

Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Hotel Seventeen in Kaduna Metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Kaduna Metropolis. Specifically, this study examined the influence of service quality dimensions tangibles and assurance on customer satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Utilizing the SERVQUAL model, this study employed a quantitative descriptive survey approach with a sample of 379 hotel guests over a six-month period, resulting in the collection of 358 usable responses via a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression were performed to analyse the impact of service quality dimensions on overall customer satisfaction. The findings indicated that both Tangibles (representing physical features and equipment) and Assurance (represented by employee knowledge, competence, courtesy, etc.) are major drivers of hotel guest satisfaction. According to the regression results, the Tangible service quality dimension had a positive effect on customer satisfaction at 0.189 ($p < 0.001$), while the Assurance service quality dimension had a greater positive effect on customer satisfaction at 0.318 ($p < 0.001$), therefore indicating the significant impact of the competence and trustworthiness of staff in influencing the overall service experience. The results from the correlation analysis also confirmed that there are positive correlations between each of the service quality dimensions and overall satisfaction. The study concluded that, although high-quality physical infrastructure contributed to favorable guest evaluations, interpersonal service factors, particularly assurance, played a more decisive role in determining customer satisfaction in the Northern Nigerian hotel context. Based on these findings, the study recommended that hotel management should implement structured staff training programmes to enhance professional competence and trust-building, alongside proactive facility management strategies to maintain and improve physical environments.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction; Service Quality; Tangibles; Assurance; SERVQUAL Model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction has emerged as a central pillar of organisational success and competitive survival within the global hospitality industry. Hotels all over the world are realizing more and more how important it is to consistently provide excellent service experiences in order to draw in new business, keep hold of current clients, and cultivate enduring loyalty (Ali et al., 2021; Prabhakar & Gunasekeran, 2024). The World Tourism Organization (2023) identifies service quality as a key determinant of destination competitiveness in an era in which customer choices are heavily influenced by digital platforms, social media, and online review systems. In this setting, a hotel's reputation can be quickly harmed and its market share drastically decreased by a single bad service experience (Hsieh & Yuan, 2022). In developed economies, service quality management has become an institutionalised component of hotel operations. To improve customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, hotels in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia frequently invest in staff training, technology-enabled guest experience systems, and organized quality assurance procedures (Prabhakar & Gunasekeran, 2024). While poor service delivery undermines customer trust and increases customer switching behavior, superior service quality consistently results in positive word-of-mouth communication, repeat business, and enhanced financial performance (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Hsieh & Yuan, 2022). The SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and the Expectancy–Disconfirmation Paradigm (Oliver, 1980), which define service quality as the difference between customer expectations and perceived service performance, provide theoretical foundations for these relationships.

Urbanization, increased business travel, and rising domestic tourism have all contributed to the rapid expansion of the hospitality sector in developing nations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. However, this growth has been accompanied by ongoing institutional and infrastructure issues that limit the provision of high-quality services. Consistent customer satisfaction is still hampered by a number of issues, including inadequate power supplies, poor facility maintenance, a lack of technological support systems, high employee turnover, and inadequate customer service training (Idris et al., 2023). These structural flaws often result in inconsistent service and deteriorating customer perceptions of responsiveness and dependability.

These are the wider regional issues seen in the hotel sector in Nigeria. Though the large cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt are recording the best cases of hotel development, empirical data are still reporting the shortcomings of staff responsiveness, lack of personalised customer care, and inconsistency in service delivery (Ali et al., 2021; Idris et al., 2023). Nigerian hotels thus determine the level of customer satisfaction according to the presence of physical facilities as well as the quality of the interpersonal relationship between the guest and the service staff. Although this relationship is of great significance, the available literature has focused much on the hotel sector in Southern Nigeria at the expense of Northern Nigeria which has not been adequately studied.

Kaduna State is a strategic destination in the hospitality sector of Northern Nigeria since it is a commercial hub, as well as an upcoming tourism destination. The state receives business travellers, conference attendees and leisure tourists which creates long-term demand of hotel services. The hotel sector in Kaduna, however, does not exist in a socio-cultural and economic setting as that of Lagos and Abuja. The presence of cultural norms and expectations of guests and operational limitations in Northern Nigeria imply that the results of other states cannot be unconditionally extrapolated to the Kaduna State, which is why it is necessary to conduct empirical inquiry on the territory of this state (Ibrahim & Musa, 2022).

Hotel Seventeen, a leading hospitality organization in the Kaduna State that accommodates both corporate and recreational clients, offers a suitable study context to explore the issue of service quality and customer satisfaction in this least researched situation. Although it is strategically positioned and has relatively modern facilities, the reviews left by the guests and unofficial evaluations have raised numerous issues associated with the slow staff reaction, lack of consistency in providing the service, insufficient focus on personalised service and, with time, the physical facilities have started to fall into disrepair. These issues imply that there has always been a discrepancy between the expected and perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

In this research, the operationalisation of service quality is based on four dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, namely tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1996). The tangibles denote the buildings, equipment and aesthetics of the people, responsiveness is the willingness and timeliness of the staff to serve the customer, assurance is the competence, courtesy and capability of the staff to elicit trust, and empathy is the capability of the hotel to offer personalised care and attention to the clients.

The dependent variable of the given research is customer satisfaction, defined as the overall assessment of hotel services by guests according to the degree to which their expectations are satisfied or surpassed. It includes the emotions of fulfilment, the perceived value, readiness to become a repeat customer and recommend behaviour (Oliver, 1980; Ali et al., 2021). Service quality is therefore linked to customer satisfaction through both psychological and cognitive evaluations of service encounters.

The issue, although the significance of service quality is accepted, is that there is no systematic empirical work on the relative role of various dimensions of service quality on customer satisfaction in the hotel sector in Kaduna State. This means that hotel managers are not provided with clear, unambiguous, evidence-based directions on which areas of service quality tangibles, responsiveness, assurance or empathy should be given priority to elicit the best impacts on customer satisfaction. As a result, the decisions made in the context of resource allocation in terms of staff training, facility improvement, and improvement of the service processes are

usually influenced by managerial intuition rather than empirical findings that are rooted within the locality (Prabhakar &Gunasekeran, 2024).

The paper aimed to fill this gap by analysing how tangibles and assurance affect customer satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State. The exploration of the targeted service quality dimensions is expected to lead to the creation of contextually relevant evidence that will be informative in the managerial decision-making process and contribute to the existing literature on service quality and customer satisfaction in the Nigerian hospitality sector. Finally, the findings will assist in enhancing the creation of a customer-oriented, competitive, and sustainable hotel sector in Northern Nigeria. In line with the objectives of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

- i. What is the influence of tangibles on customer satisfaction among guests at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State?
- ii. To what extent does assurance predict customer satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State?

Consequently, the study tested the null hypotheses below:

H1: Tangibles have no significant influence on customer satisfaction among guests at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State.

H2: Assurance does not significantly predict customer satisfaction among guests at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Customer Satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction is the cumulative evaluation of the services offered by a hotel meeting or surpassing the expectations of guests. It is a key indicator of recurring customer loyalty, repeat visits, and favorable word-of-mouth recommendations (Adediran, 2022). Satisfaction in hotel contexts can be achieved through visible factors such as room cleanliness, the aesthetic of hotel facilities and the quality of its amenities as well as intangible ones such as the warmth of the staff, attention and personalisation of the services. The growing dissatisfaction, especially in the online age, poses a threat of reputational harm due to poor online reviews, and to remain competitive, active management of customer satisfaction is vital (Idris et al., 2023).

2.2 *Service Quality*

Service quality involves the extent to which the services offered meet the required standards and exceed the expectations of the customer. Since hotel services are intangible and co-produced with the guest, quality is measured both by functional deliverables and by the manner of service delivery (Prabhakar &Gunasekeran, 2024). The SERVQUAL model conceptualizes service

quality in five dimensions, namely tangibles (appearance of physical facilities and staff), reliability (uniformity of service), responsiveness (willingness and rapidity of service), assurance (knowledge, courtesy and trust-building by staff) and empathy (individualised attention and care). Tangibles produce initial impressions; responsiveness influences perception of professionalism; assurance creates confidence; and empathy produces emotional attachment all together defining the standard of the guest experience (Hammanjoda et al., 2023).

2.3 Physical Facilities and Equipment

Physical facilities and equipment are the tangible aspects of service delivery that convey quality, reliability, and professionalism to customers in hotels. In concept, they form the tangible dimensions of service performance and provide the structural background within which service encounters take place. These encompass both supporting infrastructure (reception areas, conference halls, and recreational facilities) as well as core service spaces (guest rooms and restaurants), which are used to form cognitive and emotional appraisals of hotel services in the eyes of customers (Akanbi & Lawal, 2022; Suleiman & Yakubu, 2023).

Physical facilities and equipment, as a service quality measure, have symbolic effects as they alleviate doubts about the service deliverables of customers especially in a setting with intangibility and high perceived risk. Cleanliness, beauty, and practical organization are not merely operational characteristics, but symbolic indicators of organizational discipline, management skill, and dedication to the welfare of the customers (Adeola & Bamidele, 2021). With the help of these cues, the customers develop expectations about the credibility and reliability of the service provider even prior to any interpersonal service interaction.

Moreover, physical facilities and equipment affect customer satisfaction by creating the atmosphere of service and instilling behavioral tendencies, including comfort, trust, and a desire to revisit the hotel. The physical environment serves as an intermediary interface between managerial inputs and customer outputs, converting organizational investments into perceptual value and experiential outcomes. In theory, therefore, physical facilities and equipment are not neutral resources but rather strategic tools to position service quality, improve customer experience, and maintain competitive advantage in the hospitality sector.

2.4 Knowledge and Courtesy of Employees

The cognitive and relational bases of the assurance dimension of service quality are composed of employee knowledge and courtesy, through which hotels build credibility, trust, and confidence in the minds of their guests. In conceptual terms, employee knowledge describes the level to which service professionals possess competence, procedural knowledge, and contextual knowledge in the delivery of services, whereas courtesy describes the affective and behavioral manifestations of respect and professionalism during service contact (Adeniran & Mohammed, 2020). All these qualities influence the perception of customers towards the reliability and integrity of the organization.

In relation to service quality, knowledgeable and courteous employees act as interpretive agents, converting organizational standards into useful customer experiences. They minimize uncertainty and perceived risk by providing correct information, anticipating customer needs, and communicating effectively. Conversely, a lack of employee knowledge compromises service consistency and creates dissatisfaction through errors, delays, and incorrect information (Okafor & Nwachukwu, 2023).

Moreover, employee knowledge and courtesy affect customer satisfaction by creating psychological comfort and emotional relationships between the customer and the service provider. Courtesy enhances emotional connection, whereas professionalism builds faith in service outcomes. Theoretically, these features are not simply personal attributes of employees, but institutionalized norms of service that signal organizational dedication to quality, thereby confirming customer loyalty and increasing the reputational value of hotels in the competitive hospitality sector.

2.5 Review of Empirical Studies

The empirical studies below provide evidence-based understanding of the impact of key dimensions of service quality on customer satisfaction in Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna Metropolis.

Ali et al. (2021) carried out an extensive study of customer experience dynamics in selected mid-range and upscale hotels in the Asian region. Their research evaluated the contribution of operational practices, staff behavior, physical conditions and service processes to guest satisfaction. The authors found that customers have a holistic view of their hotel experience, basing their impressions not just on the services provided but also on the manner in which the service is delivered. In particular, guests placed high emphasis on the attitude of staff, the speed and accuracy of service delivery, and the degree to which hotel staff could predict guest needs without prompting.

Idris et al. (2023) conducted research in Abuja on customer experience management strategies in selected business and leisure hotels. Using a survey methodology, they highlighted the importance of communication, attentiveness, and personalized guest handling in shaping customer perceptions. The results indicated that clients were more satisfied when hotel employees demonstrated politeness, emotional intelligence, and readiness to assist customers beyond their prescribed duties. Interactional aspects such as smiling, active listening, and periodic check-ins with guests were also emphasized as potent factors in positive hotel experiences.

Hammanjoda et al. (2023) studied the performance of hotels in Abuja regarding the effect of organizational practices on customer experience through staff training, ICT adoption, and management style. Utilizing a survey approach, they found that hotels investing in online booking systems, automated payment systems, and innovative communication systems received

better scores on efficiency and professionalism. Employee competency, as determined by communication abilities, product knowledge, and emotional intelligence, was also established to be a critical factor in determining customer satisfaction.

Nkwede, Ogba, and Nkwede (2022) explored the determinants of customer satisfaction in high-contact service settings by studying hotels in the Abakaliki Metropolis, Nigeria. The research covered 317 hotel service consumers in Ebonyi State. Structured questionnaires were used to obtain the survey data and factor analysis and multiple regression were used to analyze the data. The research established the quality of rooms, the quality of staff service, value, and security as important factors of customer satisfaction. In particular, the quality of rooms, including cleanliness, comfort, and facilities, was identified as a significant contributor to customer satisfaction.

Obiora (2022) examined how the responsiveness of hotel workers determines the overall guest experiences in the hospitality sector in Rivers State. The target population comprised customers of selected hotels registered with the Tourism Board in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Using a correlational design within a cross-sectional survey framework, the researcher employed convenience sampling to select participants. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data which were analysed by descriptive statistics and regression methods. The findings showed a strong positive relationship between staff responsiveness and the general guest rating of their stay.

Ogunnaike and Ibidunni (2021) carried out empirical research discussing the impact of the degree of employee engagement on the overall experience of guests at Nigerian hotels. The researchers relied on paired responses of 284 employee-guest dyads in 16 hotels, enabling them to relate staff engagement indicators directly to guest ratings. The analysis indicated a significant correlation between the engagement levels of employees and guest evaluations, with particularly strong connections in the spheres of attentiveness and willingness to help.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on the SERVQUAL Model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), which defines service quality as the gap between customer expectation and perception of actual service performance. The model establishes five core dimensions tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy used to formulate the assessment of service quality by customers. These dimensions offer a systematic method of determining the effects of particular service attributes on overall customer satisfaction levels, which is relevant in the case of the hospitality sector (Adeniran & Mohammed, 2020; Okafor & Nwachukwu, 2023).

The tangibles include physical buildings, equipment and appearance of people, which are the most apparent indicators of services delivered. Reliability is a measure of how a hotel provides promised services with precision and accuracy. Responsiveness refers to the readiness and speed

of staff in responding to the requests of guests and assurance refers to the knowledge, competence, and courtesy of employees in giving confidence. Empathy is the ability of the organisation to offer individualised service that acknowledges the different preferences and issues of the guests (Iorpuu et al., 2023; Anas, 2024).

The SERVQUAL framework provides the conceptual and operational base of the current study, directly informing the choice of independent variables tangibles and assurance and their hypothesised effect on the dependent variable, customer satisfaction. The research concentrating on SERVQUAL represents a highly proven and contextually applicable theoretical framework, allowing the systematic measurement of service quality gaps and how they influence guest satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen (Olawale & Adeleke, 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population comprised all guests who patronised Hotel Seventeen within a six-month preceding period, estimated at 7,200 guests based on management records (approximately 1,200 monthly). Using the Yamane (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample of 379 respondents was determined. Systematic random sampling was employed; every fifth guest at checkout was invited to participate, ensuring representation across different days and guest categories. Data were collected through structured questionnaires over a span of four weeks during the checkout of guests. The measurement tool comprised three parts: demographic information, eighteen Likert-scale items to gauge service quality (SERVQUAL dimensions), and five items to gauge overall customer satisfaction. The questionnaire was pre-tested among 30 respondents and validated by two hospitality scholars and a hotel operations manager. All constructs had Cronbach's alpha values above 0.80, thus showing strong internal reliability. Among 379 surveys administered, 358 were valid (response rate: 94.5%). IBM SPSS Version 26 was used to analyse the data through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis at $p < 0.05$.

3.1 Model Specification

In order to test the impact that tangibles and assurance produce on customer satisfaction, the research used the following multiple regression model:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_1TAN + \beta_2ASS + \epsilon$$

Where: CS = Customer Satisfaction TAN = Tangibles ASS = Assurance β_0 = Intercept or constant term β_1, β_2 = Regression coefficients indicating the extent and direction of the effects of each independent variable on customer satisfaction ϵ = Error term, representing the variation in customer satisfaction not explicable by the model

This specification determines the individual and combined influence of tangibles and assurance on customer satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State, when other variables are held constant. Diagnostic tests, including the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), were also used to confirm that multicollinearity does not exist between the independent variables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	209	58.4
	Female	149	41.6
Age Group	18–25 years	16	4.5
	26–30 years	57	15.9
	31–40 years	153	42.7
	41–50 years	101	28.2
	Above 50 years	31	8.7
Purpose of Visit	Business	241	67.3
	Leisure	117	32.7

Source: Field work (2026)

The sample was largely male dominated as 58.4% of the respondents were males and 41.6% were females, which is in line with business travel trends. Most of the respondents (42.7%) fell within the 31–40 age bracket with 28.2% falling under 41–50 years, indicating that Hotel Seventeen majorly targets middle-aged working adults. The sample was dominated by business travellers (67.3%), which was also in line with the fact that the hotel is located in the commercial district of Kaduna.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables of the Study

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Tangibles	3.68	0.82	1.40	5.00
Assurance	3.81	0.85	1.50	5.00
Customer Satisfaction	3.76	0.91	1.20	5.00

Every dimension of service quality had a score above the 3.0 mid-point, which shows that guest perceptions are generally positive. Assurance had the highest mean ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.85$), implying that guests consider staff well-informed and reliable. Tangibles had a mean of $M = 3.68$, characterising more variability and opportunity for improvement. The overall satisfaction score of $M = 3.76$ reflects a medium-to-good level of satisfaction. The relatively large standard deviations indicate that service experiences of guests vary considerably over time.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	TAN	RES	ASS	EMP	CS
Tangibles	1.000				
Assurance	0.486	0.628	1.000		
Customer Satisfaction	0.521	0.648	0.689	0.712	1.000

The service quality dimensions are positively and significantly correlated with customer satisfaction at $p < 0.01$. Assurance ($r = 0.689$) and tangibles ($r = 0.521$) both show significant positive correlations. Moderate intercorrelations among predictors (r ranging from 0.443 to 0.652) confirm conceptual distinctiveness without problematic multicollinearity. VIF values below 2.5 in the regression model corroborate this finding.

4.4 Regression Result

Table 4: Multiple Regression Results on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Predictor Variable	β (Coeff.)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.285	0.112	2.532	0.012
Tangibles	0.189	0.053	3.543	< 0.001
Assurance	0.318	0.051	6.211	< 0.001

Model Summary: $R = 0.827$, $R\text{-square} = 0.684$, $\text{Adjusted } R\text{-square} = 0.680$, $F\text{-test} = 201.43$, $p < 0.001$

The multiple regression findings on the impact of tangibles and assurance on customer satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 201.43$, $p < 0.001$). The $R\text{-square}$ value of 0.684 and adjusted $R\text{-square}$ of 0.680 imply that the predictor variables explain 68.4% of the variance in customer satisfaction.

Both tangibles and assurance proved to be statistically significant positive predictors of customer satisfaction. The regression coefficient of tangibles was 0.189 ($t = 3.543$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that customer satisfaction increases by 0.189 units when the quality of physical facilities and

equipment is increased by one-unit, other variables being equal. This reflects the contribution of physical facilities to service quality perceptions through good maintenance, aesthetic appeal, and functional efficiency.

Assurance had a greater impact, with a coefficient of 0.318 ($t = 6.211$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increases in the knowledge, competence, and courteous behaviour of employees are a key factor that positively influences customer satisfaction. The comparatively larger coefficient of assurance over tangibles underlines the central role of staff expertise and trustworthiness in the overall assessment of hotel service quality.

Overall, the findings show that both tangibles and assurance positively influence customer satisfaction, with assurance having a stronger effect. These results align with the SERVQUAL model's theoretical assumptions, confirming that staff professionalism and trustworthiness (assurance) and the quality of physical infrastructure (tangibles) are decisive variables in overall satisfaction within service-focused settings.

4.5 Test of Hypotheses

This section presents the results of hypothesis testing based on the multiple regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). The decision rule states that if the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) should be rejected; otherwise, it should be accepted.

Hypothesis H1: Tangibles have no significant influence on customer satisfaction among guests at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State.

The regression outcome demonstrates that tangibles have a positive and statistically significant impact on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.189$, $t = 3.543$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis is rejected as the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level. The result supports that the quality and condition of tangible elements such as the aesthetics of rooms, the presentation of the lobby, the functionality of equipment used, and the appearance of staff members positively affect the level of guest satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen, which directly answers Research Question 1. Despite tangibles having the lowest coefficient among the predictors, the impact remains statistically and practically significant, meaning that physical environment quality cannot be ignored in a holistic service quality approach.

Hypothesis H2: Assurance does not significantly predict customer satisfaction among guests at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna State.

The regression result reveals that assurance is a strong and statistically significant positive predictor of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 6.211$, $p < 0.001$). This null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This observation, which directly answers Research Question 2, shows that

staff knowledge, professional skills, etiquette and ability to instil confidence are very important predictors of satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen. Assurance ranked as the second strongest predictor in the full regression model, confirming that guests place considerable value on interactions with staff who are credible, trustworthy, and demonstrably capable of delivering on service promises.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

According to the results of this research, customer satisfaction is significantly impacted by tangible quality at Hotel Seventeen in Kaduna State. As per the SERVQUAL model framework (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988), tangibles are defined as any aspects of a service that customers can see or experience before they interact extensively with hotel staff; these include the quality and condition of physical furnishings, equipment, and appearance of employees. The findings are consistent with earlier research conducted by Nkwede et al. (2022), which found that the quality of hotel rooms and amenities were determining factors in guest satisfaction at Nigerian hotels. In addition, Adeola and Bamidele (2021) found that the visual appeal, functional adequacy, and quality of the physical environment create positive first impressions on guests and ultimately affect their assessment of service quality. However, tangibles had the lowest regression coefficient of all the SERVQUAL dimensions evaluated; nonetheless, statistically significant relationships exist, meaning guests do evaluate tangible elements when making satisfaction assessments. In business hotels, where operational standards are high, guests expect a minimum level of quality to be maintained consistently.

In addition, assurance emerged as a strong and significant predictor of customer satisfaction, ranking second in influence within the regression model. Within the SERVQUAL framework, assurance encompasses the knowledge, competence, and courtesy of employees, as well as their ability to inspire trust and confidence (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This finding supports Hammanjoda et al. (2023), who observed that employee competency and professional credibility are decisive drivers of satisfaction in Nigerian hotels, and corroborates Adeniran and Mohammed (2020), who argue that knowledgeable, courteous staff are central to perceived service value. At Hotel Seventeen, where business travellers comprised the majority of guests, assurance assumes particular importance. These guests typically arrive with elevated expectations of staff professionalism and rely on personnel competence to support work-related tasks. The higher mean score for assurance than for tangibles corresponds with the SERVQUAL premise of greater importance of interpersonal dimensions of service (conveying trust and reliability) than the tangible dimensions of the physical asset. Thus, the study results support both the applicability and relevance of SERVQUAL in the context of the Northern Nigerian hotel sector.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction at Hotel Seventeen, Kaduna, focusing on the dimensions of assurance and tangibles. The research results showed that

both assurance and tangibles have a statistically significant, positive impact on customer satisfaction, leading to the rejection of both null hypotheses. The SERVQUAL model demonstrated strong explanatory power, with the two dimensions jointly accounting for 68.4% of the variance in customer satisfaction. The findings distinctly establish that the assurance dimension had a greater impact on customer satisfaction than tangibles, demonstrating that the ability of hotel staff to be professional, competent, and trustworthy is more important in determining customer satisfaction than the quality of physical facilities alone in the Northern Nigerian hotel sector. Furthermore, the results confirm that both tangible and intangible service-related dimensions work together in creating a guest's perception of value and satisfaction, thereby surmounting the identified gap in empirical evidence on service quality and customer satisfaction in Northern Nigeria.

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are provided:

- i. Hotel Seventeen's management should support their staff through structured, ongoing training programmes that provide skills in the areas of service quality knowledge, communication, professional behaviour, and cultural awareness, so that hotel staff are able to meet their customers' diverse needs consistently and demonstrably. Since the significant predictors of customer satisfaction were identified as assurance and staff professionalism, investing in staff development and trust-building capacity represents an effective business strategy for improving guest satisfaction.
- ii. Hotel Seventeen's management should implement a proactive facility management and maintenance programme focused on the physical spaces where guests are most impacted by the hotel's physical environment, ensuring that minimum quality standards in room aesthetics, lobby presentation, equipment functionality, and staff appearance are consistently maintained.

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