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Determinants of customer satisfaction in a high-contact service environment: a study of selected hotels in Abakaliki metropolis, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the factors that lead to customer satisfaction, with a particular interest in the hospitality industry of Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. In a high-contact service industry such as hospitality, service providers and customers usually have an intimate and direct interaction for a considerable time duration and, as such, sales to and retention of customers is based on the richness or otherwise of such interactions. With this in mind, this study specifically seeks to find out if customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry (especially hotels) is determined by staff service quality, room quality, value and security. Hypotheses were formulated vis-à-vis a theoretical background and conceptual models. Survey data generated from 317 consumers of hotel services in Abakaliki were used as the research database. In analysing the data used for the study, the researchers made use of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis techniques. It was discovered that all the determinants of customer satisfaction under study have an effect on customer satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: attributes, hospitality industry, markets, staff service quality, value

Introduction

High-contact services such as hotel services "alter the customer as a person by offering what are often multifaceted experiences" (Ottenbacher et al., 2006, p. 348). High-contact service industries normally entail functions in which service staff and customers have an intimate and unswerving relation for a specified time duration (Chase, 1981). A high-contact service environment is characterised by longer communication time, familiarity of communication and richness of information exchange (Kellogg & Chase, 1995). The high-contact service industry is made up of the legal services, hospitals and consultancy (Goldstein, 2009), hospitality (Choi & Chu, 2001) and beauty services (Sachdev & Verma, 2004), among others. The hospitality and lodging industry in Africa is one of the major drivers of economic growth and social development (Okafor, 2021). In most emerging markets such as Nigeria, the hospitality industry is dominated by a vibrant private sector, hence the intensity of competition. In Nigeria, the hospitality industry is fast becoming an income earner and contributes significantly to the nation's gross domestic product. Sasu's (2022) research into the Nigerian market showed that the service sector offers around 53% of the total employment in Nigeria. Service industries such as transport, education, telecommunications, health care, hospitality, etc. play significant roles in the economic development of an emerging market like Nigeria (Nkwede & Okpara, 2017). However, the COVID-19 pandemic, along with its containment issues, meant that the Nigerian economy experienced a recession where industries such as hospitality, restaurants, aviation and tourism were greatly affected (Nwanne, 2020). The Nigerian economy grew by 3.6% in 2021, of which 5.6% of the growth was attributed to the services sector (Nigerian Economic Outlook, 2021).

Hospitality is a unique kind of link between service providers and consumers, where the service provider comprehends the needs and demands of the customer and provides pleasure to the customer (Siddique et al., 2013). A hotel is a constituted organisation set up to meet certain precise purposes through a well-organised room occupancy rate, outstanding meals as well as safe and quality services for its clients (Hepple et al., 1990). A hotel is an institution offering accommodation, meals and other services to travellers and tourists (Anam & Adebitan, 2014). The definition of Hepple et al. (1990) highlights four major characteristics of hospitality. These characteristics include that

(1) Hospitality involves two persons (a host and a guest) in a place that is not the guest's abode;
(2) Hospitality is interactive as it involves at least two persons;
(3) It consists of both tangible and intangible factors; and
(4) The party called "the host" is responsible for providing security, and physiological and psychological comfort to the party called "the guest".

The hospitality industry has seen an influx of academic research in the last decade (Choi & Chu, 2001; Dolnicar & Otter, 2003; Goldstein, 2003). Some of these studies have been centred on the determinants of satisfaction in the sector (Choi & Chu, 2001; Yee et al., 2008; Albayrak & Caber, 2015).

Customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry is a multifaceted occurrence (Bowen & Chen, 2001). This is because, in the hotel sector, the service product includes both tangible and intangible attributes (Saleh & Ryan, 1992) that contribute to customer satisfaction. This study investigates those attributes of the hotel that lead to customer satisfaction in Abakaliki. Abakaliki is the capital city of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. A study conducted in 2017 showed that the town has an average of 30 hotels of varying sizes and capacities (Nkwede et al., 2017). This figure excludes bars, restaurants and fast food operations. In a city where the population is less than 3 million (2016 population estimate, National Population Commission [NPC], 2022), the need for hospitality services seems to be very high. Perhaps there is a driving force. Are the drivers of customers' patronage related to consumer satisfaction? What strategy do service providers implement to ensure customer satisfaction given the fact that the industry is highly competitive? What is the quality of the service provider that causes customer satisfaction? This is the thrust of this article.

Satisfaction is a person's reaction of pleasure or displeasure resulting from evaluating a product performance (outcome) in relation to expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2014). Satisfaction has two distinct perspectives, namely "attribute specific" and "overall performance" (Nimako, 2012). Satisfaction is regarded as attribute specific when it relates to how satisfied a customer is from the consumption of a particular product. On the other hand, satisfaction is treated as overall performance based on how satisfied a customer is over a particular time period (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Wang & Hing-Po, 2002; Nimako, 2012).

Globally, many businesses (especially in the tourism industry) are boosting customer satisfaction of their product based on the assertion that customer satisfaction is a vital precursor of a companies' financial performance (Albayrak & Caber, 2015; Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Anderson et al., 1994). Customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry is a multifaceted construct (Bowen & Chen, 2001) as already mentioned. It is multifaceted due to the fact that customer satisfaction is often tied to both the tangible and intangible attributes of the service product (Saleh & Ryan, 1992). Studies have shown that customer satisfaction in this industry can be determined by green attributes (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010) and business and recreational facilities (Chu & Choi, 2000). Atkinson (1988) discovered that cleanliness, security, value for money, courtesy and the helpfulness of staff are key attributes for travellers in hotel selection.

According to Gronroos (1984), satisfaction comprises two main components. These components include technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality refers to "what" is offered to the consumers, while functional quality refers to "how" such services are delivered. For Reuland et al. (1985), satisfaction is made up of three elements, namely product, behaviour and environment. Czepiel et al. (1985) identified two elements of satisfaction which they named "functional" and "performance-delivery" elements in customer satisfaction. Davis and Stone (1985) stated that the elements of satisfaction included direct and indirect services. Lovelock (1983) divided product and service attributes into core and secondary types. Applying the ideas of Gronroos (1984) to the hospitality industry, Choi and Chu (2001) found the technical quality (what) of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry to be the core product that the customer receives. This includes the food and beverages

in the hotel, the accommodation, air tickets, etc. On the other hand, the "how" (functional quality) includes the atmosphere, the décor, convenience of location, availability, flexibility and interactions with service providers.

In line with the above findings on the attributes of a hotel that encourage satisfaction and the two components of customer satisfaction measurement as proposed by Gronroos (1984) and adapted by Choi and Chu (2001), this study set out to discover if the determinants of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry in Abakaliki can be traced to functional quality (staff service quality and security) and technical quality (room quality and value)

Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

The theory of reasoned action forms the theoretical foundation of this study. The theory of reasoned action was proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. This theory was modelled on the assumption that the behavioural intention of a person depends on the person's attitude about the behaviour and subjective norms that surround the person. Applying this theory in real terms, in Abakaliki for instance, the attitude of consumers towards the selection of and satisfaction from hotel services can be weighted differently in line with the perception and constraints surrounding the individuals. Subjective norms which comprise social interactions among individuals also play significant roles in the satisfaction of consumers in Abakaliki. This study argues that consumer satisfaction is caused by factors that are both individual and social. Figure 1 depicts the standpoint of this article, which proposes that the factors that cause customer satisfaction are both social (interactions) and personal (evaluation of service apparatus).

Hotel attributes and customer satisfaction

Alpert (1971) defines determinant attributes as the attributes that unswervingly sway choice in the sense that they stimulate a customer's purchase of a particular good or service. The perception of hotel attributes is seen as the extent to which the travellers or customers may find various services in a facility as vital to customer satisfaction (Wuest et al., 1996). Most customer satisfaction survey indexes always refer to the physical attributes of the hotel (Saleh & Ryan, 1992). According to Dolnicar and Otter (2003), the hotel itself, the room and the service present a wide variety of different attributes. In Bankuoru Egala et al. (2021), attributes of the service provider such as ease of use, privacy, reliability, efficiency and security lead to customer satisfaction. Callan (1995; 1998) also proposed dividing the hotel attributes into two broad categories such as heterogeneity of service (which includes service provider competence and additional services), and hotel (tangible and other leisure facilities). Identifying the particular feature of the service provider that determines accommodation choice and satisfaction will assist a hotel manager in making the most favourable hotel decisions.

Gronroos (1984) separates the components of customer satisfaction into two levels of quality, namely functional and technical quality. Functional quality refers to "how" the service is delivered, while technical quality refers to "what" is being delivered, that is the service product itself. Reuland et al. (1985) suggested that the three components of satisfaction include product, behaviour and environment. Invariably, this means that satisfaction from a good or service should be judged based on
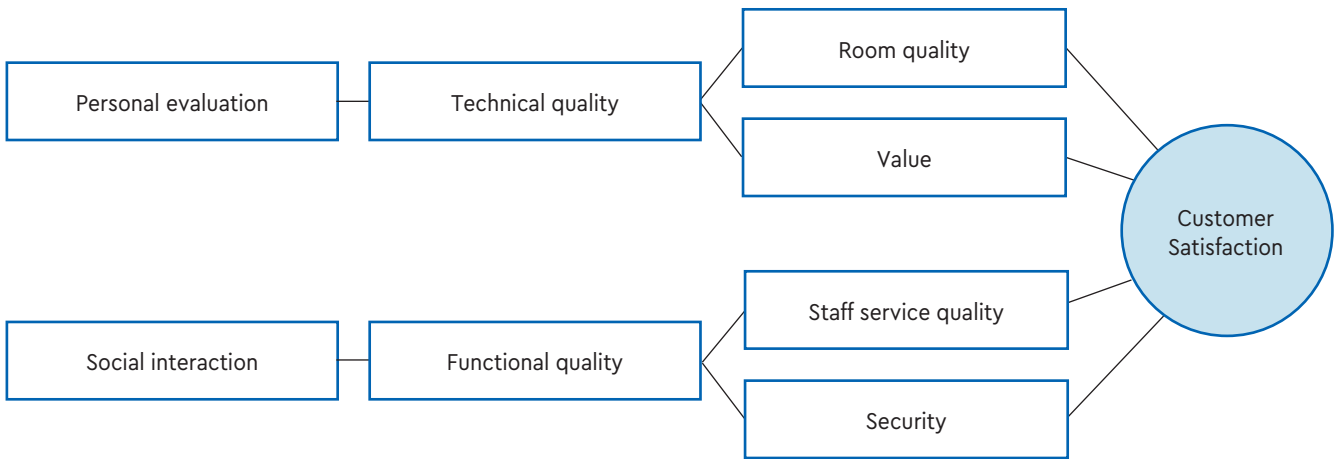
FIGURE 1: The research framework

the service product that the consumer purchased, the behaviour of the service employees who interacted with the customer and the physical environment where such service occurs. Czepiel (1990) identified two elements of customer satisfaction as the functional and the performance delivery elements, which is partly aligned with the proposition by Gronroos (1984) when he identified functional quality as one of the dimensions of customer satisfaction. He identified the other dimension of customer satisfaction as the performance element of delivery. The outcome of satisfaction may strengthen a customer's resolve to consume a particular brand of service on a given occasion (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The hotelier needs to fully understand which hotel attributes are most likely to influence a customer's choice and intention (Richard & Sundaram, 1994), customer satisfaction (Wuest et al., 1996) and repeat patronage and brand loyalty (Sirgy & Tyagi, 1986) to find the hotel attribute to improve upon or strengthen efforts around. We therefore hypothesises that:

- H1:Staff service quality has an effect on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry;
- H2: Room quality has an effect on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry;
- H3: Value has an effect on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry; and
- H4: Security has an effect on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Methodology
Sample
The research examined the hospitality services market, specifically hotels, in the urban metropolis Abakaliki in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The study used primary data acquired from a cross-sectional survey of 317 consumers of hotel services in Abakaliki from a simple random sampling procedure of consumers on the premises of the hotels between June and October 2021.

Study area and data collection
Geographically, Abakaliki occupies the north-eastern edge of the south-eastern territory known as Ebonyi State (Chubb, 1961). Farming is the indigenous occupation of the people in this region (Echiegu, 1998), although Abakaliki, the capital city, is urbanised.

The increase in business and government activities makes the capital city busy and it plays host to a considerable number of businesses, government ministries as well as the state university and a teaching hospital. This research study was carried out in the state capital because of the large concentration of hotels and consumers of hotel services there. The data were obtained using structured questionnaires administered between June and October 2021.

Measuring instruments and measures
A questionnaire was the instrument used in collecting data for the study. Five constructs — staff service quality, room quality, value, security and customer satisfaction — were operationalised to test the proposed research framework. A total of 24 scale items were used to evaluate the construct. Seven items measured staff service quality, five items measured room quality, and four items measured value. Security was measured with three items and five items measured customer satisfaction. The staff service quality measurement was based on the findings of Choi and Chu (2001) and LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996). The room quality measurement was based on the findings of Choi and Chu (2001) and Callan (1998). The value and security measurements were based on the findings of Choi and Chu (2001) and Callan (1998). The measures of customer satisfaction were based on the findings of Goldstein (2009) and extrapolated in this study. Staff service quality and room quality measure the functional quality, while value and security measure the technical quality dimensions of customer satisfaction. Modification of the measures was done on the pre-existing scale with the intention of using wording that matched the industry as well as the environmental setting of the study. The answers on the questionnaires were on a five-point Likert scale. For analysis, a multiple regression technique was used after factor analysis was conducted on the data to test the hypotheses of the study.

Model specification
Generally, the multiple regression model is specified thus:
$$y = f(x_1, x_2, \ldots x_n)$$
where y is the dependent variable (customer satisfaction); and x_{1-n} is for the independent variables (determinants);
$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \mu$$

where y is customer satisfaction;
x_1 is the staff service quality of the hotel;
x_2 is room quality of the hotel;
x_3 is value benefitted by the consumer; and
x_4 is the security attached to the hotel.

Assessing scale reliability internal consistency test

To check the reliability of the data used for the study, a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted on the data. The test usually reveals the components that have the capability to be constant in replicated studies. According to De Veils (2003), the minimum threshold for ascertaining reliability for a Cronbach's alpha test is 0.5. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value ranges from 0.887 to 0.659, which shows that the data displayed a high level of internal consistency and is reliable to provide the needed information. This is shown in Table 1.

Results

Sampling adequacy and total variance explained

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure is the test conducted on data to check the sampling adequacy of data and to determine if such data is capable of explaining the hypotheses of the study. The minimum threshold for KMO is 0.5 (Hair et al., 2006); the KMO for this study is 0.834. This figure shows that the data is capable of explaining the objectives under study. Factor loading of 24 usable items with the varimax rotation based on the convergence from the Kaiser criterion shows the loading of the 24 items into five components. The Bartlett test of sphericity which tests for components that are statistically significant shows that the components under study are statistically significant at ($p < 0.001$) with high commonality of coefficients with 0.5 and above. Exploratory factor analysis in the form of principal component analysis with varimax rotation was employed for the removal and decreasing of items to a smaller number of representative

components. This led to smaller identifiable sets of factors with an eigenvalue >1.0 for easy analysis. The total variance accounted for by the eight components (Table 2) was 67.01%. The initial eigenvalues of the eight components were (1) 9.268, (2) 3.749, (3) 2.236, (4) 1.975, (5) 1.611, (6) 1.434, (7) 1.339 and (8) 1.199 (Table 2). Furthermore, multiple regressions were performed on the transformed data to find the effect of the independent component on the dependent component (Table 3).

Discussion

Response rate and demographic outcomes

A total of 350 questionnaires were sent out to the respondents under study. Out of the 350 completed questionnaires, 33 questionnaires were rejected due to multiple ticking. In total, 317 valid responses were recorded, representing 90.6% of the total database. A large percentage of the respondents fell between the ages of 26 and 35 years ($n = 115$; 36.3%); slightly behind them were respondents aged 36 to 45 years ($n = 105$; 33.1%). Respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years, and 56 and 65 years comprised 15.5% and 2.5%, respectively. Only 0.6% of the respondents were older than 66 and 12% of the respondents were younger than 25. The implications of this information are that a large percentage of hotel consumers are middle-aged adults and are likely to have purchasing power. 44.8% of respondents were married, while 36.9% were single; 11.7% were divorced and 6.6% were widowed. A large portion of the respondents (29.7%) earned less than US$1 200 per annum.

Determinants of customer satisfaction in the hotel services market in Abakaliki

Results of the regression analysis of the determinants of customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki are presented in Table 3. In the application of the multiple regression

TABLE 1. Reliability and internal consistency test

Construct	Number of items	Source	Variables	Cronbach's α	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Cronbach's α if item deleted
Staff service quality	7	Choi & Chu, 2001; LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1996	SSQ1	0.887	25.7382	13.042	0.893
			SSQ2		25.5394	13.559	0.874
			SSQ3		25.8076	12. 650	0.863
			SSQ4		25.8265	12.441	0.867
			SSQ5		25.6845	12.824	0.865
			SSQ6		25.9117	12.404	0.865
			SSQ7		25.6814	13.085	0.870
Room quality	5	Choi & Chu, 2001; Callan, 1998	RQ1	0.777	17.0126	6.038	0.777
			RQ2		16.8044	5.114	0.698
			RQ3		16.7066	5.354	0.688
			RQ4		16.7666	6.445	0.773
			RQ5		16.7603	5.999	0.731
Value	4	Choi & Chu, 2001	V1	0.616	12.9085	2.735	0.616
			V2		13.1609	2.211	0.559
			V3		13.0820	2.557	0.517
			V4		12.9464	2.291	0.483
Security	3	Callan, 1998	S1	0.677	9.1041	1.138	0.595
			S2		9.2019	1.098	0.563
			S3		9.1703	1.123	0.589
Customer satisfaction	3	Goldstein, 2009	CS1	0.659	18.1767	2.842	0.612
			CS2		17.8991	3.452	0.546
			CS3		17.8927	3.837	0.614
					18.0442	3.637	0.632
					17.9180	3.651	0.632

TABLE 2. Total variance explained

Component	Initial eigen value			Extraction sum of squared loading			Rotated sum of squared loadings		
	Total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	9.268	27.258	27.258	9.268	27.258	27.258	4.477	13.167	13.167
2	3.749	11.026	38.284	3.749	11.026	38.284	4.139	12.173	25.340
3	2.236	6.578	44.662	2.236	6.578	44.662	3.619	10.645	35.986
4	1.975	5.808	50.669	1.975	5.808	50.669	2.786	8.195	44.180
5	1.611	4.738	55.408	1.611	4.738	55.408	2.403	7.069	51.249
6	1.434	4.216	59.624	1.434	4.216	59.624	2.016	5.930	57.179
7	1.339	3.938	63.562	1.339	3.938	63.562	1.701	5.002	62.181
8	1.199	3.527	67.089	1.199	3.527	67.089	1.669	4.968	67.089

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

TABLE 3. Determinants of customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki

Model	Standardised coefficients	t-test	p-value
Constant	—	5.912	0.000
SUM_HASSQ	0.332	5.066	0.001
SUM_HARQ	0.159	2.247	0.025
SUM_V	0.297	5.153	0.001
SUM_S	0.251	4.894	0.002
R	0.461		
R^2	0.213		

Dependent variable: SUM_CSSA

TABLE 4. Effect of staff service quality on customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki

Model	Standardised coefficients	t-test	p-value
Constant	—	5.912	0.000
SUM_HASSQ	0.322	5.066	0.001
R	0.209		
R^2	0.213		

Dependent variable: SUM_CSSA

analysis, the beta coefficient shows the change in the dependent variable which reflects a corresponding unit change in the independent variable. The value for R^2 shows the magnitude of change in the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2009). The model summary shows an R^2 value of 0.213. This means that the independent predictors of staff service quality, room quality, value and security account for 21% of the total change of the dependent variable of customer satisfaction. Room quality gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.159, at 1% level of significance of 0.025). Staff service quality gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.332 at 1% level of significance of 0.001) and value gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.297, at 1% level of significance of 0.001). More so, security also gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.251, at 1% level of significance of 0.002).

Table 4 presents the effect of staff service quality on customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki. The multiple regression model summary shows the value of R^2 to be 0.332. This means that 33% of the variation in the dependent variable can be ascribed to the independent variable. Staff service quality gave a beta coefficient of 0.332 (at 1% level of significance of 0.001). This indicates that an increase in staff service quality leads to an equal increase in satisfaction for the hospitality consumer, to at least 33%. This is in line with the result of previous studies where scholars such as Atkinson (1988), Cadotte and Turgeon (1988), Knutson (1988)nd Choi and Chu (2001) all discovered that staff service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

The results of the regression analysis of the effect of room quality on consumer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki are presented in Table 5. The results show that the estimated coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) indicates that the postulated regressor (i.e. room quality) explained 6.7%

in the variation of the regressant (that is, customer satisfaction). In other words, R^2 value of 0.067 means that 6.7% of the variation in customer satisfaction is attributed to room quality. Room quality gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.189 at 1% level of significance). This indicates that an increase in room quality would lead to a 19% increase in customer satisfaction. This is in line with the findings of Dolnicar and Otter (2003) who postulated that room quality is a critical part of the service product and the state of the room can affect the consumer satisfaction rate.

Results of the regression analysis of the effect of value on consumer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki are presented in Table 6. The results show that the estimated coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) indicates that the postulated regressor (i.e. value) explained 14.4% in the variation of the regressant (that is, customer satisfaction). In other words, an R^2 value of 0.144 means that 14.4% of the variation in customer satisfaction is attributed to value. Value gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.297, at 1% level of significance). This indicates that an increase in value would lead to a 30% increase in customer satisfaction. This is in line with the findings of other studies (Atkinson, 1988; Ananth et al., 1992; Choi & Chu, 2001) where scholars postulated that value is a critical part of the service product and can affect consumer satisfaction.

TABLE 5. Effect of room quality on customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki

Model	Standardised coefficients	t-test	p-value
Constant	—	5.912	0.000
SUM_HARQ	0.189	2.247	0.025
R	0.259		
R^2	0.067		

Dependent variable: SUM_CSSA

TABLE 6: Effect of value on customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki

Model	Standardised coefficients	t-test	p-value
Constant	—	5.153	0.000
SUM_HAV	0.297		0.001
R	0.379		
R^2	0.144		

Dependent variable: SUM_CSSA

Table 7 presents the effect of security on customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki. The results show that the estimated coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) indicates that the postulated regressor (i.e. security) explained 6.2% in the variation of the regressant (that is, customer satisfaction). In other words, an R^2 value of 0.062 means that 6.2% of the variation in customer satisfaction is attributed to security. Security gave a beta coefficient of positive value (0.251, at 1% level of significance). This indicates that an increase in value would lead to a 25% increase in customer satisfaction. This is in line with the findings of other studies (Atkinson, 1988; Ananth et al., 1992; Choi & Chu, 2001) where scholars postulated that security is one of the attributes that consumers look out for in a hotel.

Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to identify the determinants of customer satisfaction in a high-contact service environment like hospitality (with a particular interest in hotels). It identified four possible determinants of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry (that is, staff service quality, value, room quality and security). The study discovered that staff service quality, value, room quality and security all have an effect on customer satisfaction. Specifically, the findings of this study include that
(1) Consumers of hotel services are mostly middle-aged adults who have some level of formal education and earn comfortable salaries;
(2) Staff service quality has an effect on the consumer satisfaction of hotel consumers in Abakaliki. That is, an increase in staff service quality leads to an increase in customer satisfaction;
(3) The consumer of hotel services in Abakaliki is mostly affected by the value of the services rendered. An increase in the value offered to the consumer shows an increase in the level of customer satisfaction in the hotel services market;
(4) Security is also one of the determinants of customer satisfaction in the hotel services market in Abakaliki. An increase in security shows an increase in customer satisfaction; and

TABLE 7: Effect of security on customer satisfaction in the hospitality market in Abakaliki

Model	Standardised coefficients	t-test	p-value
Constant	—		0.000
SUM_HAS	0.251	4.894	0.002
R	0.249		
R^2	0.062		

Dependent variable: SUM_CSSA

(5) Room quality is another determinant of customer satisfaction in the hotel services market, although an increase in room quality results in only a slight increase in the level of consumer satisfaction.

Conclusion

This study set out to identify the determinants of customer satisfaction in the hospitality (specifically hotels) market in Abakaliki. Based on existing literature, the study limited the determinants to four hotel attributes, namely staff service quality, room quality, value and security. All the determinants of customer satisfaction under study displayed positive values. Being a high-contact service, employees (as the representatives of the organisation and the carriers of the organisation's business policy in dealings with customers) must ensure a high level of professionalism, courtesy and decorum when attending to customers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that hotel service providers:
(1) Improve the quality of rooms in their hotels through the maintenance of a clean environment as well as functioning facilities. Issues of defective appliances, leaks and dents should be identified and handled in good time by the service provider. Advances in technology also necessitate that the customer travels with smart phones and laptops and demands the highest level of comfort while on the move. Therefore, the rooms should be equipped with up-to-date technologies such as Wi-Fi and other smart information communications technologies;
(2) Improve the level of security in the hotel through the installation of CCTV cameras;
(3) Develop more ways of delivering value to the customer through the use of technology. In this era of upgraded digital technology and artificial intelligence, customers would be delighted if they came across advanced technology on the hotel premises that enhanced service delivery; and
(4) Make efforts to sustain a high level of quality service staff through prioritising regular training of frontline staff on how to deliver a personalised service to customers. For instance, frontline staff can be trained on how to welcome their guest in the guest's native language. Such training would be costly in the short-run, but should help in reducing problems as well as cutting costs through increased repeat business in the long run.

Social implications
The service encounter is a critical element of the service delivery process. The service employee, especially the frontline staff, is often the first contact and impression that customers have of the organisation. To a large extent, interactions between service providers and customers are greatly encouraged in the hospitality sector (that is hotels) where it might appear that patrons enjoy personalised service and are likely to be satisfied by employees that display a high level of professionalism, courtesy and decorum in the discharge of their duties.

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