

Service Quality Dimensions and Guest Satisfaction in the Hospitality Sector: An Empirical Analysis of Selected Hotels in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ejht.2013/vol14n17280>

Published September 28, 2026

Citation: Wachukwu-Chikodi H.I., Udeme S., and Nwene I I. (2026) Service Quality Dimensions and Guest Satisfaction in the Hospitality Sector: An Empirical Analysis of Selected Hotels in Port Harcourt Metropolis, *European Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 14(1),72-80

Abstract: *This study investigated the impact of service quality dimensions on guest satisfaction in selected hotels within Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria. Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, data were obtained from 200 respondents (100 hotel staff and 100 hotel guests) drawn from 20 hotels across the metropolis. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire titled 'Problem Hindering Efficient Service Quality in Hospitality Establishments Questionnaire' (PHESQHEPHMQ), validated by hospitality experts and tested for reliability using the test-retest method. Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized for data analysis against a 2.50 criterion benchmark. Findings revealed that hotels provide quality core service offerings (grand mean = 3.11), with accommodation quality (mean = 3.34) and room service efficiency (mean = 3.14) recording the highest ratings. Cleanliness of facilities (mean = 3.58) and quick response to complaints (mean = 3.48) emerged as the primary drivers of guest satisfaction (grand mean = 3.35). The study concludes that service quality dimensions are vital determinants of guest contentment, recommending structured staff training and continuous service standardization.*

Keywords: service quality, guest satisfaction, hospitality management, accommodation quality, Port Harcourt.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector is a significant, customer-oriented segment, where service quality and its delivery to the customer play a crucial role in the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of businesses in the hotel sector (Crossman, 2024). Modern service economies such as the hotel provide paid sleeping accommodation, food and beverages, housekeeping, and recreational facilities; its main operation is to provide a place to relax, to be convenient for business, and to make the guest comfortable. The importance of customer service quality in the operations of tourism enterprises and the impact it has on guest satisfaction, repeat visits, customer loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth is widely acknowledged (Ohikhuare & Renner, 2022; Muhammad, 2023). High rates of commercial growth, urbanization and business activities that have triggered a significant increase in the number of hotel establishments particularly in the dynamic metropolitan areas of Nigeria such as Port Harcourt, the capital city of Rivers State (Okocha et al., 2021; Wachukwu et al., 2025). The Port Harcourt's hospitality sector is a diverse one with multinational hotel chains, boutique hotels, budget lodging for multinational oil company officials, business travelers and tourists. However, this hotel's guest satisfaction is often affected by serious issues in service delivery like unclean rooms, late check-in, rude staff, and failure to respond to complaints (Ohikhuare & Renner, 2022; Isiaka et al., 2024). The provisioning of consistent service quality is extremely difficult due to the intrinsic features of hotel services: intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability and inseparability from the personnel providing the service. This study therefore empirically investigated the fundamental types of hotel services offered, and the major factors affecting guest satisfaction in the selected hotels of Port Harcourt metropolis.

LITERATURE/THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This research bases itself majorly on the SERVQUAL Model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) and supported by the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980). The SERVQUAL framework defines service quality as the gap or congruence between what customers believe the service should be like, and how the service is perceived during the transaction (Service Quality = Performance - Expectations). Parasuraman, et al. (1988) identified five dimensions of service quality: tangibility (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of staff), reliability (dependability and accuracy of services provided), responsiveness (willingness and readiness to help guests), assurance (knowledge, courtesy, competence and ability of employees to instill trust and security) and empathy (caring, individualized attention provided to guests). Positive disconfirmation results when service performance is equal to or exceeds guests' expectations in each of these dimensions in hotel settings, and consequently, guests become more satisfied and more likely to revisit the hotel (Rather, 2021; Shakur & Kleynhans, 2025).

The empirical literature supports the notion that the service quality of a hotel can be manifested in both the technical outcomes (what the guest receives at the establishment, including clean beddings, healthy food, and also reliable protection), and the functional processes (how the guests

experience the service, such as the friendliness of staff members, the timeliness of room services, and the empathetic communication with hotel staff) (Crossman, 2024; Idowu, 2024). Ohikhuare, and Renner (2022) investigated the relationship between service assurance, staff responsiveness and customer satisfaction, repeat patronage and referral behavior of star-rated hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The researchers found that service assurance and staff responsiveness had statistically significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction, repeat patronage and referral behavior of the hotel. Likewise, Kalnaovakul and Promsivapallop (2023) found that cleanliness of the rooms, speed of the complaint handling process and the functioning of the amenities were the most important factors used by guests while giving ratings to the hotel online. But there is a lack of empirical studies to look into the relative importance of specific core service provisions and direct satisfaction determinants of the Port Harcourt commercial hub, which makes the present inquiry justifiable.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey research design appropriate for evaluating the opinion, perception and attitude of the respondents without experimental manipulation of the variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study area was Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, which is the major commercial and hospitality hub of the Niger Delta region. The target population was the hotel staff and adult hotel guests in 20 purposely selected hotels that operated in the metropolis. A total of 500 individuals were observed in the selected establishments and 200 individuals (100 hotel staff and 100 hotel guests; 10 individuals per hotel) were selected by convenience sampling technique according to their willingness and accessibility.

A structured questionnaire, titled 'Problem Hindering Efficient Service Quality in Hospitality Establishments Questionnaire' (PHESQHEPHMQ) was the main instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A (Demographic Data) and Section B (Evaluation of Services Rendered and Satisfaction Determinants) measured on 4 points Likert Scale: Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). Face and content validity of the instrument were done using the expert opinion of senior academics in Hospitality Management and Home Economics from the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE), and Rivers State University. Test-retest reliability confirmed high stability and consistency across time. The data were collected through direct delivery and retrieval in the 20 hotels within a period of two weeks. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviations in IBM SPSS Statistics with a benchmark criterion mean of 2.50, with a decision-making criterion where Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agreed/Accepted and Mean < 2.50 = Disagreed.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

The demographic distribution of the 200 respondents revealed that 54.0% (n = 108) were male and 46.0% (n = 92) were female. In terms of age, 54.0% (n = 108) were aged 26–35 years, 24.0% (n =

48) were aged 36–45 years, 12.0% (n = 24) were aged 18–25 years, and 10.0% (n = 20) were aged 46 years and above. Marital status showed that 52.0% (n = 104) were single, 44.0% (n = 88) were married, and 4.0% (n = 8) were divorced. Educational qualification indicated that 78.0% (n = 156) possessed HND/B.Sc. degrees, 10.0% (n = 20) held postgraduate qualifications, and 12.0% (n = 24) had secondary or OND/NCE education. Private sector employees formed the largest occupational cohort (52.0%, n = 104), followed by business persons (12.0%, n = 24), civil servants (10.0%, n = 20), and students (10.0%, n = 20). Furthermore, 66.0% of respondents patronized hotels frequently (36.0% very often; 30.0% often), demonstrating strong familiarity with hotel service standards.

S/N

Service Dimensions Statements

Mean (x)

SD

Decision

1.

The hotel provides quality accommodation services that satisfy guests.

3.34

0.71

Agree

2.

Room service staff in the hotel perform their duties creditably.

3.14

0.69

Agree

3.

The hotel provides reliable internet/Wi-Fi services.

3.00

0.78

Agree

4.

Food and restaurant services meet customer expectations.

3.04

0.75

Agree

5.
Security services provided by the hotel are adequate.
3.02
0.81
Agree

Grand Mean
3.11
0.75
Agree

Table 1. Mean Responses on the Types of Services Rendered for Customer Satisfaction in Selected Hotels

Decision Rule: Benchmark Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree.

S/N
Satisfaction Determinants Statements
Mean ($\bar{x}$)
SD
Decision

1.
Staff politeness influences customer satisfaction.
3.24
0.79
Agree

2.
Quick response to complaints increases customer returning interest.
3.48
0.78
Agree

3.
Affordable pricing influences customer hotel choice.
3.18
0.87
Agree

4.
Cleanliness of hotel facilities affects customer satisfaction.
3.58
0.70
Agree
5.
Availability of modern facilities improves guest satisfaction.
3.28
0.87
Agree

Grand Mean
3.35
0.80
Agree

Table 2. Mean Responses on the Factors Influencing Guest Satisfaction in Selected Hotels in Port Harcourt

Decision Rule: Benchmark Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree.

As presented in Table 1, respondents agreed with all statements regarding services rendered for customer satisfaction, with all mean scores exceeding the 2.50 criterion benchmark. Quality accommodation services recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.34, SD = 0.71), followed by room service staff efficiency (Mean = 3.14, SD = 0.69), restaurant food quality (Mean = 3.04, SD = 0.75), security adequacy (Mean = 3.02, SD = 0.81), and reliable internet/Wi-Fi connectivity (Mean = 3.00, SD = 0.78). The overall grand mean of 3.11 confirms that sampled hotels provide commendable core service operations.

Regarding determinants of guest satisfaction (Table 2), all items were affirmed by respondents, yielding an overall grand mean of 3.35. The highest-rated factor was facility cleanliness (Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.70), closely followed by prompt complaint handling (Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.78). Respondents also strongly agreed that the availability of modern facilities (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.87), staff politeness (Mean = 3.24, SD = 0.79), and affordable room pricing (Mean = 3.18, SD = 0.87) significantly influence overall guest satisfaction and hotel selection.

DISCUSSION

This study's results indicate that customer satisfaction in the hotel sector of Port Harcourt is a multi-dimensional synthesis of the tangible infrastructure and intangible service delivery. The scores in the accommodation and room service categories (Mean = 3.34 and 3.14) respectively

reflect the high importance that is attached to the quality of the rooms and the performance of the room service. Comfortable rooms, clean linens and housekeeping are essential elements of the hospitality value proposition. These results are in line with those obtained by Crossman (2024), which indicate that the quality of accommodations is the one tangible service that is used by guests to measure value for money and service credibility. When accommodation facilities meet promised standards, guests experience positive expectancy confirmation, fostering psychological contentment and loyalty (Muhammad, 2023).

Moreover, the leading position of cleanliness (Mean = 3.58) among the most important determinants of guest satisfaction highlights cleanliness as a threshold factor in hospitality operations that cannot be neglected. In a post-pandemic operating environment, guests first check out the cleanliness of bathroom surfaces, room sanitation and cleanliness of the public areas before considering the secondary amenities. This aligns with the findings of Kalnaovakul and Promsivapallop (2023), who found that cleanliness is the most important determinant mentioned in online guest reviews. Customer complaint resolution time also proved to be an important factor with a mean score of 3.48, showing that how quickly guests can lodge a complaint and receive a resolution is essential in reducing guest dissatisfaction. The satisfaction of customers with the prompt and courteous responses of staff to maintenance and room service issues leads to their trust in the establishment and repeat patronage as previously reported by Ohikhuare and Renner (2022) and Idowu (2024).

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The study sought to empirically validate the application of SERVQUAL model and Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory in the urban hospitality market of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, from research point of view. It shows that the intangible aspects of the communication (responsiveness and courtesy) and the nature of the employee are what encourage guests to stay and what give an establishment a competitive edge over others. The study findings are particularly relevant for hospitality practitioners and hotel managers as the investment in the modernization of infrastructure must be accompanied with ongoing training of human resources. Management should conduct strict housekeeping sanitation inspections and educate the staff who deliver hospitality to customers to be able to take active listening, empathy and swift services recovery.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that customer service quality has a strong influence on guests' satisfaction in selected hotels of Port Harcourt metropolis. High quality accommodations, reliable room service, adequate security, and effective Internet access are all significant factors in positive customer experiences in core hospitality offerings. Additionally, cleanliness of the facility, quickness of reply to any complaints, courtesy of employees and modern facilities are the top drivers of guest satisfaction and brand loyalty. Therefore, hotels with a balance of facility quality and service

delivery that are timely, courteous and reliable are the ones that will have the greatest chance of gaining sustainable competitive advantage.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future empirical research should extend this line of research by making comparative analyses of the hotels of different star ratings (such as foreign brand hotels and indigenous budget hotels) in other major urban cities in Nigeria. Furthermore, researchers in future should use structural equation modeling (SEM) to understand which factors mediate between perceived price-fairness and electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) technologies and long-term guest retention and brand equity.

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European Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 14(1),72-80, 2026

Print ISSN: ISSN 2054-6424(Print),

Online ISSN: ISSN 2054-6432(Online)

Website: <https://www.eajournals.org/>

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

Wachukwu-Chikodi, H. I., Anthony, I. D. and Deedam, N. J. (2025) Determinants (security, ICT and room service) of customers' patronage of star-rated hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, European Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 13(1), 21-36.