

Service Packaging and Guest Hotel Selection in Umuahia, Abia State

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the Service packaging and guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State. The objectives of the study are; To examine the influence of core service packaging on guest hotel selection, to determine the influence of convenience service packaging on guest hotel selection, to examine the influence of supportive service packaging on guest hotel selection and to identify the factors affecting service packaging in hotel operations. To achieve the objective of the study, survey research design was adopted. The researcher adopted primary data in getting the required information through the use of structured questionnaire. The population of the study is infinite owing the fact that the total number of hotel customer cannot be ascertained. The sample size of the study is 196 after adopting infinite formula. In analyzing the data, simple descriptive statistics was used. The findings revealed that Core service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel. The findings also revealed that convenience service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel. Also supportive service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel. The study recommends that hotels should invest more on service packaging and ensure that their staff are well trained on service delivery, this will help in enhancing customer patronage in hotels. Also, Hotels should time to time carry out performance evaluation to acknowledge and possibly reward the best performance staff in the area of service delivery. That would help in improving service packaging thereby improving customer patronage.*

KEYWORDS: Service packaging, core service, convenience service, supporting service, guest patronage.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of liberalization and globalization, every industry faces increasing competition. Hotel industry is no exception. The presence of so many hotel groups in the market ensures that the level of competition remains considerably higher than many other service industries. It becomes increasingly difficult to keep one's market share intact for a long time. Hence, retaining regular customers and attracting new ones remain priorities for the management. Any hotel which wants to retain the customers in the long run will have to constantly outperform the competitors when it comes to customer satisfaction. Achieving customer satisfaction is the primary goal for most service businesses. Increased customer satisfaction lead to improved profits, positive word-of-mouth, more stable customer base, and lower marketing expenditures (Wirtz 2013; Bolton, 2018).

Customer patronage may be a simple main effect of customer satisfaction. Yet satisfaction does not convert always to patronage (Auh & Johnson, 2015). Satisfaction is a measure of how well a customer's expectations are met while customer patronage is a measure of how likely a customer is to repurchase and engage in relationship activities (McIlroy & Barnett, 2010). Therefore, considerable time and money is being spent in many service organizations, hotels in particular, to develop strategies to increase customer patronage. It is a well-known fact that price and quality are two important factors of value. They both lead to customer satisfaction and also customer retention, which help increase the profits of any business. Price perception and service quality are major factors in achievement of customer satisfaction and then customer patronage.

Packaging is one of the main strategies and policies that the productive institutions depends on. It represents the message that creates link between the product and the customers. In the way that the packing policy and packaging is vital to the success of marketing item, as an integral part of them often and one of the elements or the physical components.

A service is an act, deed or a performance. It is an act performed by an individual, group of persons or organization, with the purpose of satisfying customer's needs and wants for which the customer is willing to pay a price (Boniface, Onwumere, Njoku and Obasi, 2017). Service is intangible products which result from human or mechanical efforts or skills to people or objects. It cannot be physically possessed (Negi, 2009). Skinner (2010) defined service as an intangible product that produces direct benefits to a customer as a result of applying human or mechanical effort to people or object, which cannot be physically possessed.

A service is anything or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. It's product packaging is the marketing strategy which involves the provision of container to protect and promote a tangible product (Nwoka, Naresh, Malhotra and David, 2012). This implies that packaging in the tangible product sector focuses its attention on the product (Boniface et al, 2004). In the perceptions of Lovelock and Wirtz (2014) packaging of services sector shift their emphasis on the unique chain for customer-oriented delivery system. The opinion can be justified by the special characteristics of services generally, and the financial service in particular (Ladipo and Olufayo, 2011). These characteristics include inseparability, intangibility, variability and perishability. Lovelock and Wirtz (2014), thus, hotel service packaging is a function of the variables of the service mix strategies, service quality and productivity.

Services package is defined as tangible services and intangible services, composed of a set of service products. Its components include two parts: the core or essential services and additional or ancillary services. This service packaging can be in form of quality service delivery, customer relationship management, sales promotion, good environment and other forms of marketing mix. Additional services generally refer to peripheral or supportive services. Such as in hotels, accommodation is the main or core services, and reception services, room service, restaurant service and concierge services, service composition can be incorporated into the peripheral or support services areas. These services are an integral part of the package, and is the main source of corporate competitiveness. Quality of these services determines customer hotel selection. Hotels that has good service quality tends to attract more customers thereby increasing their profitability and performance in general.

Despite the importance of service packaging to customer loyalty, most hotel establishments do not take it serious. Most of them do not bother training their staff on quality service delivery which serves as service packaging and all these have made consumers to keep switching to their competitors. In most cases consumers complain of delay in service, arrogance from staff, poor relationship management among others. A dissatisfied customer will likely complain, engage in negative word of mouth and switch to a competitor. Research has shown that 30 percent of fast food establishments ceases operation after five years of commencement this is as a result of low patronage which is attributed to poor service delivery that results to consumer switching to the competitors. It is on this ground that this study aimed to examine the influence of service packaging on guest hotel section in Umuahia, Abia State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the service packaging and guest hotel selection. However, the specific objectives of the study include, to:

- (i) To examine the influence of core service packaging on guest hotel selection.
- (ii) To determine the influence of convenience service packaging on guest hotel selection.
- (iii) To examine the influence of supportive service packaging on guest hotel selection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Services are the shouting arm of marketing which ensures that intangible services are delivered simultaneously at the point of production to the consumers. This nature of service requires the need to develop better understanding of the interface between the resources to be used to create value for customers. There is therefore the imperative to design and plant the atmosphere of the service delivery. This framework studied the essence of the physical service environment which plays a crucial role in shaping the service experience and in delivering customer satisfaction and value proposition which will go a long way to convey the target image of the firm, solicit the desired responses from customers and employees, and support service operations and productivity.

Packaging may be defined as the general group of activities in product planning which involves designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product (Njoku, 2012). Cateora and Graham (2017), observed that packaging component includes style features, packaging, labeling, trademarks, brand name, quality, price, and all other aspects of a products packaging. Packaging is normally to provide protective and promotional objectives for the product. But from the perspective of value analysis, the firm should package its value in such a way as to increase profit possibilities by reducing the cost of materials for the containment, and presenting the design of the package in an innovation way to encourage, maintain and, or stimulate the responsive cord of the target customer to achieve communication and sales effects. A package may be so attractive that customers will pay more just to get special package even though the increase in price exceeds the additional cost of the package. This is innovative packaging in engineering. Mbadiwe (2017) "for a new idea to be realized and put to work, the process of innovation has to occur, and there should be constant and periodic scanning of the environment to develop and implement a systematic approach to value engineering.

Concept of service packaging

The so-called services package is defined as tangible services and intangible services, composed of a set of service products. Its components include two parts: the core or essential services and additional or ancillary services. Additional services generally refer to peripheral or supportive services. Such as in hotels, accommodation is the main or core services, and reception services, room service, restaurant service and concierge services, service composition can be incorporated into the peripheral or support services areas. These services are the integral parts of the package, and are the main source of corporate competitiveness (Bolton, 2018).

Basic services package includes three levels of services: core services, convenience services and support services. Core service is the reason to exist an enterprise in the market. The hotel, the accommodation is its core services. Facilitation services, to enable customers to use core services more convenient, if not convenient service, customer spending on core services there is no way, such as hotel reservation systems, call centers. Support services, is also an added service, but its

different functions and convenient services, it is not the role of core services to customers on the consumption or use of more convenient, but because it can increase the value of the services and the enterprise services and separate services of competitors. Such as the hotel's breakfast services, car rental services (Cronin and Taylor, 2012).

- 1) **Core services:** the core service is to provide accommodation solutions for customers, the hotel's service philosophy is: "every day, sleep well". The core needs of business travelers is "a good sleep, a good bath to wash", they do not need luxurious lobby, do not need meetings and entertainment services, in the room was on the hardware facilities of choice, as shown Fig.1, leaving only the middle part of the graphics, rounding the periphery of the service (Bolton, 2018).

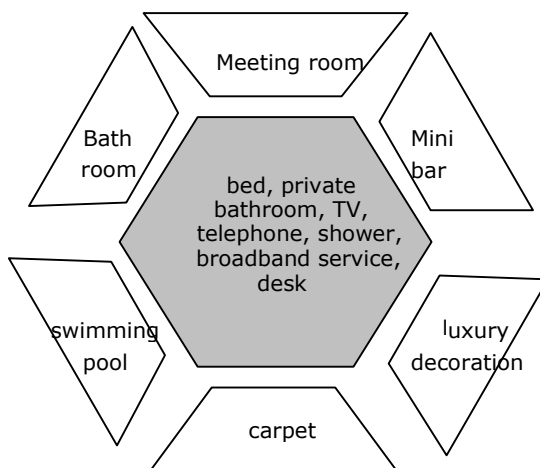


Figure 1. Hotel room hardware diagram

Convenience services: hotels offers the convenience of services: booking room through the five ways, one is network order, the customer as long as visit the company's Web site, registered as a member, to check all the hotel in real time, and can make reservations online payment; second is telephone booking, the company launched a free reservation phone: third, WAP phone book, cell phone customers can make reservations online; Fourth, SMS booking; fifth mobile client reservation, the customer need to install a client software and then online booking. hotel's order ways is most species in hotels industry of china, the fastest site visits, and rooms state is updated in real time (Bolton, 2018).

Support Services: Breakfast service is one of support services. hotels advocate “nutritious healthy breakfast” concept, buns, Western bread, boiled eggs, milk, corn porridge and fresh fruit and vegetable nutrition in full compliance with nutrition experts recommended “calcium + vitamin + protein + carbohydrate” nutrition, nutritious breakfast for customers to start from the happy day. Towels, bath towels sealed package: hotel towels should be encapsulated is an innovative approach, because often hotel towels sanitary status is worrying to lots of the guests, many people dare not use hotel towels, hotel practices to dispel the skepticism of consumers can be said to truly understand the customer needs.

A carton of milk before going to bed: stay this hotel guests can check in the reception, free carton of milk received, this is not the practice of other hotels, this box of milk to the customer is an additional surprise, reflecting the hotel is a concern for the customer, such gifts exceed customer expectations and enhance the relationship between hotels and customers to help develop customer loyalty (Bolton, 2018).

Service packaging and customer loyalty

According to Lai, Griffin and Babin (2009) loyalty is one of the main determinants of long term financial growth in an organization. Service packaging is also linked with customer loyalty. While some researchers are in the view that customer, satisfaction rather than service packaging exerts stronger influences on buying intentions of the customers (Cronin and Taylor, 2012). Some other researchers also provided the strong empirical evidences supporting the fact that service packaging increases the customer intentions to remain with any company. For example, Baker (2014) found out that service packaging results in increased market share and repeated sales that ultimately leads to customer loyalty. Zeithaml et al. (2016) also concluded in their research that when organizations improve the quality of their services, customers’ unfavorable intentions are decreased while favorable behavioral intentions are increased. Traditional service systems are still demanded by the customers along with the internet-based hotels (Yang and Fang, 2014). Service packaging might be being found to have a direct impact on customer loyalty (Parasuraman, 2015). Cronin and Taylor (2012) hypothesize that perceived service packaging positively affects consumers’ loyalty. Reichheld and Sasser (2010), Cronin et al. (2010) and Klimchuk and Krasovec (2017)

found that good service packaging leads to the retention of existing customers and the attraction of new ones, reduced costs, an enhanced corporate image, positive word-of-mouth recommendation and, ultimately, enhanced profitability. A research by Zeithaml et al. (2016) concluded that when organizations enhance the quality of their services, customers' favorable behavioral intentions are increased while unfavorable intentions are decreased simultaneously.

Service packaging has been found to have considerable impact in determining repeat purchase and customer loyalty (Jones and Farquhar, 2013). As pointed out by Bolton (2018), service packaging influences a customer's subsequent behavior, intentions and preferences. When a customer chooses a provider that delivers service packaging that meets or exceeds his or her expectations, he or she is more than likely choose the same provider again. Besides, Cronin and Taylor (2014) also found that service packaging has a significant effect on repurchase intentions. Other studies which support that repurchase intentions are positively influenced by service packaging include Zeithaml et al (2016), Cronin and Taylor (2014), Cronin et al., (2010), and Choi et al. (2014). A positive perception of service packaging is thus an antecedent to customer loyalty (Rundh, 2015). It is well known that evaluative judgments of service packaging could significantly influence service loyalty and fast food organizations loyalty (Veloutsou et al., 20014). Ruyter et al. (2018) also found a positive relationship between perceived service packaging and preference loyalty and price indifference loyalty. Velotsou et al. (2014) also found that perceived service packaging has a positive association with customer loyalty, being defined as a function of expected quality (generated from market communication, image, word of mouth and customer needs) and experienced quality (generated from functional and technical quality).

Perceived quality reflects the opinion of the customer regarding the superiority or global excellence of a product or service. According to Venetis and Ghauri (2014), service packaging is regarded as one of the few means of services differentiation, attracting new customers and increasing market share. It is also viewed as an important means of customer retention. The lifetime value of a loyal customer can be astronomical, especially when referrals are added to the economics of customer retention and repeat purchases of related products (Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger, 2017). In one case, a retail fast food organizations that increased its customer retention

rates by 5 per cent increased its profits by 85 per cent (Reichheld and Sasser, 2010). The cost of gaining a new customer is about five times greater than the cost of retaining a current customer through the use of relationship marketing.

How service packaging affects consumer behavior in hotel industry.

Nowadays competitive environment the role of package has changed due to increasing self-service and changing consumers' lifestyle. Firms' interest in package as a tool of sales promotion is growing increasingly. Package becomes an ultimate selling proposition stimulating impulsive buying behavior, increasing market share and reducing promotional costs.

According to Rundh (2015) package attracts consumer's attention to particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about product/service. Also package imparts unique value to products (Underwood, Klein & Burke, 2011; Silayoi & Speece, 2014), works as a tool for differentiation, i.e. helps consumers to choose the product from wide range of similar products, stimulates customers buying behavior (Wells, Farley & Armstrong, 2017). Thus package performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision. In this context, seeking to maximize the effectiveness of package in a buying place, the researches of package, its elements and their impact on consumer's buying behavior became a relevant issue.

Literature analysis on question under investigation has shown that there is no agreement on classification of package elements as well as on research methods of package impact on consumer's purchase decision. Some of researchers try to investigate all possible elements of package and their impact on consumer's purchase decision (Silayoi & Speece, 2014; Silayoi & Speece, 2017), while others concentrates on separate elements of package and their impact on consumer buying behavior (Underwood et al., 2011). Moreover, some researchers investigate impact of package and its elements on consumer's overall purchase decision (e.g., Underwood et al., 2011), while others – on every stage of consumer's decision making process. Furthermore, the abundance of scientific literature on this issue do not provide unanimous answer concerning impact of package elements on consumer's buying behavior: diversity of the results in this area depends

not only on research models constructed and methods employed, but on the context of the research too. All above mentioned confirms the necessity to investigate this issue in more detail. In the light of these problematic aspects, research problem could be formulated as following question: what elements of a package have an ultimate effect on consumer purchase decision.

Service Quality as a tool for Service Packaging

Quality can be defined as satisfying or exceeding customer requirements and expectations, and consequently to some extent it is the customer who eventually judges the quality of a product (Shen, Tan and Xie, 2010). In the service, where production, delivery and consumption can occur simultaneously, the concept of quality refers to the matching between what customers expect and what they experience. Customers evaluate service quality by comparing what they want or expect to what they actually get or perceive they are getting (Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman, 2018). Service Quality Service quality involves a comparison of expectations with performance. According to Zeithaman and Bitner (2013) service quality is a measure of how well a delivered service matches the customers' expectations. Fast food organizations have realized the significance of concentrating on quality of services as an approach to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and to develop their core competence and business performance (Kunst and Lemmink, 2010)

In this study, service quality has been defined as the difference between customer's expectation for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perception of the service received. Customer's expectation serves as a foundation for evaluating service quality because, quality is high when performance exceeds expectation and quality is low when performance does not meet their expectation (Asubonteng McCleary and Swan, 2016). Expectation is viewed in service quality literature as desires or wants of consumer i.e., what they feel a service provider should offer rather than would offer (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml, 2018). Perceived service is the outcome of the consumer's view of the service dimensions, which are both technical and functional in nature.

The customer's total perception of a service is based on his/her perception of the outcome and the process; the outcome is either value added or quality and the process is the role undertaken by the customer. Parasuraman (2015) define perceived quality as a form of attitude, related but not equal to satisfaction, and results from a consumption of expectations with perceptions of performance. Therefore, having a better understanding of consumers' attitudes will help know how they perceive service quality in grocery stores.

Negi (2009) suggests that customer-perceived service quality has been given increased attention in recent years, due to its specific contribution to business competitiveness, developing satisfied and loyal customers. This makes service quality a very important construct to understand by firms by knowing how to measure it and making necessary improvements in its dimensions where appropriate especially in areas where gaps between expectations and perceptions are wide.

Douglas and Connor (2013), found that the consumer who has developed heightened perception of quality has become more demanding and less tolerant of assumed shortfalls in service quality and identify the intangible elements (inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability) of a service as the critical determinants of service quality perceived by a customer. It is very vital to note here that, service quality is not only assessed as the end results but also on how it is delivered during service process and its ultimate effect on consumer's perceptions (Douglas and Connor, 2013).

The ability to provide a quality service will, therefore, improve a hotel's ability to increase market share and profitability, whilst at the same time reducing their existing customer's switching propensity to another institution. Thus the ability to consistently provide a high quality service offering may well act as a key strategic differentiator. Furthermore, successful organizations perusing quality have realized that quality improvements must be focused where most productive (Keiningham, Zahorik and Rust, 2015). Improved quality has a three-fold pay-off; namely reduced costs, increased customer retention, and attracting new customers drawn to the quality service provider (Keiningham, Zahorik and Rust, 2015). In order to achieve service quality, it is important to identify key service expectations and focus efforts at the most beneficial point in the customer.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of Planned Behaviour

Consumers always consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage in doing whatever action they feel better to be engaged or not engaged in (Ajzen, 1989). The theory of planned behaviour states that the behavioural intention is the antecedent of any behaviour. This intention is determined by three considerations; behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs (Ajzen, 1989). The behavioural belief is an individual's positive or negative belief about performing a specific behaviour and the subjective values or evaluations of these consequences. An individual's intention to perform certain behaviour will be determined by how he or she evaluates it positively. Attitudes are determined by the individual's beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour (behavioural beliefs), weighted by his or her evaluation of those consequences (outcome evaluations). The attitude toward the behavior refers to the degree at which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question.

The theory of reasoned action states that the immediate antecedent of behaviour is the behavioural intention to perform the behaviour. The intention to perform the specific behaviour is affected by the belief that performing the specific behaviour will lead to a certain outcome. The beliefs are affected by the attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms. While attitude is considered as a function of the sum of the perceived values of expected outcomes of the behaviour; Subjective Norms (SN) are a function of the sum of perceived social pressures or beliefs of others and perceived behavioural control (PBC) represents the collective effects of individuals' perceptions of both internal and external enabling factors (time, money, knowledge and others) that determine the ability to actually perform the behaviour. The theory of reasoned action loses application when the theory is applied to behaviors' that are not fully under volitional control. The Theory of Planned Behaviour took into account all behaviour that are not under volitional control and that behaviours are located at some point along a continuum that extends from total control to a complete lack of control. Control belief refers to perceived presence of factors that can influence a person's ability

to perform the behaviour. People are not likely to form a strong intention to perform an action if they believe that they do not have the resources or opportunities to do so.

TPB further provides a framework to examine the influence of attitudes on behaviours. For example, if an individual believes that the outcome of the behaviour is positive, she/he will possess a positive attitude toward performing it. That is when the customer believes that the final result of the switching action is positive, he/she will have a positive attitude towards switching. The central factor in the theory of planned behaviour is the individual's intention to perform a given behaviour. Ajzen (1989), ascertained that, attitude is the most important determinant of a customer's switching intention, attitude was influence by subjective norms, and switching intention was influenced by satisfaction which in turn influences significantly the switching behaviour of customers. The more an individual believes he/she possesses the necessary resources, abilities and opportunities necessary to influence behaviour, the more likely he/she will intend to and actually perform the behaviour. Consumers are susceptible to interpersonal influences which had been accommodated in the theory of planned behaviour.

The Theory of Attractive Quality

Inspired by Herzberg's M-H theory in behavioral science, Kano and his coworkers developed the theory of attractive quality. The theory of attractive quality is useful to better understand different aspects of how customers evaluate a product or offering (Gustafsson 1998). Over the past two decades, this theory has gained exposure and acceptance through articles in various marketing, quality, and operations management journals. The theory of attractive quality has been applied in strategic thinking, business planning, and product development to demonstrate lessons learned in innovation, competitive- ness, and product compliance (Watson 2003).

According to Kano (2001), the theory of attractive quality originated because of the lack of explanatory power of a one-dimensional recognition of quality. For instance, people are satisfied if the packaging of rice has cooking instructions and dissatisfied if the packaging does not have cooking instructions. For a quality attribute such as religious symbols & images, people are not satisfied if the package does not religious symbols & images, but they are very dissatisfied if it

does. To understand the role of quality attributes, Kano et al. (1984) present a model that evaluates patterns of quality, based on customers' satisfaction with specific quality attributes and their degree of sufficiency. On the horizontal axis in the Kano diagram the physical sufficiency of a certain quality attribute is displayed. The vertical axis shows satisfaction with a certain quality attribute (Kano et al. 1984). The theory explains how the relationship between the degree of sufficiency and customer satisfaction with a quality attribute can be classified into five categories of perceived quality. According to Kano et al. (1984), their ideas are similar to quality theories suggested by Mizuno and Ishikawa. But instead of only providing general concepts and nomenclature, Kano and his coworkers provide a methodology to use.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Berry and Bende (2013) examined the determinants of service quality in hospitality services, the Case Study of Internet Hospitality Services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". The research study proposes a revised and modified SERVQUAL model which incorporates several variables that reflects the industry-specific attributes of Internet hospitality services. A survey based research is used to collect primary data on the basis of Internet hospitality services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A multiple regression analysis is employed to examine the influence of the adapted determinants on service quality. .Focus-group interviews are also conducted as a follow-up to the questionnaire study. The findings of both fieldworks indicate that reliability, responsiveness, website design, and personalization determine service quality in the Internet hospitality context. The study presents the main findings derived from the research model which can be used by a wide range of financial institutions, which make use of the Internet in their business dealings, to support each organization's decision-making processes. Also, the model can be used as a blueprint for an organization's strategic planning.

Lewis (2013) examined the impact of Using Relationship Marketing Strategies on Customers Loyalty: Study on STC Customers in Riyadh – KSA. The study aims to determine the relationship between relational bonds (financial, social structural) of Saudi Telecommunication Company & loyalty of Saudi customers, as well as determine the statistical differences in the loyalty of Saudi customers according to education, sex and income. The study sample consists

of 500 customers, and convenience sample is used. Study results proved that there is no statistical relationship between social bonds offered by STC, and between Saudi customer loyalties to this company. On contrary, it has been found that strategies which focus on financial and structural factors were a key factor in obtaining Saudi customer loyalty for company and its services, it was also found that there are statistically differences in this loyalty level due to income level, and gender, while no differences were found due to customer educational level. Based on the above mentioned results, a set of necessary recommendations was formulated to enhance the relationship between STC & its customers

Sadeghloo et al (2013) investigated the relationship between internal marketing and service quality. The research method in this study was descriptive and correlation method. Sports and Youth offices staff of Golestan province have established statistical population of research that they all participated in the study (N=180). Reliability of questionnaires after a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha test, respectively ($\alpha=0.84$) and ($\alpha=0.88$) were obtained. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods for data analysis were used. The findings showed that between internal marketing and service quality in sports and youth offices staff, there is significant positive correlation ($r=0/547$, $p<0/001$). The research findings on the importance of internal marketing and its levels as one of the factors affecting service quality within the sports and youth offices of Golestan province underlined. Thus, leaders and HR managers should use the strategic plans for the development of internal marketing in order to provide higher quality services.

Oladele, Yakibi, Akiruwa and Ajayi (2019) investigated the influence of quality of facilities on customer patronage among selected hotels in south-west, Nigeria. The primary source of data collection was adopted while multistage sampling techniques such as stratified, heterogeneous purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were utilized. The study was carried out in Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, Ogun, Oyo and Lagos States. A total number of 69 hotels cutting across all sizes were sampled. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and inferential Statistics such as hierarchical multiple regression. Good access road, basic security facilities, constant water supply, constant electricity and convenient parking space were used as dimensions of the explanatory variables. Findings showed

that quality of facilities is positive and significantly related to customer patronage of hotels. Consequently, in ranking, we concluded that customer patronage is a function of the good access road, constant electricity, constant water supply, basic security facilities and convenient parking space.

Ezenyirimba, Ezejiolor and Afodigbueokwu (2019) determined the effect of Total Quality Management on organizational performance of deposit money banks in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: ascertain the extent to which the application of total quality management practices affect customer satisfaction in Nigerian deposit money banks; find out the effect of total quality management practices on customer's continuous loyalty in Nigerian deposit money banks. Survey research design was employed and data were collected through the use of questionnaires and was presented in a tabular form and t-test was used with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. the outcome of the result shows that the application of total quality management practices affect customer satisfaction in Nigerian deposit money banks.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For the purpose of achieving the objectives of the study, a survey research design was used through administration of questionnaire and personal interview.

Population for the study

The population for the study is made up of customers of the selected hotels in Umuahia, Abia State. However, the population of customers is infinite.

Sample size determination

To arrive at the sample size, Cochran's (1977) formula was used. This is used when population size is infinite. Thus the formula is given as;

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

where, n = population size

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z = the value of standard variate at a given confidence level and to be worked out from table showing area under normal curve.

p = sample proportion

$q = 1-p$

e = given precision rate or acceptable error

Now putting the value in the formula for infinite population, we get:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

where,

$z = 1.96$ (desired confidence level is 95% and value obtained from table)

$p = 0.5$ (sample proportion).

$Q = 0.5$ {(1-0.5) i.e 1-p}

$e = 7\%$ or 0.07 (precision rate or acceptable error)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) \cdot (0.5)}{(0.07)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0049}$$

$n = 196$ Respondents

Therefore, the population size of the study is 196 customers.

The researcher made use of the questionnaire and personal interview in obtaining the needed information from the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

The simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used to analyze respondents' personal data and research questions. Also, the regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

Decision rule:

Accept the null hypothesis if the coefficient of determination (r^2) is less than 50% otherwise reject null hypothesis and accept alternation.

Based on research questions, mean value above or equal to 2.5 is acceptable where there is 4 point scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the field work were analyzed and discussed.

Analysis of Research Questions

Question 1: How does core service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State?

Table 4.1 Mean responses of respondents on how core service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State?

S/N		Total score	Mean	Remark
1	Core service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State	614	3.57	Accept
2	Core service packaging influence customer loyalty in hotels.	596	3.47	Accept
3	Core service packaging influence guest patronage in hotels	594	3.45	Accept
4	Core service packaging influence guest decision making in hotels.	626	3.64	Accept
		Grand mean	3.53	

The results from table 4.1 above shows that core service packaging influence guest hotel selection, core service packaging influence customer loyalty in hotels, core service packaging influence guest patronage in hotels, core service packaging influence guest decision making in hotels. This is evidenced to the fact that all the items have mean values greater than 2.5 which is the criterion mean. The grand mean of 3.53 is an indication that core service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State.

Question 2: What is the influence of convenience service packaging on guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State?

Table 4.2 Mean responses of respondents on the influence of convenience service packaging on guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State

S/N		Total score	Mean	Remark
1	Convenience service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State	578	3.36	Accept
2	Convenience service packaging influence customer loyalty in hotels.	584	3.40	Accept
3	Convenience service packaging influence guest patronage in hotels	592	3.44	Accept
4	Convenience service packaging influence guest decision making in hotels.	572	3.33	Accept
		Grand mean	3.38	Accept

The result from table 4.2 above shows that Convenience service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State. Convenience service packaging influence customer loyalty in hotels. Convenience service packaging influence guest patronage in hotels. Convenience service packaging influence guest decision making in hotels. This is evidenced to the fact that all the items have mean values greater than 2.5 which is the criterion mean. The grand mean of 3.38 is an indication that convenience service packaging influences guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State.

Objective 3: How does supportive service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State?

Table 4.3 Mean responses of respondents on how does supportive service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State.

S/N		Total score	Mean	Remark
1	Supportive service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State	572	3.33	Accept
2	Supportive service packaging influence customer loyalty in hotels.	594	3.45	Accept
3	Supportive service packaging influence guest patronage in hotels	590	3.43	Accept
4	Supportive service packaging influence guest decision making in hotels.	592	3.44	Accept

		Grand mean	3.41	Accept
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Result from table 4.3 shows that supportive service packaging influence guest hotel selection, supportive service packaging influence customer loyalty in hotels, supportive service packaging influence guest patronage in hotels and supportive service packaging influence guest decision making in hotels. This is evidenced to the fact that all the items have mean values greater than 2.5 which is the criterion mean. The grand mean of 3.41 implies that supportive service packaging influence guest hotel selection in Umuahia, Abia State.

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of the study variables

	CORE SERVICE	CONVENIENCE SERVICE	SUPPORTING SERVICE	HOTEL SELECTION
Mean	4.543554	3.979094	4.191638	2.038328
Median	5.000000	4.000000	5.000000	1.000000
Maximum	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000
Minimum	2.000000	2.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Std. Dev.	0.594866	0.479928	1.144247	1.422323
Skewness	-1.416375	-1.770153	-1.249164	1.254376
Kurtosis	6.349803	11.18749	3.225050	3.082957
Jarque-Bera Probability	230.1460 0.000000	951.5089 0.000000	75.24531 0.000000	75.34607 0.000000
Sum	1304.000	1142.000	1203.000	585.0000
Sum Sq. Dev.	101.2056	65.87456	374.4599	578.5784
Observations	172	172	172	1727

Source: Extracted from E-View

Table 4.4 presents the descriptive statistics of all the variables used for regression analysis. The number of observation for the study is 172. From the table above, the following information is distilled.

For core service, the result revealed maximum and minimum values of 5.000 and 2.0000. Core service also reveals mean and standard deviation of 4.543554 and 0.594866. Convenience service

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has a mean of 3.979094 with a deviation of 0.479928. Furthermore, Convenience service records a maximum and minimum value of 5.0000 and 2.0000. Supporting service reveals maximum and minimum values of 5.0000 and 1.0000. Supporting service also reveals mean and standard deviation of 4.191638 and 1.144247. Hotel selection revealed maximum and minimum values of 5.0000 and 1.0000. Hotel selection also reveals mean and standard deviation of 2.038328 and 1.422323 respectively.

As shown in the table above, core service, convenience service, supporting service, and hotel selection have Jargue-Bera statistics of 230.1460, 951.5089, 75.24531, and 75.34607 with its associated probability values 0.0000, 0.0000, 0.0000, and 0.0000 which indicates that the they data are not normally distributed. Although data are not normally distributed, the current study will not rely on that judgement since the data collected are ranked data and expresses the opinion of the general respondent which is not meant to be manipulated. The concern for a ranked data is the level of skweness which reveals the direction of expression by the respondent whether it contains level of biases. The skweness result for core service, convenience service, supporting service, and hotel selection reveal values between -2.5 to +2.5 which means that data distribution for the variables are normally distributed; this means that there is no bias in term of the responses gotten and it thus expresses a valid responses for further analysis.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.978 ^a	.956	.955	.17370	.762

a. Predictors: (Constant), SURPORTING SERVICE, CONVENIENCE SERVICE, CORE SERVICE

b. Dependent Variable: HOTEL SELECTION

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	109.693	3	36.564	1211.836	.000 ^b
	Residual	5.069	168	.030		
	Total	114.762	171			

a. Dependent Variable: HOTEL SELECTION

b. Predictors: (Constant), SURPORTING SERVICE, CONVENIENCE SERVICE, CORE SERVICE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	.112		
	CORE SERVICE	.752	.055	.736	13.712	.000
	CONVENIENCE SERVICE	.157	.053	.131	2.944	.004
	SURPORTING SERVICE	.374	.048	.379	7.849	.000

a. Dependent Variable: HOTEL SELECTION

The results showed the influence of core service packaging on guests' hotel selection. The coefficient of determination R-square of 0.956 implied that 95.6% of the sample variation in the dependent variable (guests' hotel selection) is explained or caused by the explanatory variables (core service packaging, convenience service packaging and supporting service packaging) while 4.6% is unexplained. This remaining 4.6% could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The value of R-square is an indication of positive and very high influence of service packaging on guests' hotel selection. The F-statistic was also used to test the overall significant of the model.

The F statistic with 1211.836 has probability of 0.000% level of significance. Since the probability of the F-statistics is less than 5% level of significance, we would reject the null hypothesis, H_0 and

therefore conclude that service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

Hypothesis One

H0₁: Core service packaging has no significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

The F statistic with 13.712 has probability of 0.00% level of significance. Since the probability of the F statistics is below 5% level of significance, we would reject the null hypothesis, H₀ and therefore conclude that core service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

Hypothesis two

H0₂: Convenience service packaging has no significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

The F-statistic with 2.944 has probability of 0.004% level of significance. Since the probability of the F statistics is below 5% level of significance, we would reject the null hypothesis, H₀ and therefore conclude that convenience service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

Hypothesis three

H0₃: Supportive service packaging has no significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

The F statistic with 7.849 has probability of 0.000% level of significance. Since the probability of the F statistics is below 5% level of significance, we would reject the null hypothesis, H₀ and therefore conclude that supportive service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

The findings of hypothesis one showed that core service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel. The finding of this study is consistent to the findings of Simpeh, Simpeh, Inusah and Kwesi (2017) who examined the relationship between the multidimensionality of services cape and customer patronage. It was found that positive relationship exists between the ambience of the hotels and patronage by customers. Positive relationship was also reported

between spatial layout and patronage by customers. It was again found that signs, symbols and artifacts were positively associated with customer patronage. This study concluded that physical setting is a valuable and appropriate strategy in attracting customers in the hotel industry.

The findings in hypothesis two showed that convenience service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel. The finding is consistent to the findings of Nsour (2013), examined the impact of Using Relationship Marketing Strategies on Customers Loyalty: Study on STC Customers in Riyadh – KSA. Study results proved that there is no statistical relationship between social bonds offered by STC, and between Saudi customer loyalties to this company. On contrary, it has been found that strategies which focus on financial and structural factors were a key factor in obtaining Saudi customer loyalty for company and its services, it was also found that there are statistically differences in this loyalty level due to income level, and gender, while no differences were found due to customer educational level.

The finding in hypothesis three above shows that supportive service packaging has a significant influence on guest hotel selection in hotel. The finding is consistent to the findings of Al Bassam (2013), who examined the determinants of service quality in hospitality services, the Case Study of Internet Hospitality Services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". The findings of both fieldworks indicate that reliability, responsiveness, website design, and personalization determine service quality in the Internet hospitality context. The study presents the main findings derived from the research model which can be used by a wide range of financial institutions, which make use of the Internet in their business dealings, to support each organization's decision-making processes. Also, the model can be used as a blueprint for an organization's strategic planning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study focused on service packaging and guest hotel selection. Packaging is one of the main strategies and policies that the productive institutions depends on. It represents the message that creates link between the product and the customers. In the way that the packing policy and

packaging is vital to the success of marketing item, as an integral part of them often and one of the elements or the physical components. A service is an act, deed or a performance. It is an act performed by an individual, group of persons or organization, with the purpose of satisfying customer's needs and wants for which the customer is willing to pay a price. The objectives of the study include; to examine the influence of core service packaging on guest hotel selection, to determine the influence of convenience service packaging on guest hotel selection, to examine the influence of supportive service packaging on guest hotel selection and to identify the factors affecting service packaging in hotel operations. The chapter two is grouped into four subheadings; conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical review and summary of literature review. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire from the selected hotel guests. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and mean and regression analysis. The result revealed that service packaging (core packaging, convenience packaging and sportive packaging) has a significant influence on guest hotel selection. Therefore, the study concludes that service packaging is one of the critical factors that influences customer choice of hotel.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in the study.

- (i) Hotels should invest more on service packaging and ensure that their staff are well trained on service delivery, this will help in enhancing customer patronage in hotels.
- (ii) The result showed that service packaging has a significant influence on customer patronage. Hence, hospitality industry should grab this advantage and include service packaging in their marketing efforts in order to increase the level of patronage.
- (iii) Hotels should time to time carry out performance evaluation to acknowledge and possibly reward the best performance staff in the area of service delivery. That would help in improving service packaging thereby improving customer patronage.
- (iv) Hostels should ensure that their customers are satisfied by their service they rendered to them. Also they should improve in their customer complaint management. This will enable hotels know their area they need improvement and immediately work on it I order to enhance customer patronage.

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