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HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY AND GROWTH SATISFACTION WITHIN A 3-STARS HOTEL IN LAGOS NIGERIA

A dissertation by

Zainab Bukola Ogundele

In partial completion of the award of

MSc International Hospitality and Tourism Management

I as a result of this declare that the dissertation submitted is wholly the work of

Zainab Bukola Ogundele

Any other contributors or sources have either been referenced in the prescribed manner or are listed in the acknowledgements together with the nature and scope of their contribution.'

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. Recognizing the competitive nature of the hospitality industry and the critical role of customer satisfaction in achieving business success, the study aims to identify specific service quality factors that significantly influence guest experiences and loyalty within this context. The study used questionnaires at three-star hotels in Lagos to assess service quality dimensions. Findings showed that hotel ambience, cleanliness, and employee professionalism strongly impact customer satisfaction. Areas needing improvement include responsiveness and staff willingness to assist. Effective service recovery mechanisms and prompt issue resolution are critical for guest satisfaction. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing context-specific insights into service quality and customer satisfaction within the Nigerian hospitality industry, highlighting the applicability and necessity of adapting established service quality models to local settings. Practically, the research offers actionable recommendations for hotel managers, including enhancing staff training programs focused on responsiveness and professionalism, investing in maintaining high standards of cleanliness and ambience and implementing robust service recovery protocols. In conclusion, by addressing both strengths and gaps in service quality delivery, three-star hotels in Lagos can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby improving their competitive positioning and achieving sustained success in the hospitality sector. Future research is recommended to expand on these findings by exploring different hotel categories and incorporating longitudinal and qualitative approaches to capture evolving customer expectations and experiences over time.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

SERVQUAL – Service Quality

IPA – Importance Performance Analysis

ACSI - American Customer Satisfaction Index

ATM - Automated Teller Machine

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

BU - Bournemouth University

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Service delivery is the primary business activity in the hotel sector when it comes to providing services to consumers. This significance is due to the high level of interaction between guests and hotel service providers. Service delivery can either succeed or fail. If service delivery fails and the issue is not addressed, it can drive hotels out of business. In a hotel setting, if an employee is inattentive or the guest's expectations are not met, the customer experience can be deemed a failure (Zeithaml et al. 2019). Service failures are partly due to the inherent variability in services in various hotels, unlike the more standardised process of product manufacturing (Writz and Matilda 2013). In hospitality services, consumers' emotional and personal engagement is higher, making the impact of service failure more significant. Furthermore, the simultaneous production and consumption of services prevent pre-delivery quality inspections.

In some cases, failures are inevitable, so hotels must have mechanisms in place to address these issues. According to Smith and Bolton (2016), incidents of service failure and recovery play a crucial role in shaping the relationship between the service provider and customer satisfaction. It is the service provider's significant responsibility to ensure that services meet the organization's standards and customer needs. Positive service recovery can encourage customers to return or recommend the hotel to others. The hospitality industry in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos, has experienced significant growth in recent years. As service quality improves and guest preferences change, it becomes necessary to take proactive measures to address service mishaps. This study aims to investigate guest service delivery experiences and their reactions to the service quality provided in three-star hotels. The primary sources of satisfaction must be clearly measured. Hoffman and Kelly (2018) stated that the outcome of service recovery, whether positive or negative, heavily influences the customer's perception of the hotel. Therefore, resolving these issues requires a focus on service improvement strategies by the management of three-star hotels.

The hospitality sector is becoming increasingly competitive (Gopi and Samat, 2020). Therefore, it is imperative for three-star hotels to improve their services and overall performance to meet the expectations of today's discerning customers. To retain and expand their customer base, three-star hotels are continually seeking innovative approaches, considering the rising costs associated with customer attrition. Evaluating service quality is crucial for maintaining customer loyalty. This role is expected to become even more significant (Elvira and Shpetim, 2016). According to Michel (2010), modern customers are aware of the importance of quality products and services and their rights as customers. Service quality is a critical success factor in any service industry, heavily relying on performance in service delivery. Since hospitality is the core business of three-star hotels, customers play a crucial role in sustaining the business.

A principal contributor to customer satisfaction in three-star hotels is the degree of interaction between guests and frontline staff. Both parties must engage actively to ensure their respective needs and requirements are met (Kuenzel and Katsaris 2009). Moreover, since hotels are part of the hospitality services industry, the products they deliver are intangible, and the expected level of quality relies on customers' perceived expectations. Service failures are inevitable in the hotel industry due to the 'people factor,' which includes high levels of interaction between employees and guests, as well as the increasing demands of modern hotel guests. Service failure occurs when customer expectations are not fulfilled, indicating that the service provider has not met the anticipated service standard. Therefore, hotel management must excel in understanding and meeting customer demands. However, this cooperation necessitates that both parties work together to satisfy mutually desired outcomes. Poor communication and cooperation can lead to service failures due to unclear instructions for both customers and service providers.

Vaerenbergh (2009) emphasises that since service failures are unavoidable, effective service recovery techniques are essential. Handling dissatisfied customers is challenging due to the frustration involved, necessitating effective strategies to retain them. Additionally, in three-star hotels, the service provider must respond promptly and accurately to rectify failures efficiently. This requires skills and knowledge to devise

excellent recovery solutions. This study aims to contribute to the limited research on service quality and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

1.2.1 Aim

The research aims to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos State Nigeria.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives.

- i. To determine factors influencing customers' satisfaction with three-star hotels in Lagos State Nigeria
- ii. To assess customers' expectations of service quality in three-star hotels in Lagos State Nigeria
- iii. To investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos state Nigeria
- iv. To give managerial recommendations on strategies that can help to boost service quality to meet customer satisfaction in Lagos State '3' star hotels.

1.3 Study Rationale

The investigation into factors influencing customer satisfaction and service quality in three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria, is crucial due to the critical role these elements play in the competitive dynamics of the hospitality industry. Lagos, a rapidly expanding market, has seen growth in the hospitality sector driven by increasing tourism and business travel. In such a competitive environment, understanding and meeting customer expectations are essential for maintaining a competitive edge. The diverse clientele of three-star hotels, who seek high-quality service at affordable prices, underscores the importance of this research. Previous studies have indicated that customer satisfaction in this sector is significantly influenced by factors such as room quality, staff behaviour, and the overall ambience of the hotel. These insights highlight

the necessity of tailoring hotel services to meet and exceed guest expectations, which in turn fosters customer loyalty and encourages repeat patronage—essential for long-term success in the hospitality industry (Grönroos, 2007; Wirtz and Lovelock, 2021).

The study also addresses a critical gap in the literature concerning the application of service quality models within the Nigerian context. While existing research has established the importance of service quality in determining customer satisfaction, there is a pressing need for more localised studies that consider the unique cultural, social, and economic factors influencing customer expectations in Nigeria. This research focuses on these variables, aiming to provide actionable insights for hotel managers on enhancing service quality. Identifying key service quality dimensions, such as empathy and assurance, and developing strategies for staff training and customer engagement that align with the specific needs of the Lagos market, are essential for the sustainable growth of the hotel industry in Nigeria (Parasuraman et al., 1985). This study contributes to both academic literature on hospitality management and offers practical solutions for improving service quality and customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the significance of this research extends beyond academic inquiry to practical implications for the hospitality industry and broader societal development in Nigeria. The study challenges the applicability of established service quality models, which are predominantly based on Western perspectives, to a diverse cultural and economic setting like Nigeria. By incorporating the unique socio-cultural dynamics of Lagos, the findings can advance the theoretical understanding of service quality in hospitality management, contributing to the global discourse on service management in emerging markets (Eckhardt, 2002). Practically, insights from the research could directly influence strategies employed by hotel managers and owners, leading to tangible improvements in service quality and customer satisfaction. In an industry where customer loyalty is crucial for sustaining business success, the study's findings offer actionable recommendations that can help hotels increase their competitive advantage, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the hospitality sector in Nigeria (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

1.4 Structure of Dissertation

The following chapters constitute the study:

Chapter 1 presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives, the research questions, and the significance and scope of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the main concepts and discussions of major issues relevant to this study. It covers various applications of service quality, including delivery, recovery, and standards. The review identifies, compares, and acknowledges the contributions of several authors who have conducted related research over time.

Chapter 3 provides an outline of the methodologies used in conducting the study. It details what was done to achieve the objectives and provides answers to the research questions, the adopted methods, and the data collection process. Additionally, it describes the survey instrument used and Data analysis.

Chapter 4 covers the presentation of the research findings, providing answers to the research questions and achieving the research objectives. The analysis and interpretation of the data are presented by the study's methodology. The results obtained were used to provide feedback on the original research hypothesis.

Chapter 5 focuses on discussing the findings obtained from the research analysis. It includes recommendations based on the research findings and suggests areas for further research. The findings are discussed about the research questions to evaluate whether they adequately address the questions posed. The chapter aims to demonstrate that the research questions have been answered and the research objectives accomplished.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review aims to critically analyze existing research on service quality and customer satisfaction, focusing on the hotel industry, particularly three-star establishments in Lagos State, Nigeria. This review examines various dimensions of service quality such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy and their influence on customer satisfaction. By synthesizing empirical studies and theoretical frameworks, it seeks to identify gaps in current knowledge and provide insights into how service quality dimensions impact customer experiences. The review also explores effective managerial strategies for enhancing service quality, contributing to improved customer satisfaction and competitive advantage in the hospitality sector.

2.2 The Nigerian Hospitality Industry: Focus on Lagos

The Nigerian hospitality industry has emerged as a dynamic and rapidly growing sector, significantly contributing to the nation's economy. Driven by increased urbanisation, the rise of a burgeoning middle class, and expanding business opportunities, the industry has experienced substantial growth over the past decade, particularly in major urban centres like Lagos and Abuja. Lagos, as Nigeria's economic epicentre, stands out as a crucial hub for the hospitality sector, attracting a diverse array of business and leisure travellers (Ifediba et al., 2021). The industry's growth is projected to continue, with estimates suggesting a 12% increase from 2019 to 2023, reflecting its resilience and potential (Hotel Management Network, 2024). However, despite this growth, the hospitality sector's contribution to Nigeria's GDP remains relatively modest at approximately 4.8%, indicating significant untapped potential (Sanni, 2009).

Lagos's prominence as a hospitality hub is underpinned by several factors that drive demand for hotel services, particularly in the three-star segment. The city's role as a central business destination, especially for multinational corporations in industries such as oil and gas, generates substantial corporate demand for hotel accommodations. This demand is further bolstered by Lagos's rich cultural heritage and vibrant social scene,

which attract leisure tourists and contribute to higher hotel occupancy rates (Alabi et al., 2013; Akinyemi, 2024). Moreover, the increasing presence of international hotel brands in Lagos has intensified competition, compelling local establishments to enhance service quality and adopt more sophisticated marketing strategies (Ifediba et al., 2021). This competitive environment positions Lagos as an appealing destination for travellers seeking a balance between affordability and quality, particularly in three-star hotels.

The distribution of three-star hotels in Lagos is notably concentrated in commercial areas such as Ikeja and Victoria Island, reflecting the strong demand from business travellers. These hotels, more numerous than luxury five-star options, cater predominantly to budget-conscious travellers while offering essential amenities (Patrick et al., 2020; Tijani et al., 2012). This trend underscores Lagos's role as a central hub in Nigeria's hospitality industry, accommodating a diverse range of traveller needs. The influx of both international and domestic travellers has markedly influenced the city's hospitality landscape, driving growth and diversification within the sector.

The increase in domestic tourism has been a key factor in driving the hospitality industry forward. Nigerians are increasingly interested in local travel experiences, which is boosting the demand for hospitality services. Lagos, with its strong economy and cultural appeal, has become a focal point for this growth. As a result, the city's hospitality sector has expanded significantly, with a growing focus on mid-range and budget hotels tailored to budget-conscious travelers (Augusto & Co., 2020; Boniface, 2020). The integration of health and safety protocols, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has also become a major trend in the industry, shaping the sector's development (Pedro et al., 2024; Makhudu, 2017).

2.3 Customer Satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction has been extensively studied since the early 1970s (Myers 1992). In recent years, it has become increasingly crucial for businesses due to more sophisticated customers and intense competition. Maintaining and building a future with existing customers requires satisfying them during service delivery (Oliver and Swan 2002). However, while organizations strive to provide exceptional service, eliminating dissatisfaction is an unrealistic goal in service delivery (Collie et al. 2010).

When dissatisfied, customers may respond in various ways, such as switching providers, voicing their concerns, or remaining loyal (Hirschman 2012). Resolving customer issues presents a chance to fix the problem and favourably shape future customer actions. Studying how organizations handle service complaints enables managers to create better and more cost-effective ways to address conflicts, leading to increased customer loyalty and earnings.

According to recent research, most unsatisfied customers do not voice their concerns to the organization; only one in every 20 customers complains. Customers may refrain from complaining when they encounter a service failure due to various reasons, such as lack of time, unwillingness to complain, or the belief that the organisation will not address the issue. Consequently, service providers must encourage customers to seek redress; otherwise, customers may turn to competitors, contact third parties, or spread negative word-of-mouth (Downton 2012).

2.4 Factors that Influence Customer Satisfaction at 3-Star Hotels

Customer satisfaction in three-star hotels, particularly in Lagos, Nigeria, is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, with service quality, perceived value, and overall guest experience being paramount. Among these, service quality is often highlighted as the most significant determinant of satisfaction. The SERVQUAL model, encompassing dimensions such as Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy, offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating how different aspects of service impact customer perceptions (Radojevic et al., 2017; Sulemana et al., 2023).

Research consistently shows a direct correlation between high service quality and increased customer satisfaction. For instance, Assurance, which involves the knowledge, courtesy, and professionalism of staff, is particularly influential in the hospitality sector. Sulemana et al. (2023) emphasise that the ability of hotel employees to convey trust and confidence significantly enhances customer satisfaction. Moreover, the friendliness and professionalism of staff are critical in shaping positive customer experiences. Radojevic et al. (2017) found that these interpersonal attributes are crucial in achieving high levels of satisfaction, as a decline in such qualities can lead to customer dissatisfaction.

The physical environment and amenities, also known as Tangibles, are crucial in influencing customer satisfaction, in addition to interpersonal interactions. A well-maintained and attractive physical environment can significantly enhance the overall guest experience. According to Le et al. (2020), while both tangible and intangible elements contribute to overall satisfaction, intangible factors like ambience and service quality often have a more significant impact. Similarly, Nazir et al. (2014) argue that the quality of the physical environment, along with the accessibility of services, plays a key role in influencing guest satisfaction.

Perceived value is another crucial determinant of satisfaction in three-star hotels. Guests often evaluate the quality of services relative to the price paid, with a favourable perception of value leading to increased satisfaction. Weng (2016) asserts that when guests perceive they are receiving good value for their money, particularly in budget-conscious settings like three-star hotels, their overall satisfaction tends to rise. Therefore, maintaining an optimal balance between service quality and pricing is essential to meet guest expectations and foster satisfaction. Finally, the importance of food quality in influencing customer satisfaction cannot be understated. Kumar (2017) highlights that food quality can have a substantial impact on the overall guest experience, often surpassing the influence of service quality alone. This underscores the necessity for three-star hotels to ensure that dining experiences are of high quality, as this can be a decisive factor in guest satisfaction and loyalty.

2.5 Service Quality (SERVQUAL)

Service quality is crucial for effective service management, especially in the hospitality industry, where customer satisfaction directly impacts business success. One of the most widely recognized models for assessing service quality is the SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the 1980s. This model evaluates service quality by comparing customer expectations with their perceptions across five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The comprehensive nature of SERVQUAL makes it a valuable diagnostic tool, enabling organizations to identify specific service gaps and implement strategies to enhance service delivery effectively (Buttle, 1996).

The SERVQUAL model's structured approach has been extensively adopted in the hospitality sector due to its ability to provide detailed insights into service quality. By focusing on five dimensions, the model captures the multifaceted nature of service experiences, which are crucial in the hospitality industry where customer satisfaction is paramount. The dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy collectively address both the physical aspects of service delivery and the behavioural attributes of service providers, offering a holistic view of service quality (Landrum et al., 2009). As such, SERVQUAL facilitates a nuanced understanding of how different elements of service interact to influence customer perceptions and satisfaction (Kang & James, 2004).

The importance of maintaining high service quality in the hospitality industry cannot be overstated, particularly in competitive markets such as Lagos, Nigeria. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between high service quality and customer loyalty, with customers more likely to return to establishments that meet or exceed their expectations (Chayomchai, 2021). This relationship is further supported by studies demonstrating that improvements in one dimension of service quality often lead to enhancements in other areas, thereby contributing to overall customer satisfaction (Setyo & Andesta, 2023). The application of the SERVQUAL model in the context of hospitality, therefore, not only helps in identifying service gaps but also in understanding how these gaps impact customer loyalty and retention.

In the specific context of Nigerian hospitality, where the market is characterised by intense competition among three-star hotels, the relevance of the SERVQUAL model becomes even more pronounced. The model's ability to pinpoint service deficiencies enables hotel managers to implement targeted improvements, thereby differentiating their services from those of competitors. For instance, studies have indicated that in environments where service quality is a critical determinant of customer satisfaction, such as in hotels, the tangible aspects of service (e.g., cleanliness, facilities) and intangible elements (e.g., staff behaviour, responsiveness) are equally important (Al-Rousan & Abuamoud, 2013; Lemy et al., 2019). This underscores the necessity for hotels in Lagos to maintain a balanced focus on all SERVQUAL dimensions to enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, the role of staff behaviour, as captured by the assurance and empathy dimensions of SERVQUAL, is crucial in shaping guests' perceptions of service quality. In the hospitality industry, where service interactions are frequent and often personalised, the competence and care demonstrated by staff significantly influence customer satisfaction (Ekinci et al., 2011). Research in Nigerian hotels supports this view, highlighting that positive interactions between staff and guests are essential for creating a favourable customer experience (Sann & Lai, 2021). Consequently, by addressing the assurance and empathy dimensions effectively, three-star hotels in Lagos can enhance their service quality, leading to increased guest satisfaction and repeat business.

In addition, the SERVQUAL model's emphasis on reliability and responsiveness is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where customers often have high expectations regarding the promptness and dependability of service. Studies have shown that guests in Nigerian hotels place significant importance on these dimensions, expecting timely and reliable service as a standard (Li & Krit, 2012). This expectation aligns with broader trends in the hospitality industry, where the reliability of service delivery is often linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hue Minh et al., 2015). Therefore, three-star hotels in Lagos must prioritise these dimensions to meet customer expectations and enhance overall service quality.

Moreover, the competitive nature of the hospitality industry in Lagos necessitates continuous improvements in service quality to maintain a competitive edge. As Crick and Spencer (2011) note, the increasing competition in the hospitality sector compels hotels to differentiate themselves by enhancing their service offerings. This is particularly relevant in a market like Lagos, where numerous hotels compete for the same customer base. By leveraging the SERVQUAL model, hotel managers can systematically identify and address service gaps, thereby improving their service quality and achieving a competitive advantage (Anwar, 2017).

2.6 Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

According to Zheng et al. (2012), some researchers argue that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction, while others believe that satisfaction precedes service quality. However, most recent publications support the view that service quality

is an antecedent to customer satisfaction (Singh and Singh 2018). Generally, it is accepted that a positive relationship exists between service quality and customer satisfaction (Obeng and Peter 2017). Singla (2012) argues that service quality is an attitude related to, but distinct from, satisfaction. De Figueiredo Marcos and De Matos Coelho (2021) proposed that high-perceived service quality leads to increased customer satisfaction, a conclusion supported by Bhuian (2021) and Teeroovengadum (2022). After studying the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, Buba et al. (2024) concluded that a significant relationship exists between the two, identifying all dimensions of service quality as key factors influencing customer satisfaction.

The study suggested that to improve customer satisfaction, organizations need to enhance the dimensions of service quality. Fasanmi (2021) studied service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction in the Nigerian telecommunications industry, establishing that all five service quality dimensions positively impact customer satisfaction, with reliability having the highest impact and tangibility the least. He recommended improving and allocating more resources to all service quality dimensions since they positively affect customer satisfaction. Pedro et al. (2024), in a study to determine the relationship between service quality and three-star hotel user satisfaction in Lagos Nigeria, found that service quality accounts for 73.9% of user satisfaction, with reliability contributing most to user satisfaction and empathy the least.

A recent study by Azzam (2015) examined the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in the Arab Hotel, in Irbid City, Jordan. Utilizing the five-dimensional framework, the research found a positive correlation between high-quality services and increased customer satisfaction. The five service quality factors were found to significantly influence customer satisfaction. It is noteworthy that the current study, conducted in three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria, involved a different customer demographic compared to the previous study. This diversity in settings and clientele highlights the importance of a tailored approach to understanding and enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction. The research delved into the satisfaction levels of customers in Syria's mobile telecommunications sector. Researchers gathered data from 600 mobile phone users in Damascus and Aleppo, employing a convenient sampling technique. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the data,

revealing a clear and meaningful connection between the quality of services provided and customer satisfaction.

Similarly, a study by Olatokun and Ojo (2014) focused on the impact of mobile telecommunications service quality on customer satisfaction in Nigeria. Utilizing a survey approach, the researchers assessed customer satisfaction in Ibadan, employing a structure based on the SERVQUAL dimensions, which encompass reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. A convenient sampling method was used to select 431 mobile telecommunications users, whose satisfaction levels were measured. The findings indicated that responsiveness, assurance, and empathy were significant factors in explaining customer satisfaction. These insights could assist regulatory authorities in developing policies that prioritise customer satisfaction.

The study conducted by Lee and Cheng (2018) explored how customers in high-end hotels perceive the physical elements of service quality. The aim was to understand the relative significance of tangible service features in shaping diners' satisfaction within this dining segment. The researchers identified tangible service attributes and, through exploratory factor analysis, distinguished five underlying dimensions: presentation value, table aesthetics, sensory perceptions, hygiene purity etc.

2.7 Customers' Expectations of Service Quality in three-star Hotels

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al., provides a robust framework for assessing service quality across five dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. This model has been widely adopted and applied within the hotel industry to evaluate and enhance service delivery, thereby improving guest experiences and fostering loyalty (Ekinici et al. 2011; Al-Rousan and Abuamoud 2013; Anwar 2017). This section reviews research conducted by various scholars on service quality and customer satisfaction, focusing on studies that explore the relationship between different service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.

2.7.1 Tangibles and Customer Satisfaction

The tangible elements of a hotel, including its cleanliness, décor, and amenities, play a significant role in shaping customer expectations and satisfaction. Guests of three-star hotels anticipate a certain standard of aesthetic appeal and cleanliness. Martín et al.

(2020) highlight that the quality of room furniture and hotel decoration is instrumental in influencing guest satisfaction. The presence of modern amenities and well-maintained facilities further reinforces the hotel's commitment to quality, which is crucial in meeting customer expectations (Li and Krit, 2012). This is particularly important in the context of three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, where the physical aspects of the hotel can significantly impact the perceived value of the service offered.

Moreover, research in the hotel industry has provided insights into how both tangible and intangible aspects of service quality influence customer perceptions. Santos (2016) underscores that while tangible aspects such as cleanliness and décor are important, intangible elements like staff responsiveness and reliability also play a critical role in customer satisfaction. This dual focus on tangibles and intangibles offers a more comprehensive understanding of how service quality affects customer satisfaction within the hospitality sector. It is therefore essential for hotel management in Lagos's three-star establishments to maintain high standards in both tangible and intangible service quality dimensions to enhance guest satisfaction.

2.7.2 Reliability and Customer Satisfaction

Reliability, defined as the hotel's ability to consistently deliver promised services, is a crucial determinant of customer satisfaction. Guests expect three-star hotels to provide reliable services, such as timely check-ins and check-outs, accurate billing, and the availability of reserved amenities. Studies, including those by Li et al. (2020), have demonstrated that reliability is a key factor influencing customer satisfaction, as guests are more likely to return to hotels that consistently meet their expectations. Further, the study by Mohajerani and Miremadi (2012) suggests that reliability in service delivery extends beyond mere functional aspects; it also encompasses the broader perception of service quality, where both tangible and intangible elements such as empathy and assurance significantly influence customer perceptions. This is consistent with the findings of Galetzka et al. (2006), who examined how the reliability of services impacts customer satisfaction across different service types. Their study revealed that reliability is particularly crucial in experience services, such as hotel stays, where it profoundly affects customer satisfaction.

In the context of three-star hotels in Lagos, the emphasis on reliability in service provision cannot be overstated. Guests in these establishments expect not only the fulfilment of basic promises but also a level of consistency that assures them of the hotel's commitment to quality. This highlights the need for hotel management to focus on improving reliability as a core component of service quality to enhance customer satisfaction.

2.7.3 Responsiveness and Customer Satisfaction

Responsiveness, or the hotel's ability to promptly and effectively address guest needs, is another critical aspect of service quality that impacts customer satisfaction. Guests value hotels where staff are attentive and proactive in resolving issues, especially in three-star hotels, where resources may be limited, and time is often a critical factor. Amoako et al. (2019) emphasise that responsiveness is a vital component of service quality, with guests particularly appreciating prompt service and quick resolution of concerns. Pandey and Devasagayam (2010) provide empirical evidence from a study involving customers of a multinational hotel operating in India, suggesting that responsiveness to customer inquiries and complaints is a strong driver of customer satisfaction, regardless of the outcome of the resolution. This finding underscores the importance of staff being not only responsive but also efficient in their interactions with guests.

Additionally, Ibrahimi et al. (2016) explored the relationship between service quality dimensions, including responsiveness, and customer satisfaction in a Malaysian hotel context. Their study highlighted the importance of responsiveness, alongside other service quality dimensions such as consistency and dependability, in maximising customer satisfaction. This further reinforces the argument that for three-star hotels in Lagos, enhancing staff responsiveness should be a priority in improving overall service quality and customer satisfaction.

2.7.4 Assurance and Customer Satisfaction

The assurance of service quality is a critical aspect that includes the competence, courtesy, and credibility of hotel staff. These factors are crucial in ensuring customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Guests expect well-informed and helpful staff to provide a secure and comfortable stay, handling inquiries efficiently and offering

necessary assistance. The presence of well-trained staff is essential for enhancing customer confidence and overall satisfaction (Sepula et al., 2018). Assurance plays a significant role in shaping customer satisfaction, especially in environments where guests may feel vulnerable or uncertain, such as hotels (Chikosha & Vutete, 2014).

Rachman's (2017) study on the car rental industry highlights the substantial influence of assurance on customer satisfaction, revealing that reliable service significantly contributes to customer happiness and loyalty. Although the study focuses on a different industry, the findings underscore the universal importance of assurance in customer service across various sectors. Similarly, Park et al. (2010) investigated the impact of third-party assurance seals on customer satisfaction and repeat-purchase intention in an online context. Their research found that vendors who offer these seals, which are designed to alleviate customer concerns, experience higher overall customer satisfaction and a greater likelihood of repeat purchases. These findings suggest that strategies aimed at enhancing customer confidence, whether through direct service assurance or external validation, play a crucial role in maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2.7.5 Empathy and Customer Satisfaction

Empathy, which refers to the personalised attention guests receive from hotel staff, is another vital dimension of service quality that significantly impacts customer satisfaction. In three-star hotels, where guests may seek a more intimate and personalised service experience, the ability of employees to connect with guests on a personal level is particularly crucial (Rajaguru & Hassanli, 2018). The hospitality industry, especially within mid-range hotels, benefits from staff who can understand and anticipate individual guest needs, thereby creating a welcoming and accommodating atmosphere.

The research conducted by Ye et al. (2017) in the healthcare sector, although in a different context, illustrates the long-term detrimental effects of reducing empathy and responsiveness on client satisfaction and organisational profitability. This finding is relevant to the hospitality industry, where maintaining high levels of empathy is essential for sustaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, Bahadur et al. (2018) explored the indirect effects of employee compassion on client loyalty, highlighting that

empathy positively influences client emotional commitment, perceived service quality, and satisfaction. While this study was set in China's telecommunication sector, its implications resonate within the hospitality industry, where empathetic service is a cornerstone of guest satisfaction, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria.

These insights into assurance and empathy underline the importance of personalised, credible, and compassionate service in enhancing customer satisfaction within the hospitality sector. By fostering these qualities, three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, can significantly improve service quality and, consequently, customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2.8 Summary of Knowledge Gap

Understanding service quality dimensions in the hotel industry is vital for various stakeholders, including hotel managers, policymakers, and customers. While existing research has examined aspects of service quality in various sectors, the unique dynamics of the hotel industry where customer experiences are tied to service delivery require a focused analysis. Specifically, three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria, face increasing competition and evolving customer expectations, making it essential to identify the key service quality factors that influence customer satisfaction (Omar 2015; Lee et al. 2016; Pandey & Devasagayam 2010; Rachman 2017; Bahadur et al. 2018). This research aims to provide actionable insights that can enhance service quality management, inform policy decisions, and ultimately improve customer experiences within this specific sector.

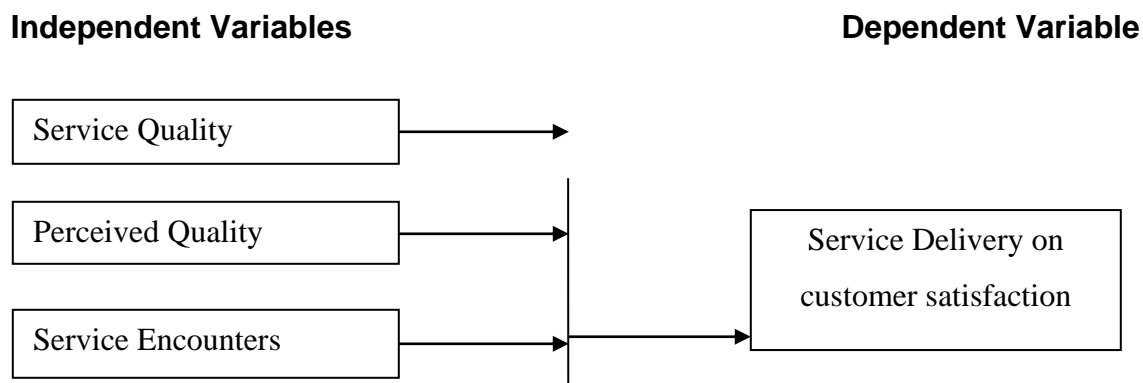
Addressing the identified research gaps is crucial for advancing both academic knowledge and practical applications in the hotel industry. By investigating how specific service quality dimensions such as Service Quality, Perceived Quality, and Service Encounter affect customer satisfaction, this study can provide hotel managers with evidence-based strategies to enhance service delivery (Olakutan & Ojo, 2016; Omar, 2015). Moreover, it contributes to the broader academic discourse by offering new perspectives on service quality in the hotel industry, particularly in a developing economy like Nigeria. This research not only fills a critical gap in the literature but also has the potential to drive improvements in customer satisfaction, leading to increased customer loyalty and competitive advantage for hotels.

The research is well-grounded in positivist research philosophy and employs a quantitative, deductive approach, ensuring its feasibility and rigour. A descriptive research design is adopted, targeting a representative sample of 120 guests from three-star hotels in Lagos State. The study uses structured questionnaires to collect data, ensuring both validity and reliability through pre-testing and ethical adherence, including participant consent and confidentiality. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS software, facilitating a robust examination of the relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. This methodological approach ensures that the research is systematically planned and executable, contributing valuable insights to the field.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

This highlights the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Author (2024)

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Zeithaml et al. (2009), is instrumental in evaluating service quality within the hospitality industry by measuring gaps between customer expectations and actual experiences. This model assesses five key dimensions—reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles—which are critical in shaping overall customer satisfaction. By quantifying these differences, SERVQUAL provides a comprehensive understanding of where improvements are necessary to enhance guest experiences, thus serving as a valuable guide for hotel managers aiming to refine service quality. In the context of hospitality management,

consistent service delivery is paramount. Despite the inevitable nature of service failures, particularly in high-interaction environments like hotels, proactive management is essential to mitigate their occurrence and impact. Service reliability is central to a hotel's credibility; failures in this area can severely damage customer trust, regardless of the interpersonal skills or apologies offered by staff (Bitner et al., 2010). For instance, when a service failure, such as delayed order taking, occurs, it disrupts the guest experience and reflects poorly on the hotel's service standards.

The implications of service disruptions are further highlighted in scenarios where both human-controlled errors and natural events contribute to service failures. For example, unforeseen weather disturbances, while beyond human control, still necessitate a swift and effective response from hotel staff to mitigate their impact on the guest experience. Proactive measures, such as installing wind barriers, can prevent such disruptions, but when they do occur, the way hotel management responds—through apologies and prompt corrective actions is crucial in determining the guest's overall satisfaction (Zemke & Bell, 2013). Understanding customer responses to service failures is crucial for effective service recovery. Customers' satisfaction is not only influenced by the service itself but also by how well the recovery process is handled. Research suggests that effective management of service recovery can significantly influence customer loyalty and their willingness to return, as well as their perception of fairness during the recovery process (Blodgett et al., 2016; Kim & Lee, 2011). In this way, service quality improvement efforts must focus on both preventing service failures and managing them effectively when they occur, ensuring that customers leave with a positive overall impression, even in the face of initial setbacks.

2. 10 Theoretical Framework

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al., is a critical framework for understanding and improving service quality across various sectors, including hospitality management. In Nigeria's hospitality industry, the application of the SERVQUAL model is particularly relevant as it provides a structured approach to enhancing customer satisfaction, a vital factor for the growth and sustainability of businesses in this sector.

The SERVQUAL model is premised on the notion that service quality is defined by the gap between customer expectations and their actual experiences. It identifies five key dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Shafiq et al., 2017; Jebraeily et al., 2019; Praise et al., 2024). For instance, "tangibles" relate to the physical environment, such as the cleanliness and presentation of facilities, while "reliability" concerns the consistent and accurate delivery of promised services (Adebayo et al., 2014). In the Nigerian hospitality context, applying the SERVQUAL model can help identify specific areas where service delivery may fall short of customer expectations, thus allowing for targeted improvements. This is analogous to findings in the Nigerian healthcare sector, where similar service quality gaps have been documented (Ojo & Owolabi, 2017; Rostami et al., 2018).

The practical implications of the SERVQUAL model in Nigeria's hospitality industry are substantial. It offers a methodical means of measuring service quality, enabling managers to collect empirical data on customer perceptions and expectations (Rahimi & Solymani, 2022). This data can then inform strategic decisions aimed at enhancing service delivery. The model's emphasis on customer-centric service encourages continuous improvement, a critical aspect in Nigeria's rapidly evolving and competitive hospitality market (Chinedum et al., 2019).

In a dissertation focused on improving service quality and customer satisfaction within a 3-star hotel in Lagos, the SERVQUAL model can serve as both a theoretical foundation and a practical guide. A literature review could contextualise the model within the Nigerian hospitality landscape, referencing studies that identify service quality gaps (Yang, 2013; Shafiq et al., 2017; Praise et al., 2024). A mixed-methods approach could be employed, combining quantitative surveys using the SERVQUAL instrument with qualitative interviews to provide deeper insights (Aagja & Garg, 2010; Nwoku et al., 2023). Additionally, case studies of successful implementations of the SERVQUAL model in Nigeria could illustrate best practices for service enhancement (Ahmed et al., 2020; Ashraf et al., 2021). By adopting the SERVQUAL model, this dissertation aims not only to contribute to academic discourse but also to provide actionable insights for hospitality practitioners in Nigeria.

2.11 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions.

- i. What are the factors influencing customers' satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos state Nigeria?
- ii. What are the customers' expectations of service quality in three-star hotels in Lagos State Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos state Nigeria?
- iv. What is the managerial strategy that can help to boost service quality to meet up with customers' satisfaction in Lagos State's 3-star hotels?

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section outlines the research approach and methods employed in the study. Participant responses were obtained, and data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The chapter is divided into six parts: research approach, target audience, design, data collection tools, ethical considerations, and data analysis methods. Generally, this specifically refers to the broad guidelines for inquiry that form the foundation of a study's underlying theoretical and philosophical presumptions.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

The foundation of this investigation lies in the philosophical approach to research, with a focus on positivism. Positivism, as defined by Bell et al. (2019), is an objectivist epistemological stance where reliable knowledge is derived from observable phenomena. This aligns with the views of Saunders et al. (2019), who argue that positivist philosophy allows researchers to uncover truths, predict outcomes, and exert control over these realities. This study adopts a positivist stance, operating within a tangible social reality to generate generalizations akin to natural laws, as found in scientific disciplines. In line with this positivist approach, the research follows a deductive methodology. It builds on the established concept of source trustworthiness, as proposed by Ohanian and discussed by Saunders et al. (2019). Source trustworthiness, comprising dimensions such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, is crucial in determining how consumers perceive and respond to marketing communications, influencing their decision-making processes. Given the study's aim to elucidate the relationships between variables such as service quality, service delivery, and customer satisfaction, an explanatory research design is appropriate. As Saunders et al. (2019) assert, explanatory research seeks to clarify the reasons behind observed phenomena, thus enhancing understanding of underlying dynamics. This approach is particularly relevant to investigating how service delivery in

three-star hotels impacts customer satisfaction in Lagos State, Nigeria, with a specific focus on service quality.

3.2 Quantitative Research: A Deductive Perspective

A deductive approach is inherently linked to a quantitative research methodology (Greener 2008). Quantitative research is characterized by an objectivist perspective on social reality, a deductive reasoning process, the collection of numerical data, and the application of a natural science approach (Bell et al. 2019). Quantitative research emphasizes the use of statistical methods to uncover relationships between different factors. This approach aims to analyze numerical data systematically, seeking to identify patterns and trends that can provide insights into the topic under investigation (Dudovskiy 2019).

Quantitative research has numerous benefits, making it an invaluable tool for scholars. First, it makes use of statistical data analysis, which conserves resources and time (Bell et al. 2019). By emphasizing numerical data and figures, quantitative research improves the study's scientific rigour (Bell et al. 2019). Researchers can speed up interpreting results by employing statistical software such as SPSS to evaluate data in an effective manner (Gorard et al. 2001; Connolly 2007).

The scientific foundation of quantitative research makes generalization easier. Larger groups can benefit from extrapolating findings from interactions with one group (Trierweiler and Stricker 1998). For example, examining how students are taught to solve problems in a particular classroom might reveal larger social trends and patterns (Shank et al. 2015; Cohen et al. 2017). Replicability is another important advantage of quantitative research. The utilization of hypothesis testing guarantees well-defined protocols and goals, facilitating the uniform replication of research (Litchman 2013). According to Shank et al. (2015), this quality raises the legitimacy of study findings and encourages trust in their dependability.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

3.3.1 Research Design

The overall blueprint and organization of the investigation, crafted to address the research queries, is known as the research design. This study will adopt a descriptive research design, as stated by (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). Descriptive research design portrays and reports the current situation, presenting the facts as they stand; consequently, if another individual replicates the study now, the circumstances would be discovered as described.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

The primary data collection method in this study is a questionnaire, a systematic tool for gathering information efficiently. The questionnaire was meticulously designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. It includes a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, allowing respondents to express their perspectives in detail while also providing structured responses. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' views on service quality dimensions, particularly in the context of three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. The inclusion of open-ended questions enables respondents to elaborate on their experiences, offering unique insights into their satisfaction levels.

The questionnaire was self-designed, drawing on themes identified in the literature review and existing studies on service quality by Omar et al. (2015), Lee and Cheng (2018), and Bahadur et al. (2018). These studies highlighted various dimensions of service quality, such as Service Delivery, Perceived Service, Service Quality, and Service Encounter, which were carefully incorporated into the questionnaire. The focus was on capturing the specific service environment of three-star hotels, ensuring that the questions were relevant and specific to this setting. The use of a Likert scale format allowed respondents to rate their level of agreement with various statements, making it easier to quantify their satisfaction levels.

A pilot test was conducted with a small sample like the study population. This is to ensure the questionnaire's validity. This pre-testing phase was crucial for refining the

questions, and ensuring clarity and accuracy in measuring the intended constructs. Feedback from industry experts was also incorporated during the questionnaire design and testing stage, further enhancing the questionnaire's relevance and effectiveness. The instrument was designed to be straightforward to understand, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation and ensuring that the responses accurately reflected the respondents' experiences.

To check for Reliability, Cronbach's alpha test was used, and its results demonstrated strong internal consistency across the various dimensions of service quality. The structure of the questionnaire, with its mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions, provided a balanced approach to data collection. This design not only allowed for the systematic gathering of data but also ensured that respondents could freely express their unique viewpoints. By combining structured questions with opportunities for detailed responses, the questionnaire effectively captured the various aspects of customer satisfaction in three-star hotels.

3.3.3 Sampling and Access

The target population for this study consists of 120 hotel guests, both male and female, from diverse age groups and income levels, who frequently stay at three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. This population, as defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), includes all cases from which a sample is drawn, allowing the research to focus on individuals whose characteristics align with the study's objectives. To capture a representative sample, a stratified random sampling method was employed, dividing the population into subgroups based on key characteristics such as age, gender, and nationality. By sampling within each stratum, the study ensures that the diversity of the broader hotel guest population is reflected, thereby enhancing the reliability of the findings.

Participants were systematically recruited during their stay at various three-star hotels in Lagos State, with efforts made to engage a wide demographic range, minimising selection bias. This approach supports the descriptive nature of the study, aiming to encompass a broad spectrum of customer perceptions related to service quality. A sample size of 70% was deemed sufficient, as supported by Gay (2008), to ensure

reliable and valid results. Before the survey, permission was obtained from hotel management, and the study's purpose was clearly communicated. Pre-testing of draft inquiries was conducted to eliminate ambiguity and ensure accuracy, with questions that failed to yield necessary data excluded from the final questionnaire. This meticulous approach ensured that all units of analysis were thoroughly examined, contributing to the overall validity and reliability of the research findings.

3.4 Addressing Ethical Consideration

In alignment with ethical guidelines for quantitative research, this study ensured the protection of participants' privacy and confidentiality throughout the data collection process (Costley et al., 2010; Dooly et al. 2017). Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Consent was obtained by requesting participants to agree to the terms before proceeding with the questionnaire. The survey was designed to ensure anonymity, with no identifying information being collected, thereby safeguarding the privacy of respondents. Data was stored securely, accessible only to the research team, and used solely for academic purposes, adhering to ethical standards for conducting quantitative research. This approach ensured that all ethical considerations were adequately addressed, fostering trust and integrity in the research process.

Respondents were given assurance that participation is entirely optional and that there will be no repercussions if they decide to withdraw their agreement at any point. To mitigate any ethical difficulties, participants will have to agree to these agreements before the research can begin (Bell et al. 2015). To protect participant confidentiality, the researcher will handle all gathered information anonymously. Only the researcher will have access to the participant's personal information, and their names will not be linked to their answers. With this precaution, participants' privacy will be safeguarded, and their data will be kept private for the duration of the study. This study aimed to preserve the integrity of the research while giving participants' rights and well-being top priority by abiding by certain ethical principles and standards.

In addition to the measures taken to protect participants' privacy and data, this study received approval from the Bournemouth University (BU) Research Ethics Committee,

ensuring that all ethical standards were met. The approval process involved completing the Ethics Checklist, which confirmed that the study adhered to the necessary ethical guidelines, including safeguarding participants' rights and well-being. By obtaining this approval, the research was conducted with a strong commitment to ethical integrity, prioritizing the confidentiality and autonomy of the participants throughout the study.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis, as outlined by Gay (2008), involves the systematic organisation and structuring of collected information to effectively convey research findings. Upon completing the fieldwork, all questionnaires were meticulously verified for reliability and accuracy. The data preparation process included editing, coding, and tabulation, which facilitated the quantitative analysis conducted using statistical methods. This study employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse relationships between variables, allowing for the identification of trends and patterns within the data (Saunders et al., 2019).

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentage distributions, were utilised to quantify response rates and service ratings, thereby offering insights into customer satisfaction and service quality in three-star hotels in Lagos State. Cross-tabulation techniques were applied to explore the correlation between service quality dimensions, such as staff professionalism and attentiveness, and overall customer satisfaction. The data were further illustrated using tables, figures, and graphical representations, which enhanced the clarity of the analysis and supported the study's conclusions on service delivery and customer experiences. This comprehensive approach, underpinned by ethical considerations and rigorous data analysis methods, ensured that the study's findings were both accurate and insightful.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and interpretation of the research findings based on the data collected through the questionnaire surveys. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the results, highlighting key insights related to the research objectives: identifying factors influencing customer satisfaction, assessing customer expectations of service quality, and investigating the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. The first section of this presents the descriptive analysis based on the responses from the administered questionnaire in which 150 people responded to the questionnaire. This is followed by a test of hypothesis which was done using regression analysis. The findings from the analysis were discussed using existing literature to provide a deeper understanding of how these results align with or diverge from previous research. This discussion aims to clarify the practical implications of the findings for hotel management and contribute to the broader field of hospitality management. By thoroughly exploring the results and their implications, this chapter seeks to offer actionable insights for improving service quality and enhancing customer satisfaction in three-star hotels, eventually guiding strategic recommendations for industry practitioners.

4.2 Presentation of Findings

Table 4. 1: General Information

| | | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender distribution of the respondents | Male | 111 | 74 |
| | Female | 39 | 26 |
| Age Bracket | Below 19 years | 24 | 16 |
| | 20 – 29 years | 51 | 34 |
| | 30 – 39 years | 45 | 30 |
| | Above 40 years | 30 | 20 |
| Nationality | Kenyan | 21 | 14 |
| | Rest of Africa | 63 | 42 |
| | Europe | 30 | 20 |
| | Asia | 36 | 24 |
| Purpose of Visit | Business | 20 | 10.5% |
| | Conference | 33 | 17.3% |
| | Leisure | 49 | 25.7% |
| | Transit | 89 | 46.6% |

Field Research (2024)

The analysis of the questionnaire data offers valuable insights into the demographics, behaviours, and preferences of the respondents, thereby laying a solid foundation for understanding the customer base of the star hotel in Lagos, Nigeria. These findings are interpreted concerning relevant scholarly literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the hotel's clientele.

Gender Distribution

The gender distribution among respondents reveals a significant skew towards male guests, with 74% of the respondents being male and 26% female. This notable gender disparity may reflect broader trends within the hospitality industry, particularly in the context of business travel, which male travellers often dominate. Schlagenhauf *et al.* (2010) observe that male travellers usually dominate the business travel segment, especially in regions where traditional gender roles are more pronounced. This demographic pattern could be a key factor contributing to the higher percentage of male respondents in this survey.

Furthermore, the predominance of male guests might also mean that the specific marketing strategies employed by the hotels could be more attractive to male guests. Previous research has shown that gender preferences influence hotel selection, with male guests often prioritising different amenities and services compared to female guests (Nadiri and Hussain 2005). Recognising this gender disparity is essential for the hotel to develop strategies that promote inclusivity, appeal to a more diverse demographic and enhance customer satisfaction.

Age Distribution

The age distribution of respondents reveals that the largest group is aged between 20 and 29 years (34%), followed closely by those aged 30 to 39 years (30%). There is a smaller representation of those below 19 years (16%) and those above 40 years (20%). This age distribution suggests that the hotel attracts a relatively young clientele, particularly those in their 20s and 30s. Young adults within the 20–39 age bracket are known to be active travellers who often seek experiences that align with their lifestyle and preferences. According to Demirciftci *et al.* (2024), this age group is typically more adventurous, technology-savvy, and likely to prioritise modern amenities, connectivity, and unique experiences when choosing accommodation. Therefore, the significant presence of younger guests might indicate that the hotel's offerings resonate well with this demographic, who may value the balance of affordability and comfort.

The relatively smaller percentages of guests aged below 19 and above 40 years might suggest that the hotel's services and environment are less appealing or suitable for

these age groups. Research by Shoemaker (2000) indicates that older guests often prioritise different aspects of service quality, such as comfort, accessibility, and personalised service, while younger guests might be more inclined towards budget-friendly and convenient options. The hotel could consider adapting some of its services to cater to these age brackets to attract a more diverse age range.

Purpose of Visit

The analysis of the purpose of the visit reveals that the majority of respondents were in transit (46.6%), followed by those visiting for leisure (25.7%), attending conferences (17.3%), and on business trips (10.5%). The high percentage of transit guests suggests that the hotel is likely positioned in a location that is convenient for travellers en route to other destinations, such as near an airport or major transport hub.

Transit travellers often have specific needs, such as quick check-in/check-out processes, accessibility to transport services, and the availability of basic amenities (Tussyadiah 2020; Qi and Mo 2021). The hotel's ability to attract a large proportion of transit guests indicates that it successfully meets these needs. However, it is important to note that transit guests typically stay for shorter durations and may not fully engage with all the services offered by the hotel, which could impact overall revenue generation (Ramanathan and Ramanathan 2011).

The substantial percentage of leisure travellers (25.7%) indicates that the hotel also appeals to those seeking relaxation or tourism experiences. This segment is crucial for the hotel as leisure travellers tend to spend more time and money on additional services, such as dining, spa treatments, and local tours (Bastakis et al. 2004). The relatively lower percentages of the conference (17.3%) and business travellers (10.5%) suggest that, while the hotel does cater to these segments, there may be opportunities to enhance its offerings to attract more guests for these purposes.

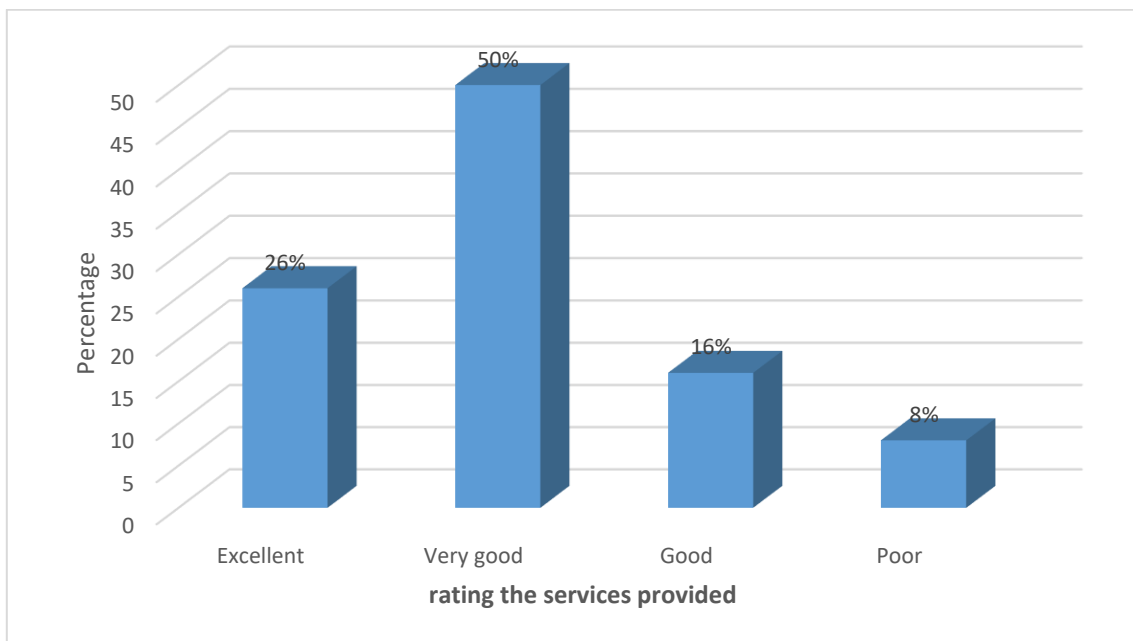
4.2.7 Rating of the services provided

Table 4. 2: Rating of Customer Satisfaction

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Excellent | 39 | 26 |
| Very good | 75 | 50 |
| Good | 24 | 16 |
| Poor | 16 | 8 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

Source: Author (2024)

Figure 4. 1: Rating of Customer Satisfaction



Field Research (2024)

The customer satisfaction analysis reveals that the majority of respondents (50%) rated the service quality at the hotel as "Very good," while a significant portion (26%) rated it as "Excellent." Combined, these positive ratings suggest that 76% of customers are

satisfied with the hotel's services. However, 24% of respondents rated the service as "Good" or "Poor," indicating room for improvement. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining high service standards to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, which are crucial for growth in the highly competitive hospitality industry.

4.3 Analysis of Research Objectives

This section shows the results from the analysis based on the research questions which were then analysed descriptively.

4.3.1 Interpretation and Analysis of Objective one: Factors influencing customers' satisfaction

Table 4. 3: Analysis of Objective 1

| Items/Questions | SA | A | U | SD | D | Mean |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| The employees are professional | 68 (45.3) | 11 (7.3) | 24 (16) | 43 (28.7) | 4 (2.7) | 3.64 |
| They give personal attention | 30 (20) | 48 (32) | 26 (17.3) | 32 (21.3) | 14 (9.3) | 3.32 |
| The staff are well-behaved | 48 (32) | 20 (13.3) | 41 (27.3) | 31 (20.7) | 10 (6.7) | 3.43 |
| There is timeliness of service | 44 (29.3) | 11 (7.3) | 63 (42) | 22 (14.7) | 10 (6.7) | 3.38 |
| Staff are always willing to help | 28 (18.7) | 36 (24) | 51 (34) | 13 (8.7) | 12 (8) | 3.17 |
| Staff are friendly and courteous | 38 (25.3) | 26 (17.3) | 40 (26.7) | 52 (34.7) | 14 (9.3) | 3.55 |
| The hotel is ambient and clean | 70 (46.7%) | 45 (30.0%) | 20 (13.3%) | 10 (6.7%) | 5 (3.3%) | 4.10 |
| The appearance of employees is catching | 60 (40.0%) | 50 (33.3%) | 25 (16.7%) | 10 (6.7%) | 5 (3.3%) | 3.97 |

Field Research (2024)

The analysis of customer satisfaction factors in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, reveals a nuanced understanding of the elements contributing to overall guest experiences. The data indicates that key aspects of service quality, such as employee professionalism, the ambient environment, cleanliness, and employee appearance, significantly influence customer satisfaction. The high mean scores for professionalism (3.64), the ambient and clean environment (4.10), and the appearance of employees (3.97) suggest that these are critical factors that positively impact guests' perceptions. The fact that nearly half of the respondents strongly agree that the hotel is ambient and clean (46.7%) and that employees' appearance is catching (40%) underscores the importance of these tangible elements in enhancing customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the lower mean scores for aspects such as timeliness of service (3.38), staff willingness to help (3.17), and staff friendliness and courteousness (3.55) point to areas where service quality could be improved. The significant percentage of respondents who only somewhat agree or are undecided about these elements (e.g., 42% undecided about timeliness) highlights potential gaps in service delivery that might detract from the overall guest experience.

This analysis aligns with the broader literature on service quality in hospitality, emphasising the importance of tangible and intangible factors in shaping customer satisfaction. For instance, research by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) in the development of the SERVQUAL model identifies reliability, assurance, and responsiveness as key dimensions of service quality, which are reflected in the customer expectations of professionalism, timeliness, and staff behaviour in this study.

4.3.2 Interpretation and Analysis of Objective two: customers' expectations of service quality

Table 4. 4: Analysis of Objective 2

| Items/Questions | SA | A | U | SD | D | Mean |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------|
| Their overall service is outstanding | 65 (43.3%) | 40 (26.7%) | 25 (16.7%) | 10 (6.7%) | 10 (6.7%) | 3.93 |
| You are likely to visit this hotel again | 75 (50.0%) | 35 (23.3%) | 20 (13.3%) | 15 (10.0%) | 5 (3.3%) | 4.07 |
| You would recommend the place to friends | 68 (45.3%) | 38 (25.3%) | 22 (14.7%) | 12 (8.0%) | 10 (6.7%) | 3.95 |
| High safety and security attention | 72 (48.0%) | 42 (28.0%) | 20 (13.3%) | 8 (5.3%) | 8 (5.3%) | 4.08 |
| Hotel physical appearance and cleanliness are kept | 58 (38.7) | 43 (28.7) | 26 (17.3) | 17 (11.3) | 5 (3.3) | 3.86 |
| The staff show sincere interest in solving a problem | 20 (13.3) | 35 (23.3) | 74 (49.3) | 11 (7.3) | 10 (6.7) | 3.29 |
| The staff are constantly courteous with you | 37 (24.7) | 55 (36.7) | 28 (18.7) | 17 (11.3) | 19 (8.7) | 3.61 |
| The hotel has your interests at heart | 40 (26.7) | 43 (22.7) | 29 (19.3) | 16 (10.7) | 22 (14.7) | 3.42 |

Field Research (2024)

The analysis of customer expectations regarding service quality in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, reveals key insights into what guests prioritise during their stay. The data

suggests that customers have high expectations for overall service quality, with a significant proportion (43.3%) rating the service as outstanding and a mean score of 3.93, indicating general satisfaction among guests. This aligns with the other literature on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, thereby highlighting the critical role of perceived service quality in shaping overall customer experiences (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Notably, the likelihood of repeat visits and recommendations to others is high, with mean scores of 4.07 and 3.95, respectively. Half of the respondents (50%) indicated their likely revisitation to the hotel, and 45.3% expressed a willingness to recommend the hotel to friends. These findings are consistent with studies that emphasise the importance of customer loyalty and word-of-mouth referrals in the hospitality sector (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998). High customer retention and positive recommendations are often seen as key indicators of service quality and customer satisfaction, leading to sustained business growth. Safety and security are also paramount in guests' expectations, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.08, with 48% of respondents strongly agreeing that the hotel provides high attention to these aspects. The importance of safety and security in the hospitality industry cannot be overstated, as these factors significantly influence guests' perceptions of service quality and their overall satisfaction (Reichel & Haber, 2005).

However, the analysis also highlights areas where customer expectations are not fully met. For instance, the mean score for staff showing sincere interest in solving problems is 3.29, with nearly half of the respondents (49.3%) undecided. This suggests a potential gap in service delivery, where staff may not be perceived as fully attentive or proactive in addressing guest concerns. This finding aligns with existing literature that identifies responsiveness as a critical dimension of service quality, which can significantly impact customer satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Moreover, while staff courtesy received a relatively positive assessment (mean score of 3.61), the perception that the hotel has guests' interests at heart is less favourable, with a mean score of 3.42. This indicates that while the staff may be courteous, there may be a disconnect between guest expectations and the hotel's ability to demonstrate genuine concern for their needs. This aligns with research suggesting that the emotional aspects of service

interactions, such as empathy and assurance, are crucial for achieving high levels of customer satisfaction (Kandampully, 2000).

4.3.3 Interpretation and Analysis of Objective three: customers' expectations of service quality

| Items/Questions | SA | A | U | SD | D | Mean |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------|
| The Service attentiveness is high | 64 (42.7) | 23 (15.3) | 40 (26.7) | 14 (9.3) | 9 (9) | 3.79 |
| The hotel staff gives you individual attention | 56 (37.3) | 34 (22.7) | 31 (20.7) | 12 (98) | 17 (11.3) | 3.67 |
| The staff are always willing to help you | 32 (21.3) | 34 (22.7) | 48 (32) | 13 (8.7) | 23 (15.3) | 3.26 |
| Quick response to service failure | 52 (34.7%) | 47 (31.3%) | 28 (18.7%) | 12 (8%) | 11 (7.3%) | 3.67 |
| Professionalism in handling a complaint | 65 (43.3%) | 50 (33.3%) | 18 (12%) | 10 (6.7%) | 7 (4.7%) | 3.94 |
| Staff responsiveness to problem-solving | 59 (39.3%) | 48 (32%) | 22 (14.7%) | 11 (7.3%) | 10 (6.7%) | 3.78 |
| They offer prompt services and respond quickly | 41 (27.3) | 57 (38) | 28 (18.7) | 15 (10) | 9 (6) | 3.71 |
| Problem resolution in time | 48 (32%) | 46 (30.7%) | 28 (18.7%) | 16 (10.7%) | 12 (8%) | 3.60 |

Field Research (2024)

The analysis of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, underscores the significant impact that various dimensions of service have on guests' overall experiences. The data suggests that specific service quality factors, such as attentiveness, professionalism, and responsiveness, are closely linked to customer satisfaction.

The high mean scores across several items such as service attentiveness (3.79), professionalism in handling complaints (3.94), and staff responsiveness to problem-solving (3.78) indicate that guests generally perceive the quality of service in these hotels positively. For instance, the fact that 42.7% of respondents strongly agree that service attentiveness is high, coupled with 43.3% strongly agreeing on professionalism in handling complaints, highlights the importance of these attributes in shaping customer satisfaction. This is consistent with the SERVQUAL model, which identifies responsiveness, assurance, and empathy as key dimensions of service quality that significantly influence customer perceptions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Moreover, the willingness of staff to help, though positively rated, shows a lower mean score of 3.26, suggesting that there is room for improvement in this area. This aspect of service quality is crucial because it directly impacts the guests' perception of how much the hotel values their patronage and their overall experience. The literature supports this, noting that staff willingness to assist is a critical factor in achieving high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000).

Additionally, the analysis reveals that promptness in service delivery, including quick response to service failures (mean score of 3.67) and problem resolution (mean score of 3.60), plays a vital role in maintaining customer satisfaction. The fact that a significant percentage of respondents (34.7%) strongly agree that the hotel responds quickly to service failures underscores the importance of effective service recovery strategies. Research by Mattila (2001) indicates that prompt and effective resolution of service issues can mitigate negative customer experiences and enhance overall satisfaction, reinforcing the need for hotels to prioritize quick and efficient service responses.

The strong correlation between professionalism, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction in this analysis is further supported by empirical studies in hospitality

management. For instance, Choi and Chu (2001) found that these factors are among the most critical determinants of guest satisfaction in the hotel industry. Their research suggests that when hotel staff exhibit professionalism and are responsive to customer needs, it significantly enhances the guest experience, leading to higher satisfaction levels and an increased likelihood of repeat business.

4.4 Testing of Hypothesis

Three hypotheses were tested for this study using both regression analysis for objectives one and three and Chi-Square for objective one. The hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance; hence the null hypothesis was accepted if the P-value is lower than 0.05 but rejected if otherwise.

4.4.1 Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant influence between some identified factors (e.g., professionalism of employees, personal attention, behaviour of staff, timeliness of service, willingness to help, friendliness, and courtesy) on customers' satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 4. 5.1: Hypothesis 1 Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0.741 | 0.549 | 0.542 | 0.508 |

The Model Summary table shows that the R-value is 0.741, indicating a strong positive correlation between the independent variables (professionalism, personal attention, timeliness and responsiveness, courteous and friendly staff, hotel ambience and cleanliness) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). The R-Square value of 0.549 implies that these factors can explain approximately 54.9% of the variance in customer satisfaction. The adjusted R-Square, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model, is slightly lower at 0.542, suggesting that the model is not overfitted and remains robust.

Table 4. 6: Hypothesis 1 ANOVA Analysis

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Regression | 106.280 | 5 | 21.256 | 82.379 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 86.884 | 144 | 0.603 | | |
| Total | 193.164 | 149 | | | |

The ANOVA table assesses the overall significance of the regression model. The F-value of 82.379, coupled with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This implies that the combined effect of the independent variables on customer satisfaction is substantial, and the likelihood of these results occurring by chance is very low.

Table 4. 7: Hypothesis 1 Coefficients Table

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | 1.295 | 0.298 | | 4.346 |
| Professionalism | 0.378 | 0.091 | 0.369 | 4.154 |
| Personal attention | 0.305 | 0.093 | 0.297 | 3.280 |
| Timeliness and responsiveness | 0.325 | 0.086 | 0.314 | 3.779 |
| Courteous and friendly staff | 0.299 | 0.089 | 0.287 | 3.361 |
| Hotel ambiance and cleanliness | 0.412 | 0.084 | 0.398 | 4.905 |

The Coefficients table provides an insightful analysis of how various independent variables contribute to customer satisfaction in a three-star hotel in Lagos, Nigeria.

Among these variables, hotel ambience and cleanliness stand out with the highest coefficient of 0.412, underscoring the significant influence of the hotel's physical environment on customer satisfaction (t-value = 4.905, p-value = 0.000). Professionalism also emerges as a critical factor, with a coefficient of 0.378, demonstrating that a 1-unit increase in professionalism correlates with a 0.378-unit increase in customer satisfaction (t-value = 4.154, p-value = 0.000). Personal attention, with a coefficient of 0.305, highlights the importance of personalised service in enhancing guest satisfaction (t-value = 3.280, p-value = 0.001). Additionally, timeliness and responsiveness (coefficient = 0.325, t-value = 3.779, p-value = 0.000) and the courteousness and friendliness of staff (coefficient = 0.299, t-value = 3.361, p-value = 0.001) are identified as significant contributors to customer satisfaction, further illustrating the multifaceted nature of service quality in the hospitality sector.

4.4.2 Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between customers' expectations of service quality and their actual experiences in three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 4. 8: Hypothesis two chi-square analysis table

| Chi-Square Tests | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 35.482 | 8 | 0.000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 36.103 | 8 | 0.000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 12.324 | 1 | 0.001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Pearson chi-square test yielded a value of 35.482 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant association at the 0.05 level between customers' service quality expectations and the actual service quality experienced in three-star hotels in Lagos State. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no relationship between these variables, is rejected. Additionally, the likelihood ratio test corroborates this finding,

showing significance ($p = 0.000$). The linear-by-linear association ($p = 0.001$) further underscores a consistent relationship between rising service expectations and the corresponding service quality received.

4.4.3 Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 4. 9: Hypothesis Three Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0.769 | 0.592 | 0.585 | 0.496 |

The Model Summary table reveals an R-value of 0.769, indicating a very strong positive correlation between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The R-Square value of 0.592 means that approximately 59.2% of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by the service quality factors considered in the model. The adjusted R-Square of 0.585 suggests that the model is well-fitted and reliable.

Table 4. 10: Hypothesis Three ANOVA Analysis

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Regression | 116.835 | 5 | 23.367 | 95.147 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 80.475 | 144 | 0.559 | | |
| Total | 197.310 | 149 | | | |

The ANOVA table shows an F-value of 95.147, with a significance level of 0.000. This highly significant result implies that the service quality variables collectively have a substantial impact on customer satisfaction. The model is statistically significant, indicating that the observed relationships are not due to random chance.

Table 4. 11: Hypothesis Three Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | 1.143 | 0.287 | | 3.982 |
| Responsiveness to service failure | 0.382 | 0.083 | 0.374 | 4.602 |
| Professionalism in handling issues | 0.341 | 0.081 | 0.334 | 4.210 |
| Staff attentiveness | 0.297 | 0.088 | 0.291 | 3.375 |
| Timeliness of service | 0.334 | 0.085 | 0.327 | 3.929 |
| Problem resolution | 0.309 | 0.079 | 0.301 | 3.911 |

The Coefficients table provides valuable insights into the influence of various service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction within a three-star hotel in Lagos, Nigeria. Responsiveness to service failures emerges as a critical determinant, with a coefficient of 0.382, a t-value of 4.602, and a significant p-value of 0.000, underscoring the importance of effectively addressing service issues to enhance customer satisfaction. Similarly, professionalism in handling customer complaints, indicated by a coefficient of 0.341 and a t-value of 4.210, also plays a pivotal role. Staff attentiveness (coefficient of 0.297) and timeliness of service (coefficient of 0.334) are both significant factors, with p-values of 0.001 and 0.000, respectively, highlighting the necessity for timely and attentive service delivery. Additionally, the ability to resolve problems efficiently, reflected in a coefficient of 0.309 and a t-value of 3.911, is essential for maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consisted of a summary of major findings, answers to research questions, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The results of the questionnaire analysis provide a clear profile of the hotel's current customer base, offering significant insights into gender, age, nationality, and the purpose of the visit. By understanding these demographics, the hotel can tailor its services and marketing strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of its guests. Addressing the identified gaps and capitalising on the strengths revealed through this analysis can enhance service quality and customer satisfaction, ultimately driving growth and loyalty.

Critical Examination of Customer Satisfaction Factors

The study emphasizes the important role of certain aspects of service quality in shaping customer satisfaction at three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. Employee professionalism, hotel ambience, and cleanliness are key factors that contribute positively to guest experiences, as indicated by their high mean scores. This is consistent with the SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), which identifies tangibles, reliability, and assurance as critical dimensions of service quality. Specifically, the focus on the physical environment, including the hotel's decor and cleanliness, aligns with the 'tangibles' dimension, highlighting the significance of maintaining an aesthetically pleasing and hygienic environment, especially in a city like Lagos, where environmental conditions can vary widely. This attention to the physical setting serves as a visible indication of overall quality and management's commitment to detail, in line with the findings of Artuğer (2020) and Lee and Chuang (2022).

Moreover, the importance placed on employee professionalism reflects the significance of the 'assurance' dimension, which encompasses competence, courtesy, credibility, and security. In the hospitality industry, where trust and safety are paramount, guests'

satisfaction is heavily influenced by their perception of staff competence and professionalism. This finding is consistent with prior research by Keith (2014) and Oppong and Boasiako (2017), which identifies employee behaviour as a key determinant of customer satisfaction in service-intensive sectors like hospitality. Furthermore, the correlation between staff professionalism and customer satisfaction is reinforced by Baquero (2022), who highlights the critical role of employee behaviour in shaping guest experiences.

However, the study also reveals areas for improvement, particularly in the timeliness of service, staff willingness to help, and friendliness, which received relatively lower mean scores. The regression analysis supports these observations, highlighting the importance of these factors in influencing customer satisfaction. The strong R-value (0.741) and the R-Square value of 0.549 indicate a substantial influence of these service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction. Notably, hotel ambience and cleanliness emerge as key predictors, with a coefficient of 0.412, while staff professionalism, with a coefficient of 0.378, also plays a critical role in guest satisfaction (Anwar, 2017; Awang Razli et al., 2021; Kapera, 2015). These findings suggest that while tangible aspects of service quality are well-managed, improvements in responsiveness and personal interaction are necessary to enhance overall guest satisfaction, as emphasised by Prabowo et al. (2020) and Lin et al. (2024).

Customers' Expectations of Service Quality

The findings from the analysis of customer expectations regarding service quality in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, reveal significant insights into the dynamics between customer expectations and service delivery. These insights are crucial for understanding the factors contributing to customer satisfaction and loyalty within the hospitality sector. The results indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents rated overall service quality highly, with mean scores reflecting general satisfaction. This suggests that, to some extent, these hotels have successfully aligned their service delivery with customer expectations, particularly in aspects like reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, which are key dimensions of service quality as identified in the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988; Forozia et al., 2013).

Moreover, the analysis underscores the importance of safety and security, with high scores in these areas reinforcing their significance as fundamental to guest satisfaction. The literature supports the notion that these factors are critical components of service quality, directly impacting customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ukpabi et al., 2018; Bartolome, 2023). The emphasis on a secure environment aligns with industry best practices, where safety is increasingly viewed as a non-negotiable aspect of hospitality management (Li et al., 2020).

However, the analysis also highlights areas where customer expectations are not fully met, particularly in the dimensions of staff responsiveness and perceived genuine concern for guest needs. The relatively lower scores in these areas point to a gap in service delivery, which is crucial as responsiveness is a key determinant of customer satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988). The findings suggest that while staff may demonstrate courtesy, there may be a perceived lack of genuine concern, indicating a more transactional rather than relationship-oriented service interaction. This distinction is critical, as emotional connections between customers and service providers are essential for fostering loyalty and satisfaction (Fernando, 2019).

Furthermore, the chi-square analysis reveals a significant association between customer expectations and actual service quality, underscoring the importance of meeting or exceeding these expectations to ensure customer satisfaction. This aligns with the expectancy-disconfirmation theory, which posits that customer satisfaction is a function of the congruence between expectations and perceived performance (Oliver, 1980). In summary, while three-star hotels in Lagos perform well in certain aspects of service quality, there are critical areas, particularly regarding responsiveness and genuine concern, that require attention to enhance overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction effect on service delivery and service recovery

The findings from the analysis of service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, offer valuable insights into the critical dimensions influencing guests' overall experiences. A notable observation is the high mean scores across various service quality dimensions, such as attentiveness (3.79), professionalism (3.94), and responsiveness (3.78). These findings align with the SERVQUAL model, which

posits that dimensions like responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are vital determinants of perceived service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). This correlation suggests that when hotel staff exhibit these qualities, it significantly enhances customer satisfaction, thereby encouraging repeat business.

Empirical studies reinforce the importance of these dimensions. For instance, Long et al. (2013) and Myrden and Kelloway (2015) argue that staff professionalism and responsiveness are crucial for achieving customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty. The positive evaluations of service attentiveness and professionalism within the Lagos hotel context underscore their importance in delivering a satisfactory guest experience. However, the analysis also highlights areas for improvement, particularly in staff willingness to assist, with a mean score of 3.26. Although this score is positive, it suggests there is room for enhancement. The literature supports the critical nature of this service dimension, with studies such as those by Zylfijaj and Pira (2017) and Gupta and Sahu (2021) emphasizing that proactive assistance from staff can significantly impact customer satisfaction.

Promptness in service delivery, particularly in responding to service failures and resolving problems, also emerged as a crucial factor. The mean scores of 3.67 and 3.60 for quick response to service failures and problem resolution, respectively, indicate the importance of effective service recovery strategies. This finding is further substantiated by the work of Maemunah et al. (2023), who note that prompt and effective service recovery can mitigate the negative effects of service failures, thereby enhancing overall customer satisfaction. Thus, hotels in Lagos must prioritise the development of robust service recovery protocols to address complaints swiftly and effectively. The regression analysis further reinforces the significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The strong positive correlation (R-value of 0.769) and the R-Square value of 0.592 suggest that service quality dimensions account for approximately 59.2% of the variance in customer satisfaction. The statistical significance of this model is confirmed by the ANOVA results (F-value of 95.147, p-value of 0.000), underscoring the critical role of service quality in the hospitality sector.

Specific service quality dimensions, such as responsiveness to service failures and professionalism in handling issues, were identified as key determinants of customer

satisfaction. Responsiveness had a coefficient of 0.382, while professionalism had a coefficient of 0.341, highlighting their importance in shaping the guest experience. This is consistent with the findings of Rijal et al. (2022) and Hoffman and Bateson (2016), who assert that effective service recovery and professional conduct in handling complaints significantly enhance customer satisfaction. Furthermore, staff attentiveness and timeliness of service, with coefficients of 0.297 and 0.334, respectively, were also significant contributors to customer satisfaction, as noted by Ladhari (2009).

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of the study summarize the important insights gained from examining service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. The study's results emphasize the significance of various aspects of service quality, including hotel ambience, cleanliness, employee professionalism, and responsiveness, as crucial factors that greatly influence guest experiences and satisfaction. These factors not only contribute to customer satisfaction but also impact loyalty and the likelihood of repeat visits, which are essential for the long-term success of hotels in a competitive market. The study underscores the importance of effective service recovery procedures. Research has shown that promptly addressing service failures and handling complaints professionally significantly improves customer satisfaction. These aspects are vital for building trust and loyalty among guests, which are crucial in the hospitality industry. The regression analysis confirms that these service quality factors are strong indicators of customer satisfaction and significantly contribute to the observed variations in satisfaction levels among hotel guests.

Based on these findings, it is evident that hotels in Lagos need to concentrate on maintaining high standards in their areas of strength while also addressing the identified service quality gaps. This two-pronged approach will not only improve customer satisfaction but also enhance the competitive positioning of these hotels in the market. Additionally, the insights from this study have practical implications for hotel management, particularly in the areas of staff training, service delivery, and customer relationship management. By implementing targeted strategies to enhance responsiveness and service recovery, these hotels can better cater to the changing needs of their guests, thereby fostering greater loyalty and driving growth in the highly

competitive hospitality industry in Lagos. Although the hotels generally received positive feedback regarding their service quality, the findings also indicate specific areas that require improvement, particularly in terms of responsiveness and staff willingness to assist. The lower scores in these areas reveal potential gaps that, if not addressed, could negatively impact overall customer satisfaction. This suggests that while the hotels have excelled in many areas, there is still an opportunity to improve service delivery to better meet customer expectations, especially in terms of interpersonal service.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction in three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria:

1. **Enhancing Staff Training and Development:** One of the key areas identified for improvement is staff responsiveness and professionalism. Hotels should invest in regular training programs for their employees, focusing on customer service skills, effective communication, and problem-solving abilities. Training should be continuous, with regular updates to ensure that staff are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs and expectations of guests.
2. **Improving Service Recovery Mechanisms:** The study highlights the significant impact of service recovery on customer satisfaction. Hotels should develop and implement robust service recovery protocols that allow for quick and effective resolution of customer complaints. This could involve empowering frontline staff to make decisions that address customer issues promptly and satisfactorily.
3. **Maintaining High Standards of Cleanliness and Ambience:** The cleanliness of hotel facilities and the overall ambience significantly contribute to customer satisfaction. Hotels should prioritize maintaining high standards in these areas, with regular inspections and updates to ensure that facilities are clean, well-maintained, and aesthetically pleasing.
4. **Leveraging Technology for Enhanced Service Delivery:** The integration of technology in service delivery can enhance efficiency and customer satisfaction. Hotels should consider adopting digital tools and platforms that streamline

operations, such as online check-in/check-out systems, mobile apps for service requests, and automated feedback collection systems. These tools can also provide valuable data for continuous improvement.

5. **Fostering a Customer-Centric Culture:** Hotels should strive to cultivate a culture that places the customer at the center of all operations. This involves not only training staff to prioritize customer satisfaction but also encouraging management to make decisions that enhance the guest experience. Regular feedback collection and analysis can help ensure that customer needs are consistently met.
6. **Adapting Service Offerings to Local Preferences:** While maintaining international standards is important, hotels should also tailor their service offerings to reflect local culture and preferences. This could involve incorporating local cuisine into menus, offering services that cater to the specific needs of Nigerian guests, or incorporating local art and design into the hotel's decor.
7. **Developing Marketing Strategies Focused on Service Quality:** Given the strong link between service quality and customer satisfaction, hotels should develop marketing strategies that highlight their commitment to providing exceptional service. This could include customer testimonials, awards or certifications for service excellence, and promotional campaigns that emphasize the hotel's dedication to guest satisfaction.
8. **Continuous Monitoring and Improvement:** Finally, it is essential for hotels to adopt a mindset of continuous improvement. Regular assessments of service quality, through customer feedback, mystery shopping, and performance metrics, can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that service standards are consistently upheld.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes a significant contribution to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in the fields of hospitality management and customer satisfaction. The research advances the existing body of knowledge by providing a detailed analysis

of the factors influencing customer satisfaction in the context of three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. While many studies have explored service quality and customer satisfaction globally, few have focused specifically on the unique dynamics within the Nigerian hospitality industry, particularly in the context of three-star hotels. This research fills that gap by offering empirical evidence on how various dimensions of service quality, such as hotel ambience, cleanliness, employee professionalism, and responsiveness, impact customer satisfaction in this specific setting.

The study shows that established service quality models like SERVQUAL are relevant in the Nigerian context. It also emphasizes the need to adapt these models to fit the cultural and regional differences. For example, the study indicates that while traditional service quality factors are still important, aspects like responsiveness and staff professionalism are particularly significant in Nigeria. This implies that existing theoretical models may need adjustments to reflect the specific expectations and experiences of customers in different cultural settings. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of service recovery mechanisms. It suggests that including this dimension in service quality models could improve their ability to predict customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

The study provides valuable insights for hotel managers and policymakers in Lagos and beyond. It identifies key drivers of customer satisfaction and offers a clear roadmap for enhancing service quality in three-star hotels. The findings highlight the importance of focusing on both tangible and intangible aspects of service delivery, such as maintaining a clean and inviting environment, ensuring professional and responsive staff interactions, and implementing effective service recovery strategies. These insights are particularly valuable for hotel managers looking to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty in a highly competitive market. Additionally, the study's recommendations are actionable, providing practical steps that hotels can take to better meet customer expectations.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The study has provided valuable insights, but it has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, it focused only on three-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria, which means that the findings may not be applicable to other regions or hotel categories. The

socio-economic, cultural, and market conditions in Lagos may differ significantly from those in other parts of Nigeria or other countries. Therefore, while the findings offer valuable insights into customer satisfaction in this specific context, they may not fully represent the dynamics in different settings. Additionally, the study heavily relied on self-reported data from questionnaires, which could introduce biases such as social desirability or inaccuracies in respondents' recollections. These factors may have affected the validity of the results, particularly in capturing the full range of customer experiences and satisfaction levels.

The study has a limitation in that it is a snapshot of customer satisfaction at a specific point in time, without considering changes over time. Customer expectations and perceptions of service quality may change due to factors such as technological advancements, economic fluctuations, or shifts in social norms. As a result, the findings may not entirely reflect long-term trends or the potential impact of emerging developments in the hospitality industry. To address these limitations, future research could broaden the study's scope to include hotels of different categories and locations, both within Nigeria and internationally. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to assess changes in customer satisfaction over time and to identify emerging trends. Additionally, future research could use a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of customer experiences and confirm the quantitative findings. By addressing these limitations, future studies can build on the findings of this research and further contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

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APPENDIX I: Showing Approved Checklist Ethics Checklist



Research Ethics Checklist

| About Your Checklist | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ethics ID | 59151 |
| Date Created | 24/06/2024 17:35:19 |
| Status | Approved |
| Date Approved | 25/06/2024 11:12:12 |
| Risk | High |

| Researcher Details | |
|--------------------|--|
| Name | Zainab Bukola Ogundele |
| Faculty | BU Business School |
| Status | Postgraduate Taught (Masters, MA, MSc, MBA, LLM) |
| Course | MSc Tourism Management |

| Project Details | |
|-----------------|---|
| Title | hospitality management in nigeria improving service quality and growth satisfaction within three stars hotel in lagos nigeria |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Start Date of Project | 22/03/2024 |
| End Date of Project | 30/08/2024 |
| Proposed Start Date of Data Collection | 17/06/2024 |
| Original Supervisor | Charalampos Giousmpasoglou |
| Approver | Ethics Programme Team |
| Summary - no more than 600 words (including detail on background methodology, sample, outcomes, etc.) | |
| <p>The research study aimed at assessing the influence of service delivery on customer satisfaction in three star hotel in Lagos State Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to assess customer expectations of quality service in 3 star hotel, to determine factors influencing customer satisfaction in 3 star hotel, to investigate the relationship between service delivery and customer satisfaction in 3 star hotel and finally give recommendation on managerialmanagement practices. This study will be significant to the organization management of three star hotels and other researchers.</p> <p>The study used descriptive and inferential research design for it describes the population the way it was. The researcher considered stratified random sampling method because the population was heterogonous. Data was collected through questionnaires and was analyze quantitatively and later presented using graphs, pie charts and table diagrams respectively depending on the techniques.</p> <p>Service failure recovery has not been given adequate attention in the hotels, hotel workers are not adequately trained and empowered to handle service recovery. These suggest that majority of the hotels are not cognizance of the realities and implications of not resolving customers complaints as quickly as they occur. Service delivery failures can put restaurants out of business, if attention is not</p> | |

paid to the problem.

A researcher is required to address ethical concerns (appendix 1) that are crucial and pertinent to the topic (Costley et al. 2010). Doorly et al. (2017) stated that it is important for researchers to think about ways to protect the participants' anonymity and privacy during data

collection. In this research, all participants were given participant information and agreement form to read and fill if they are willing to participate which is in appendix 5 and 6. All participants were briefed before given the questionnaire, and they were informed of their right to leave at any point in time.

Filter Question: Is your study solely literature based?

| Additional Details | |
|--|----|
| Will you have access to personal data that allows you to identify individuals which is not already in the public domain? | No |
| Will you have access to confidential corporate or company data (that is not covered by confidentiality terms within an agreement or separate confidentiality agreement)? | No |

Storage, Access and Disposal of Research Data

Where will your research data be stored and who will have access during and after the study

| | |
|---|----|
| has finished. | |
| on my personal computer | |
| Once your project completes, will your dataset be added to an appropriate research data repository such as BORDaR, BU's Data Repository? | No |
| Please explain why you do not intend to deposit your research data on BORDaR? E.g. do you intend to deposit your research data in another data repository (discipline or funder specific)? If so, please provide details. | |
| for sake of confidentiality | |

Filter Question: Will your research study take place outside the UK and/or specifically target a country outside the UK?

| Additional Details | |
|--|-----|
| List the European and/or Overseas country where the research will take place | |
| Nigeria | |
| Are you currently a resident of the country named above? | No |
| Do you intend to remain in/visit the country named above to undertake the research? | No |
| Do you intend to remain in the UK but recruit participants from the country named above? | Yes |
| By participating in this research, are there any potential risks to | No |

| | |
|---|----|
| participants? | |
| Does the country in which you are conducting research require that you obtain internal ethical approval (other than BU ethical approval)? | No |

| Final Review | |
|--|----|
| Are there any other ethical considerations relating to your project which have not been covered above? | No |

| Risk Assessment | |
|---|-----|
| Have you undertaken an appropriate Risk Assessment? | Yes |

| Attached documents |
|--|
| my questionnaire.pdf - attached on 24/06/2024 17:56:38 |

APPENDIX II: CUSTOMERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

RE: COLLECTION OF DATA

I am a MSC student in the Department of Tourism Management and Management University. As part of the requirement for the award of the degree, I am expected to undertake a research study on **THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN SELECTED THREE STAR HOTELS LAGOS NIGERIA**. I am therefore, seeking your assistance to fill the questionnaires attached. The attached questionnaire will take about ten minutes to complete. Kindly answer all the questions. The research results will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Only summary results will be made public. No one, except the institution will have access to these records.

Should you require the summary, kindly indicate so at the end of the questionnaire. A self-addressed envelope is provided for your reply. Your co-operation will be appreciated. Your response shall be accorded all the confidentiality it deserves and will only be used for academic purposes.

Yours sincerely,

Zainab Bukola Ogundele

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent, please provide answers to the following questions by ticking (✓) against the most suitable alternative or giving narrative responses in the spaces provided. **SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Gender

Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Age Bracket

Below 19 years ☐

20 – 29 years ☐

30 – 39 years ☐

Above 40 years ☐

3. Nationality

Kenyan ☐

Rest of Africa ☐

Europe ☐

Asia ☐

4. Purpose of visit

Business ☐

conference ☐

Leisure ☐

Transit ☐

5. How would you rate the services provided?

Excellent ☐

Very good ☐

Good ☐

Poor ☐

SECTION B: factors influencing customer satisfaction

This part concerns how you feel about aspects of service delivery, quality, encounters and perceived service levels at the hotel. Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box to show the extent to which you believe the hotel has features described by the statement. A “1” means you strongly disagree while a “5” means that you strongly agree.

| Dimension of service delivery | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Normal | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|--------|-------|----------------|
| 1. The employees are professional | | | | | |
| 2. They give personal attention | | | | | |
| 3. The Service attentiveness is high | | | | | |
| 4. Staff are well behaved | | | | | |
| 5. There is timeliness of service | | | | | |
| 6. Staff are always willing to help | | | | | |
| 7. Staff are friendly and courteous | | | | | |
| Dimension of perceived service | | | | | |
| 1. The hotel is ambient and clean | | | | | |
| 2. The appearance of employees is catching | | | | | |
| 3. The overall service is outstanding | | | | | |
| 4. You are likely to visit this hotel again | | | | | |
| 5. You would recommend the place to friends | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6. Improvement needed to the current service | | | | | |
| 7. High safety and security attention | | | | | |

| Dimension of service quality | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Normal | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|--------|-------|----------------|
| 1. Hotel physical appearance and cleanliness is well kept | | | | | |
| 2. The staff show sincere interest of solving a problem | | | | | |
| 3. They offer prompt services and respond quickly | | | | | |
| 4. The staff are constantly courteous with you | | | | | |
| 5. The hotel staff gives you individual attention | | | | | |
| 6. The staff are always willing to help you | | | | | |
| 7. The hotel has your interests at heart | | | | | |
| Dimension of service encounter | | | | | |
| 1. Quick response to service failure | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2. Professionalism in handling a complain | | | | | |
| 3. Staff responsiveness to problem solving | | | | | |
| 4. Management participation in service delivery failure. | | | | | |
| 5. The compensation given meets your needs | | | | | |
| 6. Problem resolution time | | | | | |
| 7. Safety and security | | | | | |

Thank you for the co-operation

Nationality of Respondents

The nationality distribution indicates that a majority of the respondents are from Africa, with 14% from Kenya and 42% from other African countries. Additionally, 20% of respondents are from Europe, and 24% are from Asia. This diverse nationality distribution highlights the hotel's appeal to an international clientele, particularly from other African countries, which may reflect regional travel patterns and the hotel's reputation within the continent.

The significant African presence among the guests could be attributed to regional proximity and possibly the presence of multinational corporations or regional offices in Lagos, which attract professionals from neighbouring countries (Okpolo, Asekomie, and Ogechi, 2017). The presence of European and Asian guests, who together make up 44% of the respondents, underscores Lagos' status as a global business hub, drawing international travellers for various purposes, including business, conferences, and leisure. This diversity in nationality is advantageous for the hotel, as it indicates a broad market reach. However, it also presents challenges in meeting the varied expectations

and cultural preferences of guests from different regions (Pizam and Sussmann, 1995). To effectively cater to this diverse clientele, the hotel should ensure that its services are culturally sensitive and inclusive.