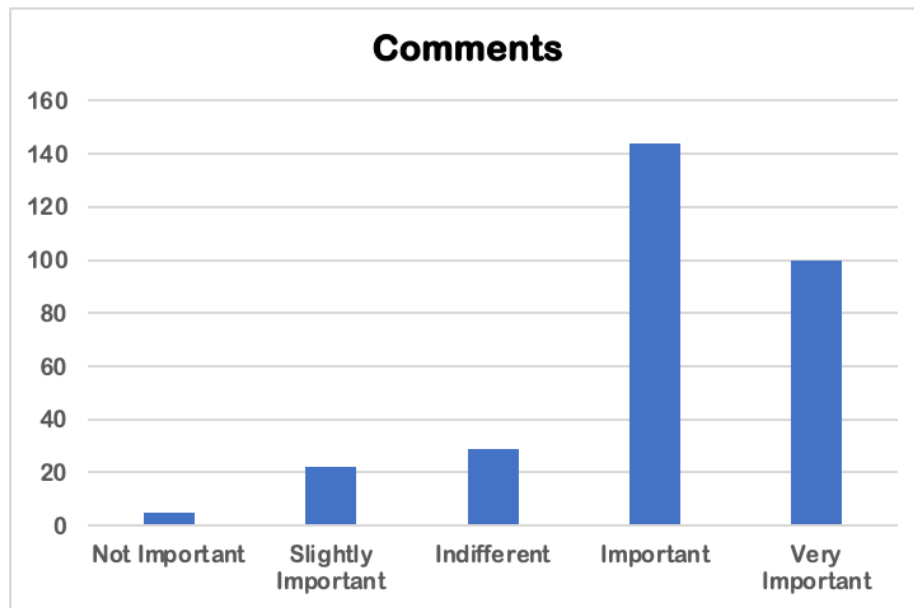


Figure 3.10: Priority Factor – Comments
 Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

From these numbers, it is clear that the vast majority of respondents (244, combining those who ranked it as "important" and "very important") consider comments a significant factor in their booking decisions. Only a minority (5) believe that comments are of no importance at all.

The high ratings of "important" and "very important" suggest that comments have a substantial impact on consumers' perceptions of the quality and value of hotels. Customers tend to value the experiences of other travelers, using this information as a form of social validation in their choice. The study conducted by El Haddad et al. (2015) highlights that customers' perceptions of price fairness significantly influence their purchase decisions and their willingness to recommend hotels to others. This phenomenon is closely related to the role of comments; when potential guests read favorable reviews, they perceive a higher level of trust and credibility associated with the hotel. This trust can mitigate any concerns regarding price fairness, leading to an enhanced likelihood of booking. Moreover, first-time customers tend to exhibit higher price sensitivity, which affects their perceptions of price fairness. In such cases, the presence of positive comments can serve as a critical buffer, reassuring these customers about the value they will receive for their money. This further emphasizes the importance of managing online reputations; hotels that encourage satisfied guests to leave positive feedback not only enhance their credibility but also foster a sense of familiarity and trust among new customers. Conversely, customers who are already familiar with a hotel's pricing policies are likely to have a more favorable perception of price fairness. In this context, comments become even more significant, as they can provide additional context about the hotel's services, amenities, and overall value proposition. Loyal customers, who tend to have a more positive perception of price fairness, can also amplify the effectiveness of comments. Their endorsements can serve as powerful

word-of-mouth recommendations, reinforcing the hotel's reputation and encouraging repeat bookings.

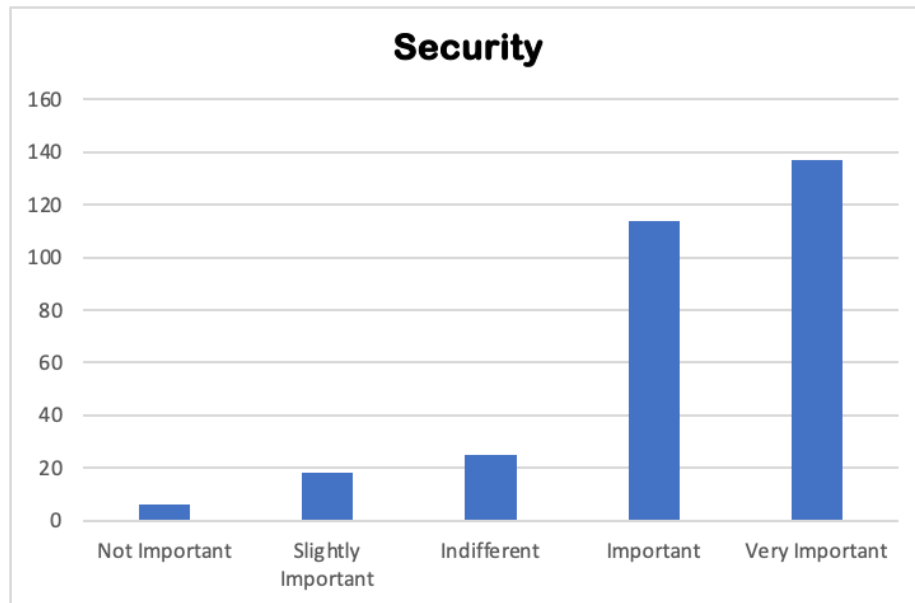


Figure 3.11: Priority Factor – Security
Source: Author's own survey data (2024)

Hotel security can be viewed as an extension of the perception of fairness and trustworthiness that consumers expect when utilizing accommodation services. As highlighted by Kahneman et al. (1986), consumers tend to evaluate the fairness of transactions in terms of perceived benefits and costs, which includes security aspects. When guests feel that a hotel does not provide a safe environment, it can be seen as a violation of their expectations of "fairness," leading to a negative perception and potential abandonment of the booking.

Furthermore, research by Granados et al. (2013) highlights the importance of information available to consumers in the decision-making process. Ease of access to reviews and information about a hotel's safety through online platforms allows consumers to make informed comparisons, increasing the likelihood that they will prioritize safety. Transparency in communicating about a hotel's safety policies and practices is vital in shaping consumer perceptions.

3.3.1.5 Age-Based Analysis of Fairness Perceptions in Online Travel Agency

Pricing

Based on the analysis of perceptions of fairness in the pricing strategies of online travel agencies, it is clear that these perceptions vary significantly across age groups.

The literature review provides essential support for interpreting these trends. Xia et al. (2004) discuss how consumers tend to identify unfair pricing practices more readily than fair ones, with negative emotions such as frustration and distrust dominating in situations where unfairness is perceived. This theory is confirmed by the fact that 104 respondents rated the pricing strategies as 'completely unjust' or 'unjust,' while only 75 considered them 'just' or 'completely just.' The imbalance reflects the stronger tendency of consumers to perceive unfairness rather than fairness in pricing strategies. Additionally, the 124 respondents who rated the practices as 'neutral' may suggest a segment of consumers who are either indifferent or have adapted to the pricing models without forming strong positive or negative opinions. This theory also applies directly to the 50+ age group, which demonstrates greater distrust and perceptions of unfairness in online travel agencies' pricing strategies. This can be explained by their lower familiarity with digital platforms, leading them to compare these practices with more traditional methods.

The prevalence of "Unfair" perceptions among younger consumers, particularly those aged 25-34, may relate to their frequent use of online platforms and heightened sensitivity to observed price fluctuations, as discussed by Campbell (1999). Modern consumers, especially frequent users of digital platforms, can be more critical when they feel that prices vary without clear justification.

On the other hand, the neutrality expressed by young adults in the 18-34 age range, as seen in the "Neutral" category, can be explained by their adaptation to dynamic pricing practices. As noted by Kimes (1989), the evolution of revenue management systems has significantly impacted consumer interactions with pricing strategies in the hospitality sector. Young adults, who frequently utilize digital platforms for booking, are well-acquainted with price fluctuations and the underlying rationale for these variations. Young adults, who frequently utilize digital platforms for booking, are well-acquainted with price fluctuations and the underlying rationale for these variations. This adaptability aligns with Seetharaman's (2009) assertion that effective pricing strategies require companies to recognize long-term implications, suggesting that consumers are increasingly aware of the contextual factors influencing pricing decisions. Furthermore, according to Xia et al. (2004), consumers engage in comparative analyses when evaluating price fairness, leading them to accept fluctuations as part of a strategic approach to revenue optimization. Their experience with price comparison tools equips them to navigate these fluctuations without perceiving them as unjust, viewing them instead as integral to the dynamic nature of pricing in online travel agencies.

Regarding the "Fair" and "Completely Fair" categories, which are dominated by responses from young adults, the literature review also offers a consistent explanation. Xia et al. (2004) indicate that consumers who frequently utilize price comparison tools develop a more informed perspective regarding pricing fluctuations, which in turn leads to a greater acceptance of dynamic pricing

strategies. However, it is crucial to recognize that price fairness only becomes relevant when consumers perceive a price as unfair.

According to El Haddad et al. (2015), customers who are more acquainted with a hotel's pricing policies tend to hold a more favorable view of price fairness. Their repeated experiences with hotel bookings allow them to develop a nuanced understanding of dynamic pricing strategies, leading to a greater acceptance of pricing fluctuations.

Moreover, frequent travelers often engage more with digital platforms and price comparison tools, enhancing their ability to evaluate the fairness of prices. As they compare rates and explore various accommodation options, their experiences reinforce a favorable perception of the transparency and adaptability inherent in online travel agencies' pricing models. This alignment of experience and expectation fosters a stronger belief in the equity of dynamic pricing practices, contributing to the higher proportion of responses categorized as fair.

4. Discussion

4.1 Discussion of results

The three main objectives of this study were outlined in the introduction and addressed throughout the paper. The first objective was to investigate how consumers perceive the fairness of pricing strategies employed by hotels and online booking platforms and what factors influence those perceptions. The second objective focused on the extent to which consumers' attitudes towards hotel pricing fairness impact their booking decisions and loyalty to specific booking channels. Finally, the third objective proposed recommended strategies for hotels and online booking platforms to enhance consumers' perceptions of pricing fairness, particularly in the context of price fluctuations.

The discussion of the results will now be structured based on each section of interest, providing a thorough analysis in line with the research objectives and addressing the key themes identified throughout the study.

The findings presented in the first section regarding the frequency of hotel accommodation bookings are closely aligned with two of the three main objectives outlined in the introduction.

Firstly, the analysis of hotel booking frequency highlights a significant connection to perceptions of price fairness among Portuguese consumers. The data indicates that most consumers book accommodation moderately, suggesting that fairness perceptions influence their purchasing decisions. Literature, such as Bandalouski et al. (2018), supports that dynamically adjusted prices can enhance occupancy rates and customer satisfaction when perceived as fair. Additionally, increased price transparency through the internet intensifies competition, compelling hotels to ensure fair pricing practices. Lack of transparency can lead to perceptions of unfairness, decreasing booking frequency. Thus, clear communication regarding price fluctuations is essential to build consumer trust and loyalty. Overall, understanding price fairness perceptions is vital for developing effective strategies that align with consumer expectations in the hotel sector.

Secondly, the analysis of the second survey question on consumers' perceptions of fairness in hotel pricing reveals important insights into Portuguese consumers' behaviors. A significant number of respondents (75 individuals) consider hotel pricing unfair, while many others (121) remain neutral, indicating ambivalence likely rooted in a lack of transparency in dynamic pricing strategies.

In today's digital age, where consumers have easy access to pricing information, unclear pricing policies can lead to negative fairness perceptions, adversely affecting customer loyalty. Hotels must adopt dynamic pricing strategies that not only maximize revenue but are also perceived as fair and justifiable. Clear communication about the reasons for price fluctuations—such as operational costs and market demand—is essential for addressing perceptions of unfairness. The concept of "dual

entitlement" suggests that both consumers and firms have rights in pricing practices. If consumers feel their rights are violated by arbitrary price increases, dissatisfaction will likely increase.

Understanding price fairness perceptions is crucial for enhancing consumer loyalty and satisfaction in the hotel sector, requiring strategies that emphasize equity and transparency for long-term success.

Building on the previous analysis, the examination of how consumer experiences influence perceptions of price fairness in hotels directly addresses the first research question regarding how Portuguese consumers perceive fairness or unfairness in pricing. The results indicate that many respondents believe their sense of fairness evolves after their hotel stays, suggesting that direct experiences significantly shape these evaluations. This observation aligns with the literature, particularly the work of El Haddad et al. (2015), which highlights the role of familiarity with a hotel's pricing policies in shaping perceptions of fairness.

Furthermore, the relationship between price fluctuations and consumer reactions, relevant to the second research question, is evident in the analysis. Loyal customers tend to have a more favorable view of pricing practices compared to new customers, who are often more sensitive to price variations. This finding emphasizes the necessity for hotels to adopt dynamic pricing strategies that are perceived as fair by consumers. Clear communication regarding the rationale behind pricing changes, such as operational costs and market demand, is essential to mitigate perceptions of unfairness.

The analysis of reservation frequency's impact on price fairness perception is closely related to consumer reactions to price fluctuations. Findings indicate that customers making 2 to 3 reservations annually often feel neutral about pricing fairness, while those with over 3 reservations display greater acceptance. This trend supports El Haddad et al. (2015), suggesting that familiarity with dynamic pricing enhances acceptance. Conversely, infrequent customers exhibit heightened sensitivity, perceiving prices as unfair. Enhancing transparency in pricing strategies can help mitigate negative perceptions and foster trust among consumers.

The subsequent section, titled "Utilization of Price Comparison Websites," examines the influence of these platforms on consumer decision-making processes, perceptions of pricing fairness, and the overall trust within the hospitality industry.

The analysis of the utilization of price comparison websites reveals distinct consumer behaviors regarding perceptions of pricing fairness. While 79.2% of respondents express trust in the pricing information from platforms like Booking and Expedia, a significant portion (160 out of 303) does not engage with comparison sites such as Trivago and Kayak. This discrepancy suggests that, despite high levels of trust in the information provided, many consumers hesitate to utilize tools that could enhance their purchasing experience. Such hesitation may be influenced by factors such as awareness, perceived complexity, or a preference for established brands.

Additionally, resistance to price increases can occur when consumers do not perceive equivalent value, reflecting concerns about fairness in pricing practices. Brand reputation and pricing transparency are crucial in shaping consumer trust and, consequently, perceptions of fairness. The time invested in price comparison is also significant, with 46% of respondents spending several days to find a satisfactory option. This behavior indicates that more conscious and critical consumers regarding pricing tend to have higher expectations about fairness in pricing practices. Therefore, implementing transparent pricing strategies is essential to meet diverse consumer expectations, fostering loyalty and satisfaction in the hotel sector.

The analysis of consumer preferences for online hotel bookings highlights four essential factors: location, price, reviews, and security. These elements are critical for hotel operators to align their offerings with consumer expectations and enhance satisfaction. Among these, **price** emerged as the most influential factor, with the majority of participants ranking it as highly important. This finding underscores the central role of price in shaping consumer decision-making, particularly in light of existing literature that emphasizes the connection between perceived price fairness and customer satisfaction, as demonstrated by Kahneman et al. (1986). Price sensitivity was evident, as only a small number of participants considered it "indifferent," indicating that consumers actively filter their options based on price.

While location was also rated as "important" or "very important" by a substantial number of respondents, the influence of price remained paramount. This suggests that, although consumers are willing to pay higher prices for hotels in desirable areas, price remains the primary criterion when assessing overall value. If a hotel's location does not enhance the experience or provide a clear added benefit, price increases may be perceived as unjustified, leading to perceptions of unfair pricing, as suggested by Campbell (1999). Consumers' willingness to pay for location is contingent on the perceived quality and service provided in that context, reinforcing the interconnectedness of these factors.

Reviews also play a significant role in shaping booking decisions, as they provide social validation and build trust. The majority of respondents considered reviews important, which aligns with the findings of El Haddad et al. (2015) that emphasize the impact of trust and credibility on consumers' willingness to book. Positive reviews, in particular, can alleviate concerns about price fairness, fostering a greater likelihood of booking. Additionally, security was identified as another critical factor, reflecting consumers' expectations for a safe environment. As Kahneman et al. (1986) observed, perceptions of fairness are shaped by both tangible and intangible benefits, such as security, further highlighting the importance of transparent communication regarding safety measures.

These findings have important implications for hotel management. By prioritizing competitive pricing strategies, optimizing location value, encouraging positive reviews, and clearly communicating

security policies, hotels can enhance their value proposition and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Limitations of this study, such as potential biases in self-reported data and sample size, suggest that future research could explore additional factors influencing hotel selection, such as environmental sustainability and brand loyalty.

The analysis reveals that while location, reviews, and security are significant factors, price remains the most critical determinant of consumer preferences for hotel selection. Focusing on delivering perceived value and ensuring fairness in pricing will allow hotels to improve customer experiences and strengthen their competitive position in the market.

Lastly, the analysis relating to the "Age-Based Analysis of Fairness Perceptions in Online Travel Agency Pricing" reveals significant differences in fairness perceptions regarding the pricing strategies of online travel agencies, depending on consumers' age groups. Older consumers, particularly those over 50, tend to consider these dynamic practices as unfair, possibly due to their lower familiarity with digital platforms and a preference for more traditional pricing models. As indicated by Xia et al. (2004), consumers are more prone to identify pricing practices as unfair, which is reflected in the heightened distrust of this age group. These findings suggest that online travel agencies should communicate more clearly with older consumers to mitigate perceptions of unfairness.

In contrast, younger consumers, especially those aged 18 to 34, tend to be more neutral or more accepting of dynamic pricing. Their frequent interaction with digital platforms and price comparison tools makes them more adaptable to price fluctuations, viewing them as part of the booking process. This trend aligns with Kimes (1989), who points to the increasing acceptance of revenue management practices in the hospitality sector. Additionally, El Haddad et al. (2015) supports the notion that consumers familiar with dynamic pricing systems tend to perceive these variations as fair, understanding the underlying logic.

These findings highlight that perceptions of pricing fairness are closely linked to digital literacy and familiarity with online booking systems. While younger consumers view dynamic pricing as an inherent part of online reservations, older individuals may require more detailed explanations about price fluctuations. Future research should explore how digital experience influences these perceptions, as well as other factors affecting these attitudes. Adjusting pricing strategies and communication according to different age groups can enhance fairness perceptions and strengthen trust in online travel agencies.

To conclude the discussion of the results, the findings elucidate the nuanced relationship between consumer perceptions of pricing fairness and various influencing factors, including age demographics, digital literacy, and market dynamics. By exploring how Portuguese consumers perceive fairness or unfairness in pricing, this research underscores the necessity for online travel agencies and hotel

operators to implement pricing strategies that not only remain competitive but also uphold transparency and justifiability in the eyes of consumers.

Furthermore, the investigation into the theoretical foundations shaping consumer reactions to price fluctuations reveals significant insights into how these fluctuations impact perceptions of fairness, emphasizing the need for effective communication regarding pricing changes. Addressing the distinct concerns of various age groups, particularly regarding their responses to dynamic pricing practices, can significantly enhance consumer trust and loyalty.

This study contributes substantially to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence that informs practical strategies for aligning pricing practices with consumer expectations, thereby effectively responding to fluctuations in pricing. Future research endeavors should seek to further investigate these dynamics, particularly within the context of the evolving digital landscape and the diverse preferences exhibited by consumers. Ultimately, fostering a comprehensive understanding of fairness perceptions, along with their implications for pricing strategies, will be instrumental in enhancing customer satisfaction and securing a competitive advantage within the hospitality sector.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Study's Contributions

The contributions of this research can be divided into two main categories: theoretical and practical.

Firstly, in terms of theoretical contributions, the investigation focused on the perception of price fairness or unfairness, with an emphasis on the context of Portuguese consumers. This study contributes to the literature by providing a conceptual framework that explores the relationship between price fluctuations, the transparency of online pricing strategies, and perceptions of fairness within the Portuguese hotel sector. By integrating the local demographic context, the research offers new insights into how Portuguese consumers react to pricing strategies in the hotel market.

The study delves into an analysis of consumer reactions to dynamic pricing strategies, something that previous studies have not examined in depth. Some authors, such as El Haddad et al. (2015), have explored perceptions of price fairness in related sectors but have not specifically addressed the impact of booking frequency and consumers' familiarity with such strategies within the Portuguese context. This study contributes to the literature by closely examining how consumer familiarity and trust in booking platforms influence their perception of price fairness. By empirically testing the relationship between booking frequency, price comparison tools, and perceptions of fairness, this study offers a fresh perspective on consumer behavior in the hotel sector.

Moreover, by incorporating factors such as consumer age and the use of price comparison tools, the study advances the understanding of how demographic and behavioral variables influence fairness perceptions. Younger consumers, more familiar with digital environments, tend to be more accepting of price variations, while older consumers demonstrate greater sensitivity and mistrust, thus contributing to a more segmented and personalized analysis of pricing strategies.

In summary, this study adds empirical support to existing theoretical propositions, pushing the boundaries of knowledge in this area and providing a solid foundation for future research on price management in the hotel industry.

5.2 Practical Contributions

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this research provides several practical insights that can help hotel managers and operators align their pricing practices with consumer expectations. First, by identifying that transparency in pricing strategies is essential to avoid negative perceptions of fairness, this study suggests that hotels adopt clear communication regarding price fluctuations, especially in the context of dynamic pricing. Lack of transparency can lead to perceptions of unfairness, as evidenced by the 75 participants who deemed hotel pricing to be unfair.

In practical terms, managers can use these insights to improve customer loyalty by adjusting communication and justifying price variations based on external factors, such as demand and operational costs. This approach will help mitigate the perception of price arbitrariness and strengthen consumer trust, especially among those who frequently use price comparison tools like Booking and Expedia.

Furthermore, the research suggests that younger consumers, more familiar with digital platforms, have a more neutral or positive view of dynamic pricing. This presents an opportunity for managers to develop tailored communication strategies, explaining price variations more clearly to older consumers, who tend to perceive such fluctuations as unfair. Thus, personalizing communication strategies for different age groups can enhance consumer trust and satisfaction.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of factors such as location, customer reviews, and security in booking decisions. Although price remains the dominant factor in consumer preferences, a premium location and positive reviews can justify higher prices, as long as these attributes are perceived as adding value. On the other hand, security also emerges as an essential criterion, especially for consumers concerned with well-being during their stay. Therefore, managers should consider a holistic approach where price, perceived value, and effective communication converge to maximize customer satisfaction.

5.3 Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study offers valuable insights into price fairness perceptions in the hotel industry, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample used in this research was convenient, which limits its representativeness. While the sample size was sufficient for the objectives of this study, it was not particularly large, which could potentially restrict the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the lack of homogeneity within the demographic data further constrains the results, as certain categories had to be grouped to ensure comparability, and others exhibited notable disparities in the number of responses, complicating the identification of significant differences across subgroups.

Another limitation is that this research was conducted solely within the context of the Portuguese hotel market, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other cultural or geographical settings. The study's focus on consumer behavior in a specific country restricts its broader generalizability, making it harder to apply the results to international markets with distinct consumer attitudes towards pricing strategies. Additionally, the absence of qualitative data limits the depth of understanding regarding consumers' personal experiences and their nuanced perceptions of pricing fairness. As a result, the study was unable to capture more detailed, subjective interpretations of dynamic pricing strategies or how they may vary across different consumer profiles.

Moreover, while this study focused on consumer perceptions and behavioral insights, the inclusion of an economic model could further enrich the understanding of price fairness by quantitatively analyzing the impact of dynamic pricing strategies on consumer welfare or market equilibrium. Although this study intentionally adopted a behavioral perspective to focus on consumer perceptions, future research might consider integrating economic models to complement the qualitative insights and offer a more comprehensive analysis. This would not diminish the relevance of the current findings but rather enhance the scope of future research by providing an additional layer of understanding about the financial mechanisms underlying pricing strategies.

These limitations highlight several opportunities for future research. Subsequent studies should consider expanding the sample size and aiming for a more diverse and representative population, both geographically and demographically, to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Future research could also benefit from employing mixed method approaches that incorporate qualitative data collection, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' perceptions of fairness and the factors influencing their responses to dynamic pricing.

Moreover, future studies could explore these variables within specific industry sectors or consumer segments, such as luxury hotels, budget accommodations, or generational cohorts, to better understand how perceptions of price fairness vary across more homogeneous populations. It may also be worthwhile to investigate additional factors that influence price fairness perceptions, such as brand loyalty, customer service experiences, or previous interactions with booking platforms. Lastly, given the growing significance of online platforms and digital pricing tools, future research could examine the role of transparency in price algorithms and its impact on consumer trust and loyalty.

By addressing these areas, future studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how pricing strategies affect consumer behavior, particularly in a globalized and digitally driven hotel market.

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Appendix A: Survey

Bem-vindo(a) ao questionário!

Este questionário faz parte da tese intitulada "The Perception of Fairness in Hotel Pricing Strategies: A Study of Portuguese Consumer's Attitudes and Preferences", conduzida no âmbito do programa de Mestrado de Economia no ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

O objetivo desta pesquisa é compreender como os consumidores portugueses percebem a justiça nas estratégias de preços dos hotéis e analisar as suas atitudes e preferências em relação a este assunto. Devido à natureza do mestrado ser em inglês, o questionário original foi traduzido para português de forma a alcançar o público-alvo pretendido— os consumidores portugueses.

A sua participação é extremamente valiosa e contribuirá para a investigação académica nesta área.

Pedimos que responda a todas as perguntas de forma honesta e completa. As suas respostas serão tratadas de forma confidencial e os dados recolhidos serão utilizados exclusivamente para fins de pesquisa.

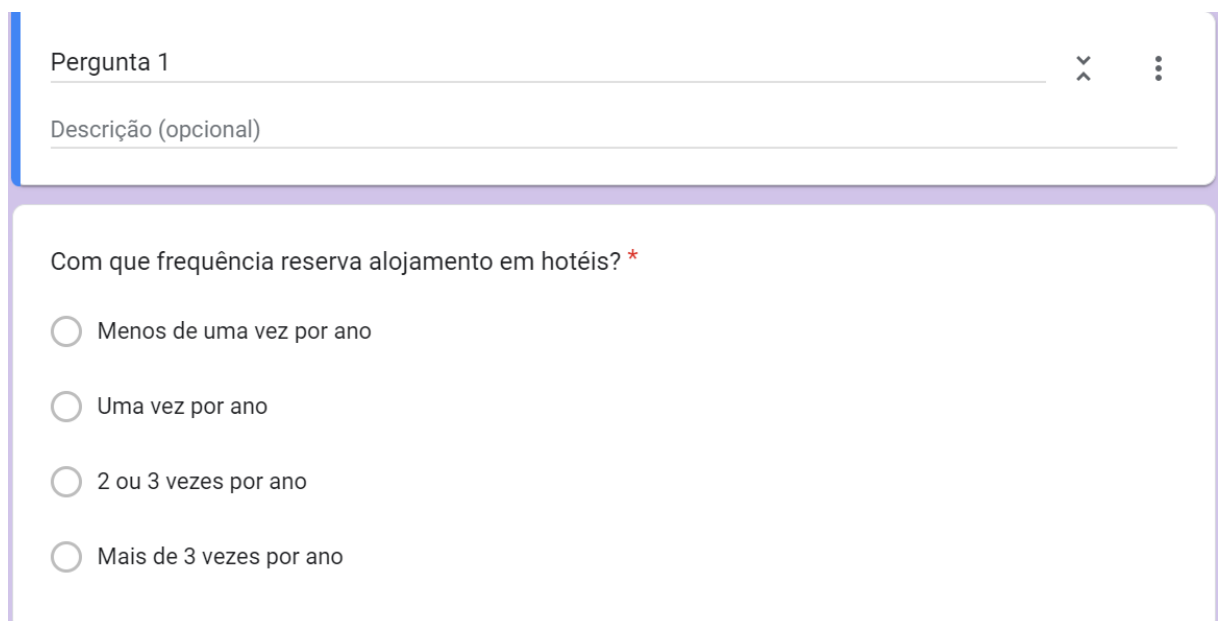
Se surgir alguma dúvida durante o preenchimento do questionário, por favor, entre em contacto através do email martaa.ortiz27@gmail.com.

Agradecemos a sua colaboração!

Com os melhores cumprimentos,

Marta Ortiz

ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.



The image shows a screenshot of a survey question. At the top, there is a header bar with the text "Pergunta 1" on the left, a close icon (X) in the middle, and a three-dot menu icon on the right. Below the header bar is a text input field with the placeholder text "Descrição (opcional)". The main content of the question is "Com que frequência reserva alojamento em hotéis? *". Below this question are four radio button options: "Menos de uma vez por ano", "Uma vez por ano", "2 ou 3 vezes por ano", and "Mais de 3 vezes por ano".

Pergunta 2



Descrição (opcional)

Utiliza sites de comparação de preços como o Trivago e o Kayak? *

Sim

Não

Pergunta 2.1



Descrição (opcional)



De forma sucinta, explique de que forma a sua experiência com estas plataformas influencia as suas decisões de reserva.

Texto de resposta longa

Pergunta 3



Descrição (opcional)

Quanto tempo gasta normalmente a comparar preços em diferentes sítios Web antes de fazer uma reserva de hotel? *

Menos de 1 hora

Mais de 1 hora, mas resolvo no mesmo dia

Pesquisa durante vários dias até encontrar uma opção que me agrade

Passo vários dias a comparar, mas finalizo numa semana

Comparo continuamente os preços até ao dia do check-in

Pergunta 4



Descrição (opcional)

Com que frequência verifica os preços depois de efetuar uma reserva de hotel? *

Nunca 1 2 3 4 5 Sempre

Pergunta 5



Descrição (opcional)



Como é que a sazonalidade dos preços dos hotéis afeta o seu processo de decisão ao selecionar as datas de viagem? *

Nenhum impacto 1 2 3 4 5 Bastante impacto

Pergunta 6



Descrição (opcional)

Já alguma vez sentiu a perceção de um preço justo (preço considerado razoável, justo e equitativo em relação ao valor fornecido por um produto ou serviço) mudar depois de ficar num hotel? *

Sim

Não

Pergunta 7



Descrição (opcional)

Quão justo acha que os hotéis são quando decidem quanto cobrar pelos quartos? (Por exemplo, por vezes os hotéis alteram os preços com base na época do ano, como cobrar mais durante as épocas de maior movimento. Podem também oferecer ofertas especiais ou descontos, como por exemplo, ficar três noites e ter uma grátis. Outras vezes, os hotéis podem ter programas de fidelização em que os hóspedes frequentes obtêm melhores preços.) Considera que este tipo de estratégias de preços é justo para os clientes? *

1 2 3 4 5

Completamente injusto Completamente justo

Pergunta 8



Descrição (opcional)

Na sua opinião, até que ponto as estratégias de preços das agências de viagens online são justas para os consumidores? (Por exemplo, as agências de viagens online podem oferecer tarifas com desconto ou ofertas especiais para reservar voos e alojamento em conjunto. Podem também ajustar os preços com base na procura, com taxas flutuantes ao longo do processo de reserva. Além disso, algumas agências de viagens em linha cobram taxas de reserva ou taxas de serviço para além do preço anunciado.) Considera que este tipo de estratégias de preços é justo para os clientes? *

1 2 3 4 5

Completamente injusto Completamente justo

Pergunta 9



Descrição (opcional)



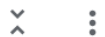
Na sua opinião, até que ponto as estratégias de preços dos sites de reservas são justas para os consumidores? (Por exemplo, os sites de reservas podem oferecer tarifas com desconto ou promoções especiais para determinados destinos ou hotéis. Podem também utilizar preços dinâmicos, em que os preços mudam com base em fatores como a procura e a disponibilidade. Além disso, alguns sites de reservas podem cobrar taxas adicionais, como taxas de reserva ou de serviço, para além do preço anunciado.) Considera que este tipo de estratégias de preços é justo para os clientes?

1 2 3 4 5

Completamente injusto

Completamente justo

Pergunta 10



Descrição (opcional)



Até que ponto confia nas informações sobre preços fornecidas pelas agências de viagens online, como a Booking e a Expedia?

De modo algum

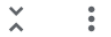
Ligeiramente

Moderadamente

Bastante

Completamente

Pergunta 11



Descrição (opcional)



Já alguma vez pagou mais por um hotel do que o preço médio para essa localização? *

Sim

Não

Pergunta 11.1



Descrição (opcional)



Quais os motivos para essa decisão?

Texto de resposta curta

Pergunta 12



Descrição (opcional)

Ao procurar um hotel, se for confrontado com preços mais elevados no centro da cidade em comparação com preços mais baixos na periferia, para que opção está mais inclinado? *

Dar prioridade à conveniência de uma localização central, apesar do custo mais elevado

Optar por uma opção mais económica na periferia, mesmo que isso signifique sacrificar a proximidade e...

Pergunta 13



Descrição (opcional)

Como é que reage quando o preço de um hotel que estava a pensar reservar aumenta subitamente? *

- Explorar outras opções de hotéis para encontrar um melhor negócio.
- Reservá-lo na mesma porque é o que queria.
- Alterar as datas da estadia para encontrar preços potencialmente mais baixos.
- Contactar diretamente o hotel para se informar sobre a alteração de preços ou negociar uma tarifa mais ...
- Outros

Pergunta 14



Descrição (opcional)



Quando procura hotéis online, a que fatores dá prioridade e como os classifica em termos de importância ao tomar a sua decisão? *

Por favor, classifique os seguintes fatores de nada importante a muito importante.

	Nada importan...	Pouco importa...	Indiferente	Importante	Muito importa...
Localização	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preço	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comentários	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extras	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Política de can...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Segurança	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acessibilidade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ofertas especi...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tamanho do q...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pergunta 14



Descrição (opcional)

Caso exista outra preferência, especifique qual e o seu grau de importância respetivamente.

Texto de resposta curta

.....

Pergunta 15



Descrição (opcional)

Qual é a probabilidade de recomendar um hotel a outras pessoas com base no seu preço? *

Muito improvável 1 2 3 4 5 Muito provável

Pergunta 16



Descrição (opcional)



Considere uma situação em que existem dois hotéis bem conhecidos, o Hotel X e o Hotel Y, num destino turístico popular. O Hotel X anuncia o encerramento temporário para manutenção. Anteriormente, o Hotel Y cobrava 150 euros por noite por um quarto. No entanto, após o encerramento do Hotel X, o Hotel Y aumenta a sua tarifa para 180 euros por noite. Considera que este aumento de preço é justo? *

Muito injusto 1 2 3 4 5 Muito justo

Pergunta 17

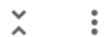


Descrição (opcional)

Imagine que está no site da Booking.com para fazer uma reserva de um quarto de hotel. Descubra que a plataforma oferece preços com desconto com base no histórico de reservas dos clientes. Consequentemente, para um cliente fiel, o preço é de 95 euros, enquanto para um novo cliente é de 105 euros. Na sua opinião, até que ponto é justa a estratégia de preços da Booking.com? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Muito injusto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Muito justo

Pergunta 18



Descrição (opcional)



Qual é a sua idade? *

- Menos de 18 anos de idade
- 18-24 anos de idade
- 25-34 anos de idade
- 35-44 anos de idade
- 45-50 anos de idade
- 50> anos de idade

Pergunta 19



Descrição (opcional)

Qual é a sua identidade de género? *

- Masculino
- Feminino
- Não-binário
- Prefere não se pronunciar

Pergunta 20



Descrição (opcional)

Qual é o nível de ensino mais elevado que completou? *

- Menos do que o ensino secundário
- Diploma do ensino secundário ou equivalente
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento
- Outra opção...

Pergunta 21

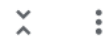


Descrição (opcional)

Qual é a sua situação profissional atual? *

- Empregado
- Desempregado
- Estudante
- Outra opção...

Pergunta 22



Descrição (opcional)

Qual é a sua área/ocupação profissional? *

Texto de resposta curta
