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Full Length Research Paper

Service quality dimensions as correlates of customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Ibadan

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ABSTRACT: Customer satisfaction is a critical success factor in the service provider sector. Focusing on and satisfying the needs of customers are very important for the survival and continued existence of service firms, especially hotel services. The purpose of this study is to examine the service quality dimensions as correlates of customer satisfaction of selected hotels in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Data generated from 539 customers in 59 hotels in Ibadan were analyzed using correlation and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that service quality dimensions have a positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction. The study concludes that tangible, reliable; responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are good predictors of customer satisfaction of hotel service in Ibadan. Managers are therefore encouraged to give more attention to the service quality dimensions as major influencers of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, hotel service, service quality, customer expectation

INTRODUCTION

The essence of every marketing activity is to attract, satisfy and retain customers. This can only be achieved with excellent customer service quality. Quality has attracted the attention of practitioners and academicians over the years most especially in the manufacturing sector. Since the 1980s, however, the importance of quality for business performance in the service sector has also been widely recognized in literature, because of its impacts on business performance. Service Quality is crucial in any business as it helps to create a bond between the business and its clients (Blem, 2015). It has been established that a high quality of service provides benefits which include, improved corporate image, enhanced customer satisfaction, cross-selling opportunities, decreased customer defection, increased chances of word-of-mouth recommendation, and maintenance of positive long-term customer relationships (Osayawe, 2016). This is because customers derive their perceptions of service quality on the levels of satisfaction they enjoy with a particular business. Businesses need to be able to satisfy customers and meet their expectations of service quality to gain a competitive advantage.

Customer Satisfaction is an essential marketing philosophy that is imbibed across diverse sectors of the manufacturing and service industries. It is a measure of how products or services offered by a company meet or exceed customer expectations. Research in customer satisfaction studies is fast is becoming more popular in service marketing in recent years as a means of boosting business performance and leveraging competitive advantages (Choi and Chou, 2011). Both business managers and owners alike in the hotel industry constantly train their staff on the key attributes of their company's services with a view to the satisfying customer. Staff orientation in this direction is important, owing to the growing demands for hotel services and constant requests by customers for higher standards. Hotel is an important sector of the hospitality industry. It is a commercial enterprise that focuses on the provision of sleeping accommodation, and if so required entertainment, food, and drink. Hotels receive a different kind of guest who appear able and willing to pay a reasonable sum for the facilities or services rendered and who is in a fit state to be received. To be successful in the hotel business, managers need to improve on their service quality to the customer. Service quality is seen as a competitive strategy and means of differentiating between objectively similar alternatives in the

marketplace (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2013). It is a way of making success among competing brands particularly in businesses that offer nearly identical services where establishing quality standards may be the only way of differentiation.

Such differentiation can yield a higher proportion of customer choice and can be the difference between business success and failure (Bennett and Higgins, 1993). However, in today's competitive business environment service quality is very important to attract and retain customers. The level of service quality is determined by how satisfied customers are with important service elements.

The overall judgment or opinion of customers or recipients of services about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services rendered are referred to as service quality. To avoid customer dissatisfaction, marketers must constantly assess customers' expectations of service quality (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2013)

In Nigeria, little emphasis is placed on providing quality service and satisfaction to customers; as a result, some hotels take customers for granted and provide inefficient services. Customers are dissatisfied as a result of the unsatisfactory services provided. This has impacted negatively the growth and development of the hotel business in Nigeria when compared to other developing countries. Furthermore, the hospitality industry in Nigeria and other parts of the world is faced with the challenge of giving tangible evidence of quality service. As such, service providers are using atmosphere, automation and employee empowerment, and differential pricing to create memorable experiences, thus giving customers something to hold onto and equally look forward to (West et al. 2011).

The business of a hotel unlike any other business needs a lot of individualized attention to their numerous guests. However, the management of some hotels has not been putting much attention to this very important aspect of the business which can be a game-changer for the development of the business. Parasuraman et al. (2015) stress that service quality measures how well the delivered service matches customer's expectations. Delivering service quality refers to meeting and satisfying customer's expectations consistently and positively. The business of a hotel is unique in the sense that customers will always need the attention of the service provider throughout their stay in the Therefore, showing empathy to the various needs of the guest stands to put the provider at a competitive edge. The study examines the service quality dimension as correlates of customer satisfaction in selected Hotels in Ibadan. Understanding the extent to which customer satisfaction is been impacted by service quality provided by the hotel, will help the management of hotel facilities and other allied hospitality service providers in knowing the expectation of customers and ensuring that they meet up this level of expectation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual review of service quality

This is seen as an assessment of how well a delivered service conforms to the client's expectations. Service business operators often assess the service quality provided to their customers to improve their service, to quickly identify problems, and to better assess client satisfaction. Service quality is a key requirement in every field. In terms of Industrial growth, quality characteristics fulfill requirements. In the most generalized way, Quality can be defined as "the inclusion of all specified features and characteristics, as defined for product or service and its ability to satisfy the given needs. The basic concept remains the same i.e. Meeting the needs of the customer. Customers are interested in using the different services offered to them by service providers to optimize their satisfaction. However, delivered service can only become quality service if it meets the customer's expectations. The expectation of the customer depends upon the customer's perception of service quality, which may differ from person to person. Service quality is seen as a competitive strategy and means of differentiating between objectively similar alternatives in the marketplace (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2013). Parasuraman et al. (2018), define service quality as an attitude or global judgment about overall excellence or superiority of service with a comparison of expectation and performance as measuring tools. Service quality from the customer's perspective is defined as, Service Quality = Perception – Expectation (Parasuraman et al., 2018). Service quality is nothing but the difference between the service expectation and service received by the customer.

The customer has certain expectations about the service. If the customer experiences the same service as they expect then, this difference will be zero and we can say that the service quality is very good. Cronin and Taylor (2014), play an important role and so should be understood and defined properly. Edward (1982) and suited to the market. Philips (2019) views quality as conformance to requirements. Johnson (2017) views quality as the degree to which a set of inherent define service quality as the strategic inclusion of elements into services offered by a company to win the minds of a consumer in the marketplace. Customer perception is influenced by various factors, which may result in a change in service quality as well, the factors include age, gender, occupation, global competition & technological changes. The perception of the younger generation of service quality could be different from the older one. Similarly, a working corporate professional perception could be different from a business person or a housemaid. That is why the perception should be taken into consideration by service providers to meet the customer requirements.

In studying service quality, several measurement frameworks were established such as technique and functional quality model (Gronroos, 1984), SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988), synthesized model of service quality. Weit and Wessley, (2002) declare, "Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations", he argued further that service quality results from customer expectations of what should the service provider offer, how the provider performs to meet those expectations. Thus delivering quality service means ensuring consistency in service delivery performances on daily basis (Weitz and Wessley, 2002). According to Kotler (2007), service quality is very important to attract and retain customers, derive the perceptions of service quality on the levels of satisfaction they experience with the particular business. Businesses need to be able to satisfy customers and meet their expectations of service quality to gain a competitive advantage (Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994).

Assessing customer expectations and perceptions of service quality requires an understanding of customers' relationship with the service provider. Thus Zeithml and Bitner (2009) observe "a sound measure of service quality is necessary for identifying the aspects of service needing performance improvement, assessing how much improvement is needed on each aspect, and evaluating the impact of improvement on efforts". East (1997) argues that SERVQUAL measures service quality through customers' expectations i.e what firms should provide in the industry being studied, and their perceptions of how a given service provider performs against these criteria. Numerous researches had been carried out in the hospitality industry using SERVQUAL model. Due to the intangible nature of services SERVQUAL model was developed to measure customers' evaluations of service quality (Zeithaml and Bitner 2019).

This SERVQUAL scale is designed in a form of a survey containing 22 service attributes, grouped into the five service quality dimensions (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2019. The service quality dimensions used in the SERVQUAL model are: Tangibles, which refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, written materials and the appearance of the physical surroundings; Reliability, which is the ability to perform the promised service both dependably and accurately; Responsiveness, actually is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; Assurance, refers to employees knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence and finally on the SERVQUAL scale is Empathy, which refers to caring, individualized attention given to customers by the company (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2013). It also includes features such as approachability, sensitivity, and effort to understand the customer's needs. Customers' rate statements on service attributes in terms of their expectations and perceptions (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2009). The level of service quality is determined by subtracting the average score obtained from the expectations section from that obtained from the perceptions section (Weitz and Wessley, 2002). The calculated difference between the expectations and perception ratings constitutes a quantified measure of service quality (Weitz and Wessley, 2002). The SERVQUAL scale has been used by many organizations, with adaptations to suit the research content.

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a marketing philosophy used in all sectors of both manufacturing and service industries to measure how products or services supplied by a company or an enterprise meet or exceed customer's expectations. Recent research effort shows that customer satisfaction studies are fast becoming more popular in service marketing as a strategy or means of boosting business performance and leveraging competitive advantages (Choi and Chou, 2011). In other words, research in the customer satisfaction area is increasingly becoming more frequent. An extensive review of the literature reveals that customer satisfaction popularity is inherent in its potency in providing business owners and managers with a metric that they can use to manage or improve their businesses. Despite the fact that there are various perspectives on the meaning and concept of customer satisfaction. Parasuraman et al. (1988), define customer satisfaction as the outcome of service quality. Crompton and MacKay (1989) see customer satisfaction as a psychological outcome emerging from customer's experience. Oliver (1997) considers satisfaction as "an evaluative, affective or emotional response". Based on existing theoretical facts and empirical evidence, Oliver (1997) defines satisfaction and dissatisfaction as "the customer's fulfillment response: the degree to which the level of fulfillment is pleasant or unpleasant". In this context, he asserts that satisfaction is determined by disconfirmation; and defines disconfirmation as the difference between customer's expectations of the performance of service. He concludes that if performance is less than what the customer expects, service quality is perceived to be low resulting in a negative disconfirmation or dissatisfaction. On the contrary, if performance meets expectations, service quality is perceived to be high resulting in a positive disconfirmation/satisfaction (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). McDougall and Levesque (2000) view satisfaction as the overall judgment of a service provider. Zeithaml and Bitner (2013) define customer satisfaction as the evaluation of a product service in terms of whether it has met a need or want. The authors further argue that satisfaction occurrence is influenced by perceptions of service quality, prices, situational factors, and personal

variables (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2013). Satisfaction is a psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the customer's prior feelings about the consumption experience (Hansen and Sand, 2018; Liu and Tsai, 2010; Mehra and Ranganathan, 2018). Satisfaction is related to the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations. Kotler and Lane (2009) argue that the identification of the determinants of customer satisfaction is a key concern for service management. Customer satisfaction is related to product quality, in that, incidents of satisfaction (Liu and Tsai, 2010).

The hotel industry

The hotel industry is one of the most important sectors in the tourism and hospitality industry. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) explains that the global number of hotel rooms has grown from 14 million to 17 million between1997 to 2005 and it is expected to increase astronomically by the end of 2020. The growth in the hotel industry has been identified as one of the major facilitators in the development of the Tourism and hospitality industry as a whole. No wonder the governments of some countries give incentives to hotel developers and owners to further enhance their country's tourism sector.

Looking at the various types of accommodation available to the tourist, the hotel is the biggest and most visible sub-sector. It is usually viewed traditionally as an establishment that provides accommodation, food, and beverage services on a pay basis to guests who are only for a short stay. However, the modern perception of a hotel is more complex than this because not all of the hotels provide services such as food and beverages, at the same time, some hotels even offer additional services such as conference rooms to their guests (Cooper et al., 2008). Because of differences in perception of the concept of the hotel, the definitions of the European Union on the concept of the hotel are used. A hotel, according to the Commission (Eurostat 2013), is a unit that provides stays for visitors on a daily or weekly basis, primarily for short stays. Services provided by such units include daily cleaning and bed-making as well as offering food and beverages, parking, laundry services, recreational services to the guests. It is also good to state here that some of the hotels offer amenities such as conference and convention facilities (European commission 2014.) The hotel provides a home away from home to millions of travelers and tourists.

The purpose of their visit is different, so is their need and expectation of services rendered by the hotel. Hotels can be classified based on the room charges, facilities available, lent of stay of guests, location of the hotel, ownership, and management, and many more. Some of the most famous classifications are residential hotels, transit hotels, resort hotels, heritage hotels, and commercial hotels.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on two theories: Theory of Expectations-Confirmation/Disconfirmation of Customer Satisfaction and Comparison Level Theory of Customer Satisfaction. These theories form the theoretical foundation on which service quality and customer satisfactions are based.

Expectation-confirmation theory of customers' satisfaction

Expectation-confirmation theory (ECT) is a cognitive theory that seeks to explain post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction as a function of expectations, perceived performance, and disconfirmation of beliefs. The structure of the theory was developed in a series of two papers written by Oliver (1997; 1980). Expectation confirmation theory involves four primary constructs: expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation of beliefs, and post-purchase or adoption satisfaction.

(i) Expectation: this refers to the attributes or characteristics that a person anticipates or predicts will be associated with an entity such as a product or service. Expectations are posited to directly influence both perceptions of performance and disconfirmation of beliefs and are posited to indirectly influence post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction by way of a meditational relationship through the disconfirmation construct. Pre-purchase or pre-adoption expectations form the basis of comparison against which product, service, or technology artifact are ultimately judged.

(ii) Perceived performance: refers to a person's perceptions of the actual performance of a product or service. According to expectation confirmation theory, perceptions of performance are directly influenced by pre-purchase or pre-adoption expectations, and in turn directly disconfirmation of beliefs and post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction. Perceived performance is also posited to indirectly influence post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction by way of a meditational relationship through the disconfirmation construct.

(iii) Disconfirmation of beliefs: is about the judgments or evaluations that a person makes concerning a product, service, or technology artifact. These evaluations or judgments are made in comparison to the person's original expectations. When a product, service, or technology artifact outperforms the person's original expectations, the disconfirmation is positive, which is posited to increase post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction. When a product or service underperforms

the person's original expectations, the disconfirmation is negative, which is posited to decrease post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction (that is, to increase dissatisfaction).

(iv) Post-purchase or post-adoption satisfaction refers to the extent to which a person is pleased or contented with a product or service after having gained direct experience with the product, service, or technology artifact.

Expectation confirmation theory posits that satisfaction is directly influenced by disconfirmation of beliefs and perceived performance, and is indirectly influenced by both expectations and perceived performance employing a meditational relationship that passes through the disconfirmation constructs (Figure 1).

Several authors criticized the Expectancy-Confirmation/Disconfirmation theory of customer satisfaction. La Tour and Peat (1979) argue that the EDP ignores other sources of expectations, such as the customers' experience and other customers' experiences with similar constructs. In contrast to the Expectancy-Disconfirmation paradigm which uses predictive or situationally produced expectations as the comparison standard, the Comparison Level Theory argues that there is more than one basic determinant of comparison level for a product. Others are:

(i) Customers prior experiences with similar products.

(ii) Situationally produced expectations (those created through advertising and promotional efforts).

(iii) The experience of other customers who serve as referent persons.

They found that situationally induced expectations had little effect on customer satisfaction, while expectations based on prior experiences were the major determinant of customer satisfaction.

This finding suggests that customers may give less weight to manufacturer-provided information when they have personal experience and relevant information about other customers' experiences (Yi, 1990). Unlike the Expectancy-confirmation paradigm, the Comparison Level Theory suggests that customers might bring several different comparison standards into the consumption experience. Customers might be more likely to use predictive expectations based on external communication (advertisement) before the purchase (in their decision-making), while different standards (for example, experience and experiences of other customers suggested by La Tour and Peat's model) might become more likely after the purchase.

There is, however, inadequate information concerning what standards that customers bring into the consumption experience are being confirmed and disconfirmed.

Empirical review

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has attracted the attention of scholars on industries (Bolton, 2018; Caruana, 2002; Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003 and Khan et a., 2013), service quality has also been related to customer behavioural intentions (Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994; Choi et al., 2004). Customer satisfaction was also applied to the hospitality industry where numerous studies c examined the attributes that travelers may find important regarding consumer satisfaction. Hossain (2012) carried out a study on the impact of perceived service quality on the satisfaction of Tourists visiting Cox' s Bazar in Bangladesh. Five (5) quality dimensions of Service Quality were used i.e. tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. A sample size of three hundred and eighty-five (385) tourists' was collected. It was discovered in the study that the five (5) service quality dimensions had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. The strongest factor is empathy, followed by responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and tangible. Boonit and Rompho (2012) in their study of measuring service quality dimension and comparing between boutique and business hotels in Thailand. using service quality model with twenty-nine (29) indicators, on a five-point (5) Likert scale from "very low" to "very high" and a sample size of one hundred and eighty (108) respondents, discovered that the quality of service was moderately low, hotels were unable to deliver as promised while, customer expectation was high on boutique hotels when compared to business hotels. Juwaheer and Ross (2003), in their study, titled exploring the perception of international tourists about hotel service quality in Mauritius. Nine (9) service quality dimensions i.e. reliability, assurance, extra room amenities, staff communication and additional amenities sought, room attractiveness and décor, empathy, staff outlook and accuracy, food and service-related, hotel surroundings, and environmental factors. Thirty-nine (39) question items were used on a five (5) point-like scale from "very low expectation" to "very high expectation". A sample size of four hundred (400) international tourists was sampled. It was discovered in the study that room attractiveness and décor have the strongest impact on perceptions of hotel guest satisfaction; this was closely followed by staff outlook and accuracy, reliability, hotel surroundings, and environmental factors, food and service-related factors. A study was carried out by Srinivas and Padma (2013) in Bangalore in India. A total of 100 respondents were considered for the study which centered on the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. The result of customer expectation showed the assurance dimension was at the highest level, followed by empathy, responsiveness, tangibility, and reliability respectively. The study showed that customers expected the front office staff especially

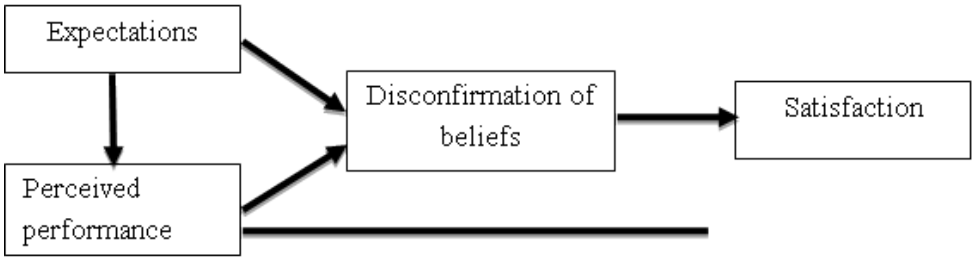

Figure 1: Expectation-Confirmation Theory.

Accountant to be trustworthy because they are responsible for the hotel expenses or collecting money from a hotel guest. In addition, Atkinson (1988) found out that cleanness, security, value for money, and courtesy of staff determine consumer satisfaction. Akpan, (1995) claims that the vital factors are the behavior of employees, cleanness, and timeliness while that conducted by Choi and Chu (2001) shows that staff quality, room quality, and value are the top three hotel factors that determine travelers satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a cross-sectional research design. The population of this study consists of the hotels registered in Ibadan with the hotels. This is a website that deals with hotels in Nigeria, their location, amenities offered, price, etc. According to https://hotels.ng/ , the total number of hotels in Ibadan is four hundred and thirty-two (432).but 2 and 3 stars hotels considered are two hundred and fifty-five (255.)The sample size of the hotels was determined using Yamane (1967) formula. It is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population of the study

e = Level of significance

$$= \frac{255}{1 + 255(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{255}{1 + 255(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{255}{1 + 255(0.0025)}$$

$n = 109.63 \cong 110$

Therefore, the total sample size of hotels for this study was one hundred and ten (110), which was randomly selected to have a proportional representation in the five (5) Local Government Areas of Ibadan inner city. Data generated through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involve frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation while the inferential statistics of correlation analysis and multiple regressions were used to conclude.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two hundred and fifty copies of the questionnaire were administered to fifty-nine (59) hotels. Out of the total 550 (100%) questionnaire distributed, 539 questionnaires were retrieved representing 97.45%. Hence, the result analysis in this study was based on the 539 copies of the questionnaire that were filled and returned. Out of 539 Hotel customers sampled in Ibadan for this study, three hundred and thirty-three representing 61.6% were male while their female counterparts were two hundred and seven (38.4%). This reflected that the majority of the customers that patronized hotels in Ibadan were male customers. The result also confirmed that majority of the hotel customers (n=174; 32.3%) were within the age bracket of 31 to 40. The result of occupation of the customers depicted that about 47.9% of the customers that use hotels in Ibadan were civil servants, followed by business men/women (n=101; 18.7%). Also, the education distribution of the customers revealed that majority (n=238; 44.2%) were B.Sc/HND holders, followed by one hundred and eighty (33.4%) were NCE/OND holders, sixty-two (11.5%) were second-degree holders, twenty-seven (5.0%) were school certificate holders and thirty-two (5.9%) possessed trade test education. Furthermore, the income status of the respondents ranged from #100,000 to #200,000 above and majority (n=175; 32.5%) of the customers earned below #100,000 per month. Finally, the result revealed that about 29.7% of the customers have been using the hotels from three years ago. This implies that customers

sampled for this study had enough experience of the hotels and best suit to give relevant information relating to the service quality of the selected hotels in Ibadan. There is correlation coefficient between customer satisfaction and tangible (r=0.881, p<0.05). This indicates that the tangibility dimension of service quality provided by hotels in Ibadan relate positively with customer satisfaction. The implication of the result is that, if the physical facilities or materials associated with hotel services are appealing and staff is well dressed and attractive to customers, it will have positive impact on customer satisfaction in using hotels in Ibadan. (r=0.887; p<0.05); statistically, the null hypothesis two was therefore rejected, indicating that reliability dimension of service quality had positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction using hotels in Ibadan. The implication of this result is that, when hotel engaged in error free services and staff provide better service along with accurate information, the customer satisfaction will be positively influenced.The result further shows relationship between customer satisfaction and responsiveness (r=0.806; p<0.05), indicating that the responsiveness dimension of service quality provided by hotels in Ibadan relate positively with customer satisfaction. The implication of the result is that, if the staff give prompt service to the customer or assist the customers, it will have positive relationship on the customer satisfaction. Result also reveals that customer satisfaction and assurance are significant related (r=850; p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis four was rejected and accepted the alternates, indicating that the assurance dimension of service quality provided by hotels in Ibadan positively relate with customer satisfaction. The implication of the result is that, when staff have adequate knowledge of the service provided to the customers, communicating with them in appropriate forms, trustworthy and consistently courteous to the customers, the customer satisfaction will be positively influenced. Finally, customer satisfaction and empathy are also related (r=0.906; p<0.05), meaning that empathy dimension of service quality had positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction using hotels in Ibadan. The implication of this result is that, when customer expectations are met with the service provided, it will positively relate with the customer satisfaction. The result in (tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) on customer satisfaction of selected hotels in Ibadan. The results revealed that tangible (β = .272, P<.05), responsiveness (β = .187, P<.05), responsiveness (β = .212, P<.05), assurance (β = .236, P<.05) and empathy (β = .489, P<.05) had positive contribution on customer satisfaction of selected hotels in Ibadan. Furthermore, the results revealed the joint predictions of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction which was significant at 0.05 level of significance ($F_{(5,533)}$ = 766.869; R^2 = .878, Adj. R^2 = .877; P< .05). Statistically, adjusted R^2 value of 0.877 signifies that 87.7% of the variation in customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Ibadan was accounted for by the service quality dimensions. Therefore, tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy are good predictors of customer satisfaction. The study examined the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Ibadan. Each of the six research hypotheses was based on determining the relationship and joint contribution of service quality dimensions (tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) on customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Ibadan. The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

A correlational analysis was used to determine the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Finding on research hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction. This is corroborated with the study of Rao and CharanSahu (2013) who found that customer expectations are positively determined by the tangibility dimension. Another obvious fact observed in hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction. This finding is supported by Juwaheer and Ross (2003) who in their study examined nine (9) service quality dimension (such as reliability, assurance, extra room amenities, staff communication, and additional amenities sought, room attractiveness and décor, empathy, staff outlook and accuracy, food and service-related, hotel surroundings and environmental factors) and found that room attractiveness and décor have the strongest impact on perceptions of hotel guest satisfaction, this was closely followed by staff outlook and accuracy, reliability, hotel surroundings, and environmental factors, food and service-related factors. The findings of hypothesis three also deduced that there is a significant relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction. This is in agreement with the study of Hossain (2012) who in his study found that the five service quality dimensions have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and concluded the strongest factor is empathy, followed by responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and tangible. Furthermore, finding on research hypothesis four revealed that there is a significant relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction. This agrees with the study of Juwaheer and Ross (2003) and Hossain (2012). Finding on hypothesis five also revealed that there is a significant relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction. This is supported by the study of Rao and CharanSahu (2013) who found that customers expected the front office staff especially Accountant to be trustworthy because they are responsible for the hotel expenses or collecting money from a hotel guest. Finally, the finding of hypothesis six revealed that service quality dimensions (tangible, reliability, responsiveness,

assurance, and empathy) jointly predicted customer satisfaction.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study examines an explorative assessment of service quality dimensions as correlates of customer satisfaction in some selected hotels in Ibadan. The work started by conceptualizing service quality variables. Based on the findings above, the study concludes that service quality dimensions such as tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, are key determinants and predictors of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry in Ibadan. The study also concludes that service quality dimensions have great influences on customer's decision of the choice of hotel to stay or visit. Finally, adequate knowledge and implementation of well thought out service quality dimension will not only make the hotel to be more competitive; but also enhance its performance in terms of customer patronage and loyalty which could lead to higher profitability of the hotel enterprises. Based on the findings, this study recommends the following:

i. Hotel managers should ensure that their staff dresses properly when rendering services.
ii. Employees should always be prepared and willing to assist customers and stay polite in all their service performance.
iii. Hotels should engage technological outfit that makes the front office and other auxiliary unit 24hours open to meet customers need at any time of the day.
iv. The physical look of a hotel should be given adequate attention as the look speaks volumes of the perception of service to be expected by the customer.
v. The hotel needs to put up a customer feedback mechanism (possibly online), through which customers can express their views on the quality of services rendered by the hotel.
vi. Finally, hotel operators should ensure that they not making promises that will unnecessarily raise the expectations of the customers against the actual quality of service they are capable of providing.

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