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Assesing the Effect of quality Service of Small Hotels on Customers Satisfaction in Bauchi Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Quality of a product (or service) may be observed as its features by means of which certain needs of customers are satisfied. Moreover, customer satisfaction is one of the leading indicators of successful performance in the hotel sector. Many hotels today tend to increase their investments with the aim of improving service quality and perceived value for guests in order to achieve better customer satisfaction. This study is aimed at determining the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Purposive random sampling was used based on the convenient for researchers in gaining information from respondents. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument where 150 respondents were engaged in the study but only 112 filled and returned their questionnaire which became the unit of analysis of this research. Correlationwas used to test the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer's satisfaction and meanwhile, the hypothesis were tested using regression analysis. The result shows that Reliability and Customers' Satisfaction were not positively and significantly associated (r=0.024, p=0.805), Assurance and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.798, p=0.000), Tangibility and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.447, p=0.000), Empathy and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.425, p=0.000). And finally Responsiveness and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.918, p=0.000). Therefore based on the findings it was recommended thathotel managers should place importance on significant predictors of guest satisfaction such as; empathy, responsiveness, assurance and tangibility for policy and practice.

Key Words: Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Hotel, Bauchi.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of services provided and customer satisfaction are critical success factors in any business, according to Blesis, Ivkov-Dtigurski, Stankov, Stamenkovis and Bradis(2013) as they are essential for gaining competitive advantage and keeping customers. Given that the costs of attracting new customers are higher than the costs of keeping existing ones; successful managers need to pay special attention to keeping existing clients by conducting efficient policies on customer satisfaction and loyalty, which are particularly prominent in the hotel industry. Customer satisfaction, though an important output, is often ignored in hotel efficiency studies. According toComo(2010) the success and profits of any hotel are tightly connected with customer satisfaction as one of the main preconditions for creating customer loyalty in business.

Quality of a product (or service) may be observed as its features by means of which certain needs of customers are satisfied. Theory and practice of marketing introduce various approaches to quality rating of certain products and service that mainly depend on the subject of analysis of that complex problem. The fact is that consumers observe and rate the same product differently, based mainly on their own motives and attitudes. According to the fact, that consumer's attitude on the quality is a key issue of quality level; measurements must be based on field investigation of the consumer population. Moreover, customer satisfaction is one of the leading indicators of successful performance in the hotel sector. Many hotels today tend to increase their investments with the aim of improving service quality and perceived value for guests in order to achieve better customer satisfaction and loyalty, which leads to a better relationship with each customer (Mucai, 2013). Such relationship quality has a remarkably positive effect on the behavior of hotel guests, creates positive word of mouth (WOM), and increases repeated guest rates(Mohajerani & Miremadi, 2013). Taking into account the aforementioned, the main objective of this paper is to assess the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer's satisfaction.

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1.2 Statement of Problem

This charming hotel market attracts a great number of customers from home and abroad which give rise to unprecedented competition pressure. The key problem for these hotels to survive is how to attract and satisfy the customers through service quality(Gupta & Srivastava, 2011). In the existing world maintaining the old ones and drawing the attention of the new customers is considered to be a victory. Customer satisfaction is defined as the determinant that how much the firm's goods, maintained services and improvements are capable of meeting the expectations of the customers. The customer's satisfaction can be measured in various ways, one of the ways of measuring the customer's satisfaction is the expectation of customers about the benefits and the cost association depends upon the experience of the past as suggested by (Malik, Ghafoor, & Iqbal, 2012). High growth in the hotel industry intensifies the competition among hotel service providers in Nigeria and forces them to find the best strategy to improve their service qualities to enhance customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Also, due to high fragmentation and poor professional management which characterize the industry and have prevented the application of appropriate strategies toward potential markets (Setiowati & Putri, 2012).

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To determine the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction of small hotels in Bauchi Metropolis

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1Concept of Service Quality

General definition of quality reads: "Quality is a measurement or indicator of scope, i.e. the term for usability of a product or service for meeting specific needs at a certain place and time, when the product or service is confirmed as goods through the process of exchange"Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and Johnston (1995) defined the service quality in terms of customer satisfaction. "Quality means achievement of estimated standards and their constantmaintenance, i.e. an ongoing process. High-class hotels render the highest standards and highest quality products and service, with the most extensive scope of expensive hotel service. Economy class hotels offer products and service of lower quality, with a limited scope of less expensive service."

Definition of quality must be driven by customer's demands. Numerous quality definitions available in both domestic and foreign references comply with this attitude. Product quality is the feature that makes it appropriate for use. Moreover, quality is a complex set of features that define its level of appropriateness to the intended purpose. Quality stands for an integral unity of product features. Quality of a product is the measurement of its usefulness, i.e. appropriateness to meet the customer's demands (Mohajerani & Miremadi, 2013). Regardless the definition of quality, the only acceptable quality for the guests is the one that conforms to their expectations.

2.2Customers' Satisfaction in Hospitality

It is hard to achieve balanced quality of a hotel product, since its creation and its concurrent realization involve more than one "producer". Thus, the problem of its quality should be observed regarding certain components, i.e. customer satisfaction, expressed by the concordance level between the expected and experienced(Gunarathne, 2014).

According to the fact that service is less tangible than a product, the major portion of service quality is found within the delivery. However, customer's expectations play an important role, since the expectations concerning service significantly differ from those referring to products. Moreover, customers' expectations vary due to the service type. The importance of customer' expectations highlight the fact that product quality represents its ranking based established standards. When consumers assess product or service quality, it is performed according to internal standardsagainst the expected quality of service. Therefore, the expectations are internal standards upon which the consumer ranks the quality of delivered service(Opuni, Opoku, & Oseku-Afful, 2014).

The level of customers' expectations differs from case to case. If a guest stays in a certain hotel, with high level of personnel courtesy and low prices but the interior or ambience fail to match the expected level, the guest expectations will not be met (Igbojekwe & Managwu, 2015). Inappropriate ambience will cause certain guests to decide not to stay in the hotel, but other guests, who are also aware of the modest interior, will decide to stay in the hotel since they expect courteous personnel and lower prices. That hotel meets minimum tolerable expectations to attract guests. However, for other profiles of guests, the level of expectations is higher since low price and courteous personnel cannot render compensation for inappropriate ambience (Mohajerani & Miremadi, 2013).

2.3 SERVQUAL Model

As result of the research conducted in companies which provide service (banking, telecommunication, insurance company, maintenance and repair of apparatuses), the authors of Gap model developed SERVQUAL model for measuring service quality (Parasuraman *et al*, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994). Parasuraman *et al* (1985) within the original SERVQUAL model defined service quality using 10 determinants of quality: reliability, responsiveness, competence, credibility, access, courtesy, communication, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Parasuraman *et al* (1988) reduced those into the following five: Tangibles - Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials; Reliability - Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; Responsiveness - Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; Assurance – Knowledge, courtesy and trustworthiness of the personnel; Empathy (understanding the customer) - Making the effort to know customers and their needs. This set of five dimensions (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy) is further subdivided into 22 categories (Parasuraman *et al*, 1988): SERVQUAL model became the model with the most widespread application in the process of themeasurement of service quality.

2.1.1 Tangibility

The tangible dimensions are the features of physical infrastructure, the equipment available to make the service a delightful experience, the outward show of people providing the service (Sandhu, *et al.*, 2013). (Ahmed, Nawaz, Usman, Shaukat, Ahmad, & Iqbal, 2010) upholds that "Assurance" and "Tangibles" are the most important values of service quality.

2.1.2 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the willingness to help the customers in case of any problem. Solving the complaints of customers efficiently creates a positive image about the quality of service but if customers are kept waiting, it creates negative impression about the quality of service. Dealing with the customer's complaints and helping in recovery with professionalism is responsiveness (Parasuraman *et al.* 1988).

Responsiveness accounts for a prompt response to the customers' needs. Mobile phone users are keento get a prompt response from the employees regarding their complaints and enquiries (Sandhu, *et al.*, 2013). As company is providing products and services to the customers so for the consequences, company is responsible. It is the responsibility of the company to provide what they are saying.

2.1.3 Reliability

The dimension of reliability requires provision of service accurately and dependably. Sandhu, et al (2013) found that the dimension of reliability does not reflect significant effect on customers' perception of quality. Completing the services on time and in unfailing manner free of errors and the ability to perform the desired and promised services accurately is reliability (Parasuraman 1988).

2.1.4 Assurance

Assurance is the ability to build trust in customers and showing courtesy every time. It consists of polite behavior of the staff, respect and gratitude to the customers and building confidence in them about the service (Parasuraman 1988). Assurance focuses on the expertise of the employees about the multifaceted knowledge of the service offering, courtesy, and their ability to instill faith and dependence in the service providers' competence. The staff should have the competence to inspire trust and confidence among the customers about the ability of service providers in anticipating and meeting customers' needs (Sandhu, *et al.*, 2013). Offering better warranty terms convey greater assurance to buyers and can result in greater sales (Ahmed, *et al.*, 2010).

2.1.5 Empathy

Empathy is providing extra care and attention to individual customer every time. It means howmuch the company understands the needs of the customers and with how much care and attention they are dealtwith (Parasuraman 1988). Empathy necessitates placing customers over and above everything else duringthe course of staff interaction (Sandhu, *et al.*, 2013). Ahmed et al., (2010) found Empathy factor to have a significant negative relationship with customer satisfaction.

2.4Model of the Study

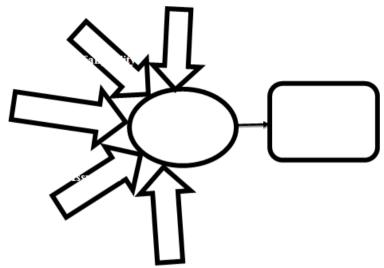


Figure 1: Conceptual Frame work of Customers satisfaction **Source:** Adapted from Sandhu, Mahasan, Rehman and Muzaffar (2013)

From figure 1; "Tangibility", "Assurance", "Empathy", "Responsiveness" and "Reliability", are the independent variables which affect service quality. Service quality is the intervening variable which has direct influence on customer's satisfaction. In this study customer's satisfaction is dependent variable. Therefore, independent variables lead to increase the service quality (intervening variable) and this eventually increases customer's satisfaction (dependent variable). Founded on above modelthe followinghypotheses are established;

2.5 Hypothesis of the Study

HO₁ There is no significant relationship between Tangibility and Customers Satisfaction

HO₂ There is no significant relationship between Reliability and Customers Satisfaction

HO₃ There is no significant relationship between Responsiveness and Customers Satisfaction

HO₄ There is no significant relationship between Empathy and Customers Satisfaction

HO₅ There is no significant relationship between Assurance and Customers Satisfaction

III. METHODOLOGY

This research concerted on how service quality dimensions affect customer's satisfaction of small hotels in Bauchi state Nigeria. The correlational study was undertaken in order to test relationship between service quality dimensions and customer's satisfaction. Fifteen (15) small hotels were used for the study. Purposive random sampling was used based on the convenience of the field work in gaining information from respondents who are customers. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument where 135 were distributed but only 112 respondents filled and returned their questionnaire representing 82.9% response rate which is excellent for a descriptive study. Those 112customers became the unit of analysis for this research. Cronch Alpha Coefficient was used to find out the reliability of the variables in this study. All statements were measured by Likert scale on a 5-point fixed at 1(strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach Alpha was used for reliability while correlation analysis was used for relationships and regression was employed to test the hypothesis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability

Internal consistency technique was used to assess the reliability of the questionnaires. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized to compute the result in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaires were consistent in eliciting the right responses.

Table 1Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items		
.807	33		

Source: Survey (2016)

Result from Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.807where alpha was greater than 0.7, it was considered suitable (Kothari, 2004).

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis indicated that Reliability and Customers' Satisfaction were not positively and significantly associated (r=0.024, p=0.805). The results also indicated that Assurance and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.798, p=0.000). Further, the results indicated that Tangibility and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.447, p=0.000).

Table 3 Correlations Matrix

-		Reliability	eliability Assurance Tangibility EmpatResponsivenes			es Customers'	
					hy	S	Satisfaction
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	112					
	Pearson Correlation	.404**	1				
Assurance	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	112	112				
	Pearson Correlation	.392**	.683**	1			
Tangibility	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	112	112	112			
	Pearson Correlation	.106	.431**	.122	1		
Empathy	Sig. (2-tailed)	.268	.000	.201			
	N	112	112	112	112		
Responsivene ss	Pearson Correlation	179	.655**	.462**	.332**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	.000	.000	.000		
	N	112	112	112	112	112	
Customers' Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.024	$.798^{**}$.447**	.425**	.918**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.805	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	112	112	112	112	112	112

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). **Source**: Survey (2016)

Table 3 also indicated that Empathy and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.425, p=0.000). And finally Responsiveness and Customers' Satisfaction were positively and significantly associated (r=0.918, p=0.000).

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.968ª	.936	.933	.21491

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness, Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility, Assurance

Source: Survey (2016)

The results presented in Table 4 present the fitness of model used for the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. Responsiveness, Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility and Assurance were found to be satisfactory variables in Customers' Satisfaction. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 93.3%. This means that Responsiveness, Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility and Assurance explain 93.3% of the variations in the dependent variable which is Customers' Satisfaction. This results further means that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory.

Table5 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	71.786	5	14.357	310.852	.000 ^b
1	Residual	4.896	106	.046		
	Total	76.682	111			

a. Dependent Variable: Customers' Satisfaction

Source: Survey (2016)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness, Reliability, Empathy, Tangibility, Assurance

Table 5 above provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variables are good predictors of performance. This was supported by an F statistic of 310.852 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 at 95% significance level

Table 6 Coefficients^a

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta	_	
	(Constant)	1.094	.185		5.910	.000
	Reliability	.110	.054	.074	2.040	.044
1	Assurance	.404	.049	.418	8.269	.000
1	Tangibility	257	.042	218	-6.055	.000
	Empathy	.007	.015	.013	.458	.648
	Responsiveness	.512	.029	.754	17.493	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customers' Satisfaction

Source: Survey (2016)

Thus, the optimal model for the study is; Customers' Satisfaction = $1.094 + .110X_1 + .404X_2 + .110X_1 + .100X_2 + .100X_2$

 $.257X_3 + .007X_4 + .512X_5$

Where; Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness explain 93.3% of the variations in the dependent variable which is

 X_1 = Reliability

 X_2 = Assurance

X₃= Tangibility

 X_4 = Empathy

 X_5 = Responsiveness

Regression of coefficients results in Table 6 shows that Reliabilityhad a positive and significant effect on Customers' Satisfaction (r=0.110, p= 0.044). Results from the regression analysis further indicated that Assurancehad a positive and significant effect on Customers' Satisfaction (r=0.404, p=0.000). It also shows that Tangibility had a negative and significant effect on Customers' Satisfaction (r=-0.257, p=0.000). Results from the regression analysis further indicated that Empathy had a positive and non-significant effect on Customers' Satisfaction (r=0.007, p=0.648).Lastly, results indicated that Responsivenesshad a positive and significant effect on Customers' Satisfaction (r=0.512, p=0.000).

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was tested by using the ordinary least square regression model indicated above. The acceptance/rejection criteria was that, if the p value is greater than 0.05, the Ho is not rejected but if it's less than 0.05, the Ho fails to be accepted.

- H_1 . The p-value of 0.044 indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected hence there is significant relationship between Tangibility and Customers Satisfaction
- H_2 . The p-value of 0.000 indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected hence there is significant relationship between Reliability and Customers Satisfaction
- H_{3} . The p-value of 0.000 indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected hence there is significant relationship between Responsiveness and Customers Satisfaction
- H_4 . The p-value of 0.648 indicated that the null hypothesis was accepted hence there is no significant relationship between Empathy and Customers Satisfaction
- H₅ The p-value of 0.000 indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected hence there is significant relationship between Assurance and Customers Satisfaction

4.4 Discussion and implication

A customer considers the quality of services received against his expectation and internal standards that exists in an organisation to measure satisfaction (Opuni, Opoku & Oseku-Afful, 2014). The importance of maintaining a good customer's satisfaction is that it results to brand loyalty, good word of mouth, and a repeat business. This research adopted the SERVQUAL model to measure the influence of service quality on customer's satisfaction in Bauchi hotels. The hypothesis tested in 4.3 points out the relationship between the service quality indicators and customer's satisfaction; revealing which of these indicators affects significantly and positively customer's satisfaction in small hotels found in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The result demonstrates that customer's satisfaction can strongly be driven by the quality of services offered by hotels in Bauchi

Metropolis. Going by the regression coefficients, all the dimensions were found to be positively related with customer's satisfaction. Out of the five quality dimensions measured, four dimensions (tangibility, responsiveness, reliability and assurance) were found to significantly affect customer's satisfaction while empathy was not significantly affecting customer's satisfaction. Assurance, tangibility, responsiveness was found to be most significant; followed by reliability while empathy was not found significant. However, in a similar study in Vietnam by Minh et al (2015), tangibility was the only dimension not significantly affecting customer's satisfaction. The difference in the two results could be attributed to cultural differences, values and norms.

The result shows a significant relationship between tangibility and customer's satisfaction. This result agrees with Saghier (2015). This simply means that the tangible features of hotel services such as physical infrastructure; furniture and fittings; equipment etc. when put in place can increase a guest satisfaction. Responsiveness is another determinant of service quality which portrays the ability of the employees to give attention and quick response to customers need and complaint. The result reveals responsiveness to have a significant relationship with customer's satisfaction; this reflects the findings of Minh et al (2015). Also, findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between reliability of the staff and customer's satisfaction. This is an indication that the ability of the staff to perform their duties consistently and timely has positively effects on customer's satisfaction. Similarly, Shing et al (2012); Watiki (2014) in their research found reliability to have the strongest relationship and significance with customer's satisfaction. Shing et al (2012) opined that it is the most important variable in determining customer's satisfaction; therefore, hoteliers should enhance on their problem-solving skills and prompt attendance to guest complains. Contrarily, Sandhu, et al (2013) found no significant relationship between reliability and customer's perceived quality. Empathy allows the staff to give extra care and attention to individual customer. There was no significant relationship found between empathy and customer's satisfaction. The finding implies that customers would derive additional satisfaction whether or not staff go extra length to discharge their duties. Contrary to this finding, Minh et al (2015) ascertain empathy to have the strongest relationship with customer's satisfaction. Notwithstanding, Ahmed et al (2010) found empathy and customer's satisfaction to have a significant but negative relationship. Yet assurance was found to have a significance and positive effect on customer's satisfaction. Agreeably, Watiki (2014) discovered assurance to have effect on customer's satisfaction. Guest satisfaction can arise from the competency, efficiency and quality assurance the customer is giving and the result is trust and brand loyalty. This research maintains that there is a significant relationship between service quality dimension and customer's satisfaction; that brand loyalty, image and repeat visit can be maintained by improving on these service quality dimensions. This position agrees with the opinion of Muslim et al (2013); Watiki (2014).

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, knowing how consumers perceive service quality and being able to measure service quality can benefit management of hotel service. Measuring service quality can help management provide reliable data that can be used to monitor and maintain improved service quality. Using the SERVQUAL model to assess service quality enables management to better understand the various dimensions and how they affect service quality and customer satisfaction. This will help them to identify those that have strengths and weaknesses and thereby makenecessary improvements.

- i. Tangibility has a negative and significant effect on Customers Satisfaction
- ii. Reliability has a significant and positive effect on Customers Satisfaction
- iii. Responsiveness has a significant and positive effect on Customers Satisfaction
- iv. There is no significant relationship between Empathy and Customers Satisfaction
- v. Assurance has a significant and positive effect on Customers Satisfaction

4.6 Recommendation for Policy and Practice

The recommendation from findings is that attention should begiven to the most important cause of hotel guest satisfaction; hotel management should place an importance on other significant predictors such as;

- i. Empathy (giving special attention to the customer, availability of room service, understanding the customer's requirement, listening carefully to complaints of hotel guests and hotels should regard the customers who are best interested at heart);
- ii. Responsiveness (willingness of staff to provide help promptly to guests and availability of staff to provide service perfectly);
- iii. Reliability (performing the services at the time promised, hotels should have experienced staff, giving an accurate information about hotel services and providing timely housekeeping services to hotel guest);
- iv. Assurance (friendliness of staff, courteous employees and ability of staff to install confidence in customers)
- v. Special attention should be devoted to Tangibles,(providing quality equipment and facilities, the hotel benefits like; comfortable, relaxed and welcome feeling to guest, quietness of rooms, security of room,

comfortable and clean mattress, pillow, bed, sheets and covers, reasonable room rates and give variety of basic products and services such as toothpaste, soap, shampoo, towels, toilet paper, stationery, laundry, ironing, tea, coffee, drinking water).

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