Consumer Perception and Satisfaction of Hotel Services in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction with hotels is largely based upon the anticipated quality of services and perceived expectation from the hotel ratings. Customer's perception of hotel is, therefore, a derivative of value expectation for prices offered by the hotel for their services. This study assessed the customer's perception and satisfaction of hotel services with a view to ascertaining the service quality. The research design adopted was the descriptive research design. A structured questionnaire was face validated and tested the reliability of 0.812 chronbach alpha was established through a pilot test. The questionnaire was administered to patrons of some selected hotels in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data, one hundred and three (103), were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM version 23. Frequencies and percentages were used to identify standard rating of the hostel. The principal component analysis was used to identify key variables of linear combinations which allowed for most of the variability in guests' expressed perception and satisfaction with hotel services. Findings revealed that hotel management over exaggerated the standard and quality of their hotels in the town. Customers' perception was guided by security measures available,

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promotional strategies and protection of guest's privacy among others. Satisfaction with determined by timelines of meals served, safety and security of guests' and properties, laundry services staff efficiency and availability of ICT devices among others. It can be recommended that hotel managers should be engaged in consistent research studies in order to improve their hotel business which may invariably have implications for prices, quality and patronage.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry basically provides hospitable accommodation for travellers as temporary homes for those who can afford the price. Hotel management, therefore, advertises the quality of their services which allows prospective patrons to know their standard. This arose from the perceptions of the prospective customers. Therefore, understanding the consumer is crucial in the hotel business [1]. The quest for the hospitable environment and the expectation perceived to be received are some of the major factors of patronage of hotels. Satisfaction is understood to be predicted by service quality [2] and [3]. The expected luxury from the hotel is not just from the quality of services provided but site, environment, and others which guest perceived could be obtained [4].

1.1 Literature Review

Allport socio-psychoanalytic theory of consumer behaviour [5] was considered for this study. Allport defined prejudice closely to attitude as a feeling of favourable or unfavourable toward a person or thing prior to or not based on actual experience. He identified most exogenous i.e. socio-cultural factors and social factors as influencers and endogenous, i.e. personality and motivation as cognition variables that affect human behaviour (decision) toward an object stimulus as a product. Hotels are generally categorized by the quality of their standard and levels of services they provide to their customer. The quality of services is determined by the type of facilities, provision of protection and leisure devices provided along with the prices. Hotels are rated according to quality from 1 star to in most cases 5 stars and could be rated higher depending on the number of rooms, amenities, structure and size [6] and [7]. There is no real international hotel rating system, what exists is variations between countries' standards. The star classifications of the hotels are a function of the services provided. Customers' perception and satisfaction do not necessarily relate to the rating of the hotel as hotel management, and customers may likely have different perceptions of satisfaction. The management could perceive satisfaction in terms of luxury and service quality provided while the customers may conceptualize satisfaction in terms of value received for the price of lodging; luxury and service quality [8].

The customers' perception of a hotel is the driving force of their expectations [9], and the customers' emotional judgments about the hotel are what will determine whether she or he will return to get the services again or not [10]. From a study in East Asian societies, [11], suggested that luxuries play a predominantly social symbolic role, minimizing their private meanings and hedonic value, which are emphasized in the West. When it comes to luxury, service quality and satisfaction, positive customer experiences are vitally important, because a positive experience will cause the customer to wish to return or stay longer and to recommend the establishment to others [3,12,13]. In an analysis of the factors of hotel patronage, [14], reported significant cultural differences in the impact of the factors on customer beliefs about service quality and their satisfaction. From a meta-analysis of hospitality management studies, [15], reported that customer experiences are multidimensional and unique to each situation. [16,17] opined that restaurant customers would select restaurants that meet their quality and value standards; and restaurateurs that ignore this will see customer traffic decline as guests support competing restaurants. The customer's perception of this service quality has at least two elements – satisfaction with what was provided; and the way in which this was delivered by the front line employee [18,19]. Culture is another factor known to attract customers to hotels. [20] reported that Russians constitute the largest foreign tourist group visiting Finland principally because of culture and their perceptions of food and food-related preferences during such visits. The report stated that Russian tourists especially value the freshness and healthiness associated with local food.

Customers' satisfaction could be defined as the outcome of perceived value expectation of patronage. satisfaction is key to patronage [21]. Customer satisfaction is often used by managers to predict repeat patronage, which leads to brand loyalty and new customers [22]. [23] reported a long-term and reciprocally advantageous relationships between customers and the hotel management which they stated as becoming progressively important because of the highly positive correlation between guests' overall satisfaction levels and the probability of their return to the same hotel. Customer requirements for quality products and service in the tourism industry have become increasingly evident [23].

Lafia is the Capital of Nasarawa state. It is in close proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria. Hotels within the town are graded from 1star to 5 stars. The proximity to FCT makes the town's hotels attractive to customers who visit not just the town but the FCT. No known studies have been conducted on perception and satisfaction with hotels in Lafia. This study could be a baseline for the investigation of service quality of hotels in the state. Hence the specific objective of this study was to determine:

1. Customers perception of hotel corroborates with that of the hostel management in Lafia by their rating of the hotel.
2. Customers perception of hotel services in Lafia
3. Customers satisfaction with hotels services in Lafia.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Area of Study

This study was conducted in Lafia Municipal council of Nasarawa State (Local Government Council). The council is located between 8°-9° East of the Greenwich meridian and latitude 8^0-9^0 North of the equator. In terms of vegetation, the council lies largely within the guinea savannah ecological zone. It's raining season starts from March/May to October (Lafia municipal council information unit, 2018). The council area has an annual average rainfall of about 1.288 mm and an average temperature of about $32°C$ (Nasarawa State agricultural development project, 2018). Sandy-loams and clay fine sand silt are found in Fadama areas. The major

occupation of the people includes cultivation of vegetables crops like tomatoes, hot pepper, garden eggs etc. (statistical Data of National Population Commission, 2006), indicated that the council has a total population of 478,809 people consist mainly of the following tribes: Kanuri (Barebari), Alago, Hausa, Fulani, Migili, (Koro) Eggon (Mada dutse), Gwandara etc. The council is made up of thirteen districts among which are Lafia central, Lafia east, Lafia west, Lafia North, Agyaragu, Akunza, Assakio, Shabu, and Kwandere. The council shares boundaries with the following local government area: Doma in the west, Obi in the south, Quan'pan in Plateau state in the east and finally Nasarawa Eggon in the north.

2.2 Population

The population was any man or woman who patronizes some hotels in lafia, Nasarawa State.

2.3 Research Design

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study.

2.4 Instrument

The questionnaire was structured, and the perception index was employed to construct the questionnaire including a five (5) point likert scale.

2.5 Validity

The questionnaire instrument was given to three (3) professionals in this area of the study to validate the instrument. Al necessary corrections were made before the instrument was pilot tested.

2.6 Reliability

Chronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.812 using the statistical programme of Social Science (SPSS) was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. These indicate that the question was suitable and appropriate for the purpose of the study.

2.7 Sample Size

One hundred and three (103) questionnaires were administered to the respondents.
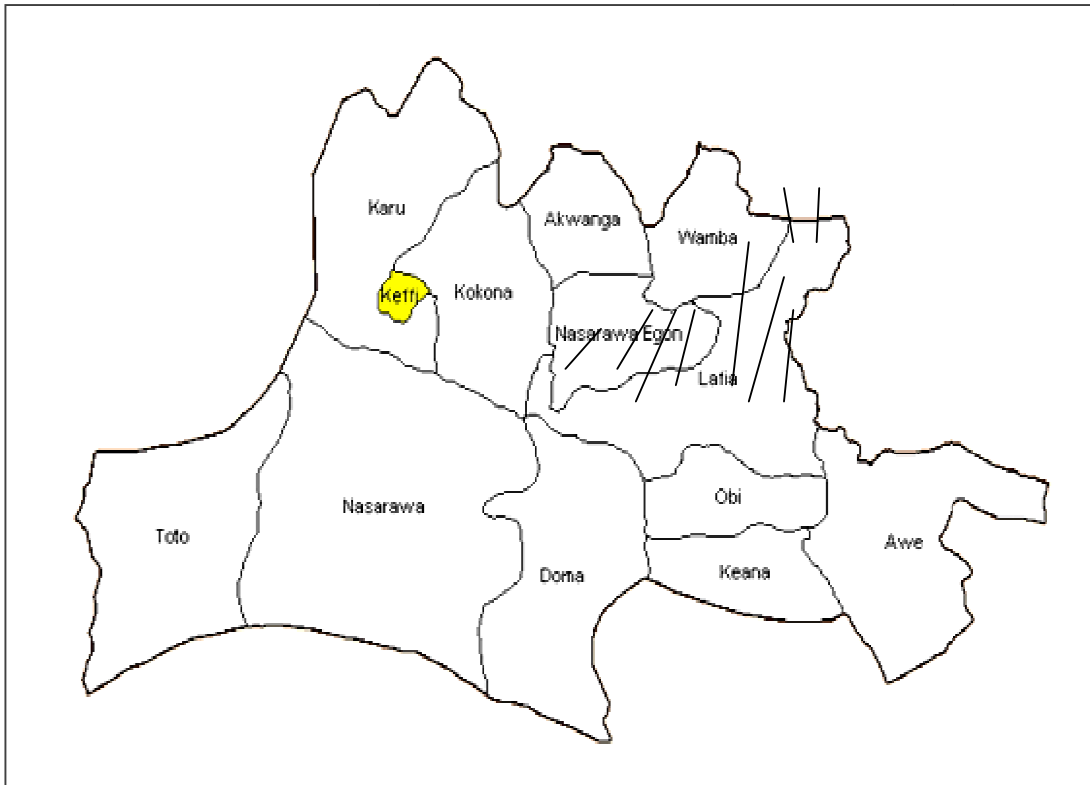
Fig. 1. Map of Nasarawa State showing the study area

2.8 Sample Technique

Nine (9) major hotels in Lafia were sampled. Convenience sampling was adopted in distributing the questionnaire to hotel consumers at the point of patronage.

2.9 Collection of Data

Questionnaire was distributed to the guests at the hostels by the researchers and research assistant who was employed to assist a a guest who patronized the hostel and had difficulty in completing the questionnaire.

2.10 Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM version 23(field, 2006). Statistical procedure used included frequencies and percentages which were used for the frequency distribution percentages along with means. Factorial analysis was used to determine the major variables and factors influencing customers perception and satisfaction of hotels in Lafia as experienced by customers.

3. RESULTS

Objective 1: To determine the rating of the hotels by the guest and the hotel management

The customers generally rated the hotels lower than the management. Table 1 shows the graded hotels by the guest along that of the management. The percentage ratings are graphed in Fig. 1.

By the ratings of the customers, none of the hotels exceeded a 4staf hotel. Most (61 or 59.2%) of the customers were of the view that the hotels were in 1-star grade. Those who rated their lodging as 4 star were only 4(3.9%) which was the actual number the management rated as 5star hotel. The table and the graph shows that the customers generally rated the hotels 1star lower than the rating of their management indicating that hotel management over exaggerated the ratings of their hotels.

Table 1. Rating of the hotels by the guest and the hotel management

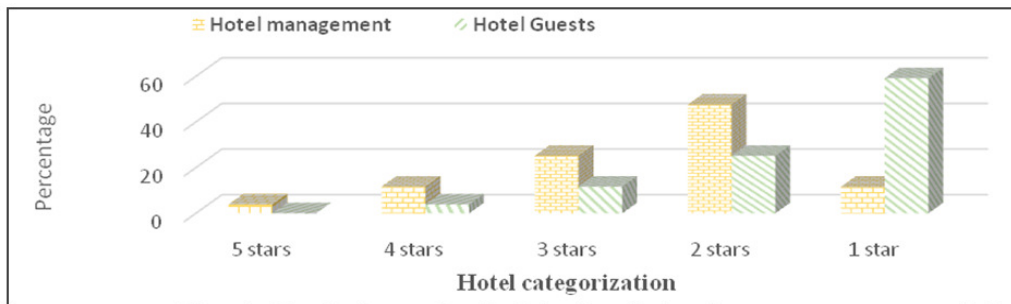| Hotel Grading	Hotel management		Hotel guests	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
5 stars	4	3.9	0	0.0
4 stars	12	11.7	4	3.9
3 stars	26	25.2	12	11.7
2 stars	49	47.6	26	25.2
1 star	12	11.6	61	59.2
Total	103	100.0	103	100.0

Fig. 1. Graded standard of the hotels by the management and the guests

Objective 2: To determine customers perception of hotels services in Lafia

Sixteen items were used for this assessment. They included the issue of security, promotional strategies, restriction of women of easy virtues, landscaping, designing and arrangement of the hotel, privacy of guest, amenities for recreational activities, staff discipline and handling of guests. Others included Cultural and religious activities, cleanliness of interior and exterior, packages offered, prices and quality services. To determine the major variables of perception of the hotels by the guests, the variables were subjected to a factor analysis using the principal components as the extraction method. This was to ensure that the selected parameters were reduced to a small number of linear combinations of the 16 variables which account for most of the variability. A summary of the factor loadings and sorted commonalities based on a principal components analysis with the extraction is shown in Table 2. The extraction of the main factors was based on eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.0. From the result of the extraction Sums of Squared loadings, the total variance explained by the five main variables account for 67.113% of the variability in the original data.

Table 3 shows the principal components extraction with the eigenvalues. Using the initial commonalities for the extraction, Security, promotional strategies used by hotel management, restriction of women of easy virtues, Landscaping, design and arrangement of the hotel and with the privacy of guest are the significant variables of perception by a guest who patronize the hotels. The selection process is shown in the graphed scree plot in Fig. 2.

The Eigenvalues table indicates that the eigenvalue for the first factor accounts for 32.00% of the total variation and the second eigenvalue accounts for 10.24%, the subsequent factor accounted for 9.67%, 8.54% and 6.67% for the total of 67.11% of the total variation accounted by the five major factors. The contributions from the remaining eigenvalues were negligible. This analysis suggests that extracting 5 factors is appropriate for determining variables of guest perception of the hotels. The Scree Plot graphs these eigenvalues.

From the scree plot, security consideration is the dominant issue in the guest perception of any hotel. This is hardly surprising in view of the prevailing fear of bombing and frequent attacks common in many parts of the country especially in the FCT and it's environ of which Lafia is part. The promotional strategies adopted by hotel management came a distant second to the guest perception of the hotels. The restriction of women of easy virtues from gaining access to the guest could be seen as part of the security

Table 2. Summary of principal component communities for the variables of hotel perception by the guests

Sn	Perceptions of the hotels by the customers	Extraction
1	Security provided by this hotel is adequate	.801
2	The hotel has promotional strategies for customers benefit e.g. Gold, silver and bronze cards etc.	.746
3	This hotel restricts women of easy virtues access into the hotel.	.733
4	Landscaping, designing and arrangement of the hotel attracts me to this hotel.	.731
5	Privacy of guest is protected in this hotel	.716
6	Claims by the management of the hotel contradict the reality on ground	.711
7	Peculiar activities (e.g. live band, swimming pool, conferences/workshop/seminars, cinema, gymnastic center), motivate me to lodge in this hotel	.706
8	Staff are disciplined and polite in handling guests.	.693
9	Cultural and religious activities of the guest are considered (e.g. arrow indicating the eastern direction for Muslim prayers and Bible for Christians), are provided in the rooms.	.664
10	The cleanliness of the interior and exterior of the hotel is appealing	.650
11	Packages (e.g. complimentary meal, newspapers, cosmetics, free beverages in the room, internet services, free shuttles, e.g. to tourist sites and for conveniences etc.) offered by this hotel, motivate me to patronize this hotel.	.630
12	Tariff is commensurate to the service provided	.608
13	Quality services are peculiar to this hotel	.604
14	The hotel experiences high patronage	.589
15	Colours, fittings and figurines in the hotel rhyme and are pleasant	.588
16	This hotel is conscientious of time	.567

Table 3. Selection of guest perception of hotel factors with the principal component

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.120	32.003	32.003	5.12	32.00	32.00
2	1.638	10.235	42.238	1.64	10.23	42.24
3	1.547	9.669	51.907	1.55	9.67	51.91
4	1.367	8.543	60.450	1.37	8.54	60.45
5	1.066	6.663	67.113	1.07	6.66	67.11
6	.795	4.968	72.081			
7	.678	4.240	76.321			
8	.624	3.898	80.220			
9	.576	3.600	83.819			
10	.505	3.153	86.973			
11	.491	3.066	90.039			
12	.418	2.612	92.651			
13	.375	2.347	94.998			
14	.309	1.930	96.927			
15	.268	1.675	98.603			
16	.224	1.397	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

precaution which most gest placed uppermost in their perception of the hotels. The issue of aesthetic consideration came fourth. This included the perception of hotel's sitting, landscaping, structure and arrangement followed in the fifth position by the need for protection of guest' privacy. The availability of recreational facilities like a live band, swimming pool, conferences /workshop/ seminars, cinema, gymnastic centre) were not found to be major perceived factors for lodgers. This also goes for staff discipline and polite handling of guests cultural and religious provisions, cleanliness of interior and exterior of the hotels, provision of the
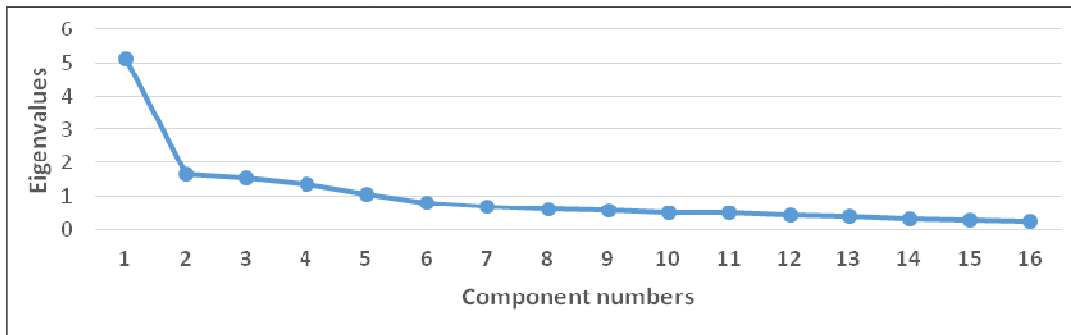
Fig. 2. Scree plot eigenvalues on guest's perception of hotels in Lafia

Table 4. Summary of Principal component communities for satisfaction variables by the guest of the hotels

Sn	Factors for the satisfaction of customers with the hotel's services	Extraction
1	Meals are served at call to order (or without delay)	.947
2	Safety and security of guests and their properties is guaranteed	.853
3	Laundry services are commendable	.801
4	Some of the staff are very efficient	.779
5	I am satisfied with the ICT services of this hotel	.774
6	I will like to lodge in this hotel again	.701
7	Overall, I am satisfied with the services of the hotel	.665
8	The meals at the hotel taste delicious and appetizing	.590
9	The receptionists are rude and aggressive	.586
10	The hotel makes online reservation/booking	.581
11	Rooms are not well kept and ventilated	.580
12	Facilities provided by the hotel are satisfactory	.530
13	In general, the hotel staff are not smart in appearance	.527
14	I received value for the money I spent in this hotel	.487

complimentary meal, newspapers, cosmetics, free beverages in the room, internet services, free shuttles e.g. to tourist sites and for conveniences etc. The tariff commensuration to the service provided quality of services, Colours, fittings and figurines in the hotel rhyme pleasantness along with conscientious timing were all relatively negligible in terms of guest perception of the hotel.

Objectives 3: To determine the stratification level of customer with the hotel services in Lafia

For satisfaction with the hotel services, 14 items were involved in the assessment. They included meals served, safety and security of guests and their properties, laundry services, the efficiency of staff and available ICT services along with the timing process of activities among others. The selection process of the main factor for satisfaction here was subjected to the use of the principal component analysis. Summary of the factor loadings and sorted communalities based

on a principal components analysis are shown in Table 4.

The main factors loading based on eigenvalues greater than 1 is shown in Table 5. Satisfaction of guest as shown in the table generally revolves around five main factors. These were meals served on a timely basis, safety and security of guests and their properties, laundry services, staff efficiency and availability of ICT devices in the hotels. Extraction of the principal component was based on initial factor report. The Scree Plot graphs the eigenvalues in Fig. 3.

The Eigenvalues table indicates that the eigenvalue for the first factor accounts for 29.67% of the variation and the second eigenvalue accounts for 11.96%, the subsequent factor accounted for 10.17%, 8.16% and 7.20% for the total of 67.16% of the total variation accounted by the five major factors. The sixth eigenvalue only explains 6.56% of the variation, and the contributions from the remaining eigenvalues were negligible. This analysis

Table 5. Selection of guest satisfaction with hotel factors with the principal component

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.153	29.665	29.665	4.153	29.665	29.665
2	1.675	11.961	41.626	1.675	11.961	41.626
3	1.424	10.170	51.796	1.424	10.170	51.796
4	1.142	8.157	59.953	1.142	8.157	59.953
5	1.008	7.202	67.155	1.008	7.202	67.155
6	.919	6.564	73.718			
7	.718	5.131	78.850			
8	.690	4.929	83.779			
9	.603	4.306	88.085			
10	.480	3.430	91.515			
11	.351	2.507	94.022			
12	.327	2.333	96.355			
13	.289	2.064	98.419			
14	.221	1.581	100.000			
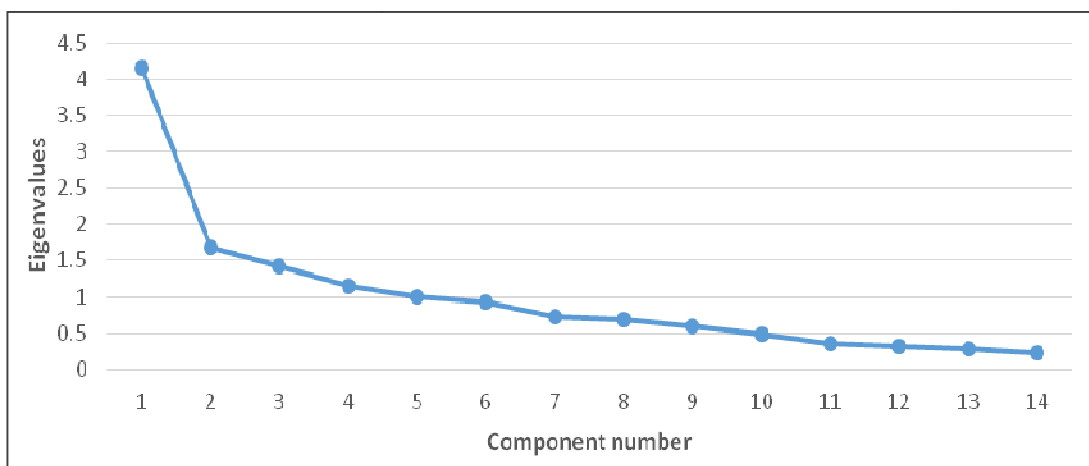
Fig. 2. Scree plot eigenvalues on guest's satisfaction with hotels services in Lafia

suggests that extracting 5 factors is appropriate for determining variables of satisfaction by the customers.

The scree plot of the eigen values shows that the satisfaction of the guests with the hotels depends to a large extent on the meals served on a timely basis, safety and security of guests and their properties, laundry services, staff efficiency and the provision of ICT devices by hotel management.

4. DISCUSSION

1. Results showed that Lafia hotel management perspective of the quality of their hotels services does not corroborate with the perspectives of their customers. The variation of their perspectives could be explained as preferred by [6] that hotels are rated according to quality from 1star to in most cases a 5star hotels and could be rated high depending on the numbers of rooms, amenities, structure and size. There is no real international hotel rating but what exists is variations between the customer's standard. The star classification of hotels is a function of the services provided. Customer's perception, therefore, does not necessarily relate to the rating of the hotel as hotel management and customers

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rating may likely have different perceptions and satisfaction [8,7]. [14] said customers experiences are multi-dimensional and unique in such situations. Therefore it can be implied that the rating of hotel management and their customers in Lafia depends on their individual perceptions and expectations.

2. Guest sufficiency with these services (security provided, promotional strategies, restriction of women of easy virtues, landscaping, privacy of guest and peculiar services) were strong factors found to be determinant of their continued patronage of the hotels. Guest who said they were satisfied with the above major factors were willing to lodge in the respective hotel again and were generally satisfied with others services like online reservation/booking where such was available, rooms ventilation and other facilities provided by the hotel and would likely be satisfied with the value of money spent on their lodging. The finding of this agrees with [22] who reported that International tourist hotels in Taiwan tend to diversify their business by expanding their food and beverage services. Wong and [11], suggested that luxuries play a predominantly social symbolic role, minimizing the private meanings and hedonic value which are emphasized in the west. When it comes to luxuries, services quality and satisfaction, positive customer experiences are vitally important because positive perception will cause the customers to wish to return or stay longer and recommend the establishment to others. [3,12]. Customer's perception of service quality has the element of satisfaction and the way in which it was delivered by the front line employee [17].

3. In terms of satisfaction, meals served on a timely basis, safety and security of guests and their properties, laundry services, staff efficiency and the provision of ICT devices by hotel management were considered to be major determinants of satisfaction with the hotel services by the guest. These variables generally determine the customers' willingness to come back for repeated patronage and possibly recommend such other to other prospective guests. Customer's are often used by managers to predict, repeat

patronage which leads to brand loyalty and new customers [21]. The finding of this study has implications for hotel managers who wants to promote their business and expand the level of their patronage. To attract new customers and retain existing ones, managers must concentrate on improving on these identified factors and further enhance other factors.

5. CONCLUSION

Observations from this study suggest that management may not have the same perception of their hotels as their customers. The two tended to rate the standard of the hotels differently. Apart from this perceived difference, patronage is based on perception of hotel security, promotional strategies adopted by hotel management which prospective guest perceived to be of advantage to them, restriction of women of easy virtues, sitting, aesthetic values Landscaping, designing and arrangement and protection of guest privacy. These factors are significant and tended to encompass other factors in guest perception and satisfaction of the hotels in Lafia town.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. Hotel management in Lafia needs to engage in constant studies in order to ascertain customer perceptions on their services that they provide so that Hotel management may not assume and or underestimate their customers. This may necessarily have implications for price rating and customers patronage.

2. In order to attract new customers and retain existing ones, Hotel management must concentrate on improving the identified factors from this studies that impinge on the willingness of customers for repeated patronage and probably recommend another prospective guest.

3. There is a need for further studies on Hotels in Nasarawa State in order to improve on the quality of the hospitality services item of timely meals served, safety and security of guest and their properties laundry services, staff efficiency and, ICT services in other to attract industry and enhance economic derivation through tourism in Lafia.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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