PHYSICAL   FACILITIES AND CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF SELECTED HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

This study centered on physical facilities and customer patronage of selected hotels in Port Harcourt. and adopted survey design with questionnaire as major instrument for data collection. The entire twenty best hotels on line formed the study population, and five of the hotels randomly selected. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The hypotheses were tested via t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. It was found; among others that there is significant relationship between servicecape and customer preference of hotels and that there is significant relationship between aesthetics and customer repeat visit to hotels. Based on the findings and conclusions thereof the study recommended, among others, that hoteliers should pay strict attention to their service scape as one of the most powerful tools to leverage the image of their hotels among competitors, creating serene, cozy environment to provide wonderful experience that calls for repeat patronage; That hotels should remain customer-focused, add talents, and launch new products that deepen relationships, improve customer satisfaction scores and increase retention in realization of the fact that a lost customer can hardly be regained. Very importantly, ambience characteristics such as temperature, music, and lighting with right colorations should be used holistically to gain synergy, thereby creating the desired atmosphere in hotels, put confidence in the mood of customers to patronize their service always.

Keywords: Physical facilities, Ambience, Servicecape, Aesthetics, Customer Patronage

INTRODUCTION

A good impression is vital in business, since many customers, upon seeing dirty or disheveled facilities, will immediately head to the nearest competitor. Even if the state of your facilities has nothing to do with how well you serve your customers, an unsanitary and unpleasant atmosphere creates negative impressions and can lead customers to dismiss you out of hand. This study therefore centers on physical facilities and customer patronage of hotels in Rivers State. The fact remains that customers consider facilities offered by service providers' right from first contact with the organization. Customers often let their first impressions guide their evaluations of a business, according to the book "Travel and Tourism," by Hilary Blackman and colleagues. If your facilities are rundown and filthy, new customers might turn and walk out of the door. Even if they stay, they're not going to be willing to pay much for your product or service.

No doubt, poorly kept hotel facilities also make customers uncomfortable. For example, suppose a lobby has filthy windows, ripped seats and stale air, customers aren't going to tolerate waiting long in that environment, and if they do, they're not going to be optimistic about what your business can do for them. Failing to make your facilities at least presentable prime's customers to expect a bad experience, and this could permanently damage their perception of your customer service. Ravi Shanke in his book 'Services Marketing contrasted the bad feelings created by poor hotel facilities to the good feelings fostered by a clean and pleasing

atmosphere, stressing that when your facilities are in order, your customers know you're in control of your business and that you pay attention to their wellbeing, such as having wonderful experience. A well-functioning business also indicates a steady stream of customers, increasing the likelihood that your company is good at what it does. And the pleasant atmosphere puts customers in an optimistic mood, improving their perception of your customer service, thereby patronizing your hotel again and again.

Quite certainly, hotel business is currently or has become more competitive as customers continually expect the hotels to match or exceed their expectations (Wong and Sohal, 2003). Interestingly, successful hotels are increasingly turning to the delivery of effective customer services to render a competitive advantage, since maintaining customer satisfaction is crucial for businesses as they transact in a highly competitive world (Fonseca, 2009). Therefore successful hotels strive offering quality service visible in conducive atmosphere, well ventilated, good lightening, and better ambience among others and are likely to be preferred by customers (Thang and Tan, 2003).

Statement of Problem

Hospitality sector has rapidly increased in size and stature, yet customer satisfaction and fostering goodwill don't appear to have kept pace with growth. This research considers aspects of hotel facilities that impact upon customer patronage and, ultimately, pays dividends in terms of generating loyalty. Hence, attaching importance to customers by hoteliers providing needed physical facilities cannot be over stressed, since customers are the lifeblood of every business survival. However, most hotels have fallen short of the expectations of their customers in recent time. Customers have experienced challenges ranging from poor attention by staff at service points, unprofessional conduct or rudeness by the staff of the hotels, poor standard of servicescape, incessant power failure, and polluted promises among others thereby not creating needed value to customers. If customers feel they got less value than what they expected, their attitude towards a given hotel would be negative and they may pass this attitude to potential customers (Chau and Kao, 2009).The challenge posed is on providing the right ambience, state of act facilities to provide value, and satisfy customers as to remain loyal.

Moreover, the competition for customers is particularly fierce in hotel business, and if customers have a negative experience and become dissatisfied with a service provider, they most likely switch to a new provider. It is against this backdrop that this study is set to empirically investigate physical facilities and customer patronage of hotels, drawing our analysis from selected hotels in Port Harcourt.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to investigate physical facilities and customer patronage of hotels in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the extent to which servicescapes enhance preference of hotels in Port Harcourt.
2. Determine the extent to which aesthetics enhance customer repeat visit to hotels in Port Harcourt.

Conceptual Framework
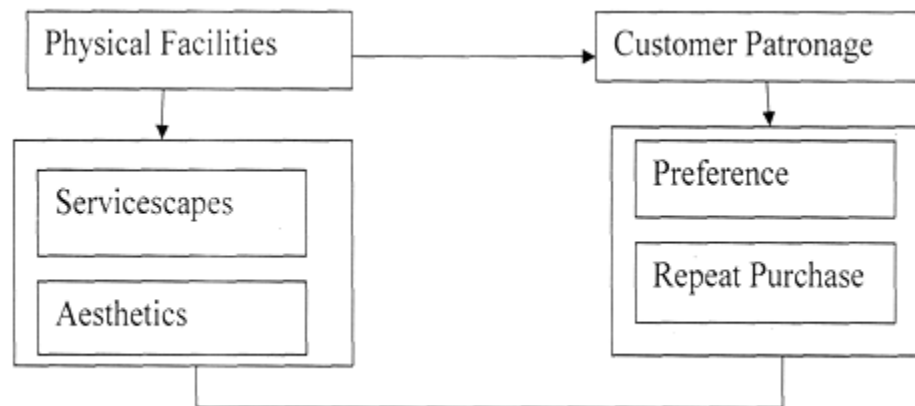
Source: Researcher's Desk, 2017.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following questions were highlighted:

1. To what extent does servicescapes enhance preference of hotels in Port Harcourt?
2. To what extent does aesthetics enhance customer repeat visit to hotels in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses stated in null form guided the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between servicescapes and customer preference of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between aesthetics and customer repeat visit to hotels in Port Harcourt.

Significance of Study

The great interest in this study is its ability to unravel influence of physical facilities on patronage of hotels.

1. The study would be of immense benefit to hoteliers and their customers. Hoteliers are now better exposed to offering quality and pleasurable atmosphere to their clients to remain competitive. And customers now can enjoy pleasant atmosphere that puts them in an optimistic mood, and feeling at home.
2. The study would also benefit other researchers on similar study. Being rich in literature of knowledge, it could be consulted or referenced as source of knowledge.

Scope of Study

The study subject scope covered physical facilities and customer patronage of hotels in Port Harcourt.

The content scope include: servicescape, aesthetics and lightening aspects of physical facilities as well as preference, repeat visit and customer referral dimensions of customer patronage of the selected hotels.

The unit scope includes management/operative employees of the selected hotels as well as their customers.

The geographical scope focused on five hotels located at Obio Akpor and Port Harcourt cities in Rivers State.

The study time scope is limited to academic semester as a course work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF HOTELS PHYSICAL FACILITY

In a fast and dynamic environment such as ours, with regards to hotels business, people tend to respond to their environment holistically. Hence, the totality of customer perceptions of stimuli is that which constitutes and determines their responses to a given environment. Although, serenity and solitude constitute a contributing factor to effective

physical setting and influence internal responses and customer's behavior, hotels atmospherics, such as humid temperature, good luminous density and lighting, colors and music may lure customers as well as travelers and visitors away from home to spend time in those hotels. These customers who travel away from homes seek evidence of the eventual quality of the intangible service from observing the tangible elements, that is the physical setting (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991).

Understanding how hotel business interacts with their esteem customers and deliver value services in a unique physical setting is of decisive importance in the hospitality industry (Peterson and Zinkhan, 2011). Hotel business' use of physical settings devices as a marketing strategy is increasing rapidly in the hospitality domain. As organizations continue to make widespread use of physical instruments to attract customers in the hotel industry, the actual concern service organizations revolves around the idea of successful existence of hotel industry and proffer efficient marketing of its services thus, for any firm to be successful and operate profitably in a dynamic business environment, it must derive strategies that will appeal to customers patronage (Kuti and Harrison, 2012).

SERVICESCAPE AND CUSTOMER PREFERENCE
In 1992, Mary Jo Bitner studied in depth the concept of servicescape. She defined it as the environment in which a service is provided. She explains that servicescape can be considered as one of the tools used in the area of consumer behavior. Indeed, the environment in which a service is provided (including the ambiance, the space, the symbols of the interior and exterior of a selling point and the human relationships take a lot of things into account, and this whole environment is considered like having an impact on customers.

A clearer definition from Zeithaml et al. (2009) defines servicescape as "the environment in which a service is delivered and in which the firm and the customer interact, and any tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service". Here Zeithaml et al. reinforce Bitner's idea with the thought that servicescape acts as a facilitator. Later, in 2011, Rosenbaum and Massiah in line with Bitner's and Zeithaml's definitions posited that servicescape includes several dimensions: a physical, a social, a socially-symbolic and a natural dimension. As it were, servicescape is a complete concept which includes a wide range of variable. Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) argued that the social dimension is the easiest to understand because it is more perceivable. Moreover, some environmental stimuli of the physical dimension may be linked for different reasons (as crowd and layout).

More than having an impact on customers, servicescape is also used to give a real experience. In hotels or food stores, servicescape can refer to the exterior and the interior of the hotel. It includes the commodities such as parking, the equipment such as trolleys, the layout, which refers to the organization of aisles, the checkout position, to create a logical flow in order to control crowd for example, and facilitate the wonderful customer experience. Through servicescape's elements, such as in-store design, feature or staff service, customers can interact, learn and experience the brand values. In eatery context, creating this experience through servicescape aims producing outlets that capture and represent the brand essence (Healy et al., 2007).

AESTHETICS AND CUSTOMER REPEAT PATRONAGE
Consumer satisfaction can predict repeat patronage leading to brand loyalty and new consumers.

Consumers determine which restaurants meet their quality standards and ignoring this leads to consumers moving toward competing restaurants. It is therefore important for service firms such as those in the hotel industry to manipulate their physical environment efficiently infusing aesthetic elements such as architecture and design in the overall layout to

appeal to customers, enhancing satisfaction and increasing repeat patronage (Amoabi and Caleb, 2009).

Ordinarily, poorly kept facilities also make customers uncomfortable. Failing to make your facilities at least presentable prime's customers to expect a bad experience, and this could permanently damage their perception of your customer service. Contrast to the bad feelings created by poorly maintained facilities with the good feelings fostered by a clean and pleasing atmosphere. When your facilities are in order, your customers know you're in control of your business and that you pay attention to the details. A well-functioning business also indicates a steady stream of customers, increasing the likelihood that your company is good at what it does. And the pleasant atmosphere puts customers in an optimistic mood, motivating them to regularly patronize your business.

Baker et al (1994) indicate that ambient and social elements in the service organization significantly affect customer's quality perceptions, suggesting that customer's satisfaction in all dimensions of physical settings indeed increases their re-patronage intentions. Ching (1996) found out that the ambient odor affects consumer decision if they are congruent with the target product - class. Recently, Nguyen, (2006); Rosenbaum (2011) shows that physical settings and perceived waiting time positively influence overall service quality; overall service quality influence perceived value. Therefore it is imperative to study the factors of dimension of physical settings that influence consumer overall perception of the physical environment and their subsequent internal and external responses towards service experience and repeat patronage.

Based on the study by Wakefeild and Baker (1998), the physical environment includes elements such as layout, interior architecture and decoration, lighting, music, aromas and cleanliness. Namesivayam and Lin (2008) also state that physical settings of the physical environment of an organization consist of elements, such as overall layout, design, and decoration. The physical setting also includes elements of atmospherics, such as temperature, lighting, color, music, and scent (Bitnes, 1992; Namsivayam and Lin, 2008). Physical setting therefore influences not only consumers cognitive, emotional, and physiological states but their behavior (Bitnes, 1992; Namsivayam and Lin, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Our study is built on Service Quality Gap Model. The gap model (also known as the "5 gaps model") of service quality is an important customer-satisfaction framework that identifies five major gaps that face organizations seeking to meet customer's expectations of the customer experience considered appropriate in hotel services (Parasuraman: Zeitham and Berry, 1985). The five gaps that organizations should measure, manage and minimize to Parasuraman et al (1985) could be depicted below:
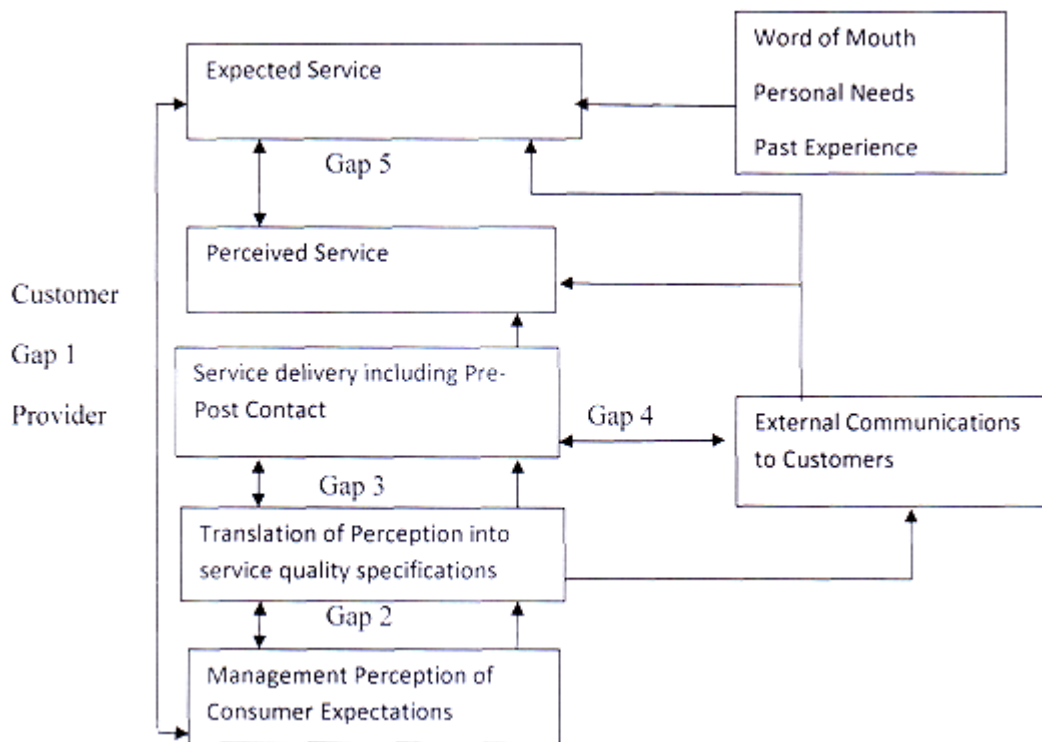
Source: Adopted from Parasuraman: Zeitham, and Berry (1985). In"A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research" *The Journal of Marketing,* 2 (3), 9-12.

From the model, Gap 1 is the distance between what customers expect and what managers think they expect.

Gap 2 is between management perception and the actual specification of the customer experience - Managers need to make sure the organization is defining the level of service they believe is needed.

Gap 3 is from the experience specification to the delivery of the experience - Managers need to audit the customer experience that their organization currently delivers in order to make sure it lives up to the spec.

Gap 4 is the gap between the delivery of the customer experience and what is communicated to customers - All too often organizations exaggerate what will be provided to customers, or discuss the best case rather than the likely case, raising customer expectations and harming customer perceptions.

Finally, Gap 5 is the gap between a customer's perception of the experience and the customer's expectation of the service - Customers' expectations have been shaped by word of mouth, their personal needs and their own past experiences.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Adiele, Miebaka and Ezirim (2015) examined the impact of physical evidence on customer patronage of quoted Banks in south-south zone of Nigeria. 14 quoted Banks at the Nigeria Stock Exchange Market were used for the study. The research considered firm level of analysis and top managers unit of analysis. Customers of the chosen banks were also used. By this arrangement, 42 managers and 7 customers randomly selected constituted respondents for the study. They adopted the cross - sectional survey method, and descriptively presented the study variables, while inferentially, the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was used in testing the study hypotheses. In addition, they employed the Pearson Partial Correlation to ascertain the extent to which the organizational factors mediate the relationship between physical

evidence and customer patronage which was facilitated by the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 15.0. The result of the analysis showed that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between physical evidence and customer patronage. The study specifically revealed that efficient design of work place ambience; physical architecture and signs significantly impact on sales volume, profit margin and customer retention. The study therefore concluded that physical evidence significantly affects customer patronage. Hence, it was recommended that the panacea to poor customer patronage is predicated on the bank's ability to efficiently adopt physical evidence dimensions used for the study as significant conditioning factors of the business environment.

Interestingly, Ogbuji, Onuoha, and Usman, (2016) investigated the association of spatial layout with customer patronage of cinema firms in Port Harcourt. Data were collected from 375 respondents in three cinema houses in Port Harcourt using a set of questionnaire structured in a five-point Likert measuring scale. The study hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, in SPSS (version 21.0) which showed that spatial outlet has significant association with customer patronage of cinema firms in Port Harcourt. The study concludes that spatial layout should be considered a critical marketing factor in setting up cinema services environment. It was recommended among others that Cinema firms should continuously improve their spatial layout in other to increase customers comfort. Cinema firms should ensure proper functioning of their equipments, as this will serve as a major prerequisite for customer patronage and retention.

Another interesting study by Omar, Badaruddin, and Mastura, (2015) centered on Effects of Factors in the Physical Environment of Hotels on Customers' Perceptions of Service Quality and Loyalty. Omar et al (2015) adopted a survey study in which data were collected using questionnaire based on Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1991a, 1991b), Bitner (1992), Wakefield and Blodgett (1996, 1999), and Skogland and Siguaw (2004). Data were collected from 209 customers who stayed overnight at hotels located in Al-Ladhiqiyah, a coastal city in Syria. The sampling design in the study was convenience sampling. The researcher made no attempt, or only a limited attempt, to insure that this sample is an accurate representation of some larger group or population, and distributed the survey questionnaire to guests when they checked in. Data obtained were tabulated and entered in SPSS. To answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses, regression analysis was employed. The study maintained that physical environment influences the perceived service quality that relate to customer loyalty. This conclusion is in agreement with the findings of other studies that emphasized the role physical environment does play in customers' loyalty and satisfaction process (Bitner, 1992; Lucas, 2003).

Methodology
The study methodology covered how the data needed to achieve the purpose of the study was generated, gathered and analyzed. More so, it tells how the work was organized and concisely explains certain terms and procedures. This was discussed under the following headings: Research design, Research population, Research sample/sampling Techniques, Instrumentation, Validity of instrument, Reliability of instrument, Administration of instrument, and Method of data analysis.

Our study adopted the use of descriptive design and (Orodho, 2004) contends that, to produce information that is of interest to policy makers even in business descriptive design is helpful. The descriptive study was undertaken in order to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of the variable of interest in a situation (Kothari, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the target population consists of all the twenty hotels listed under best on line hotels by Rivers State on line hotel special deals of trip advisers in Port Harcourt. Consequently, five of the hotels were randomly selected via simple random sampling technique. A representative of 15 management staff, 35 operative employees and 100 customers, totaling 150 was selected to participate in the study, with questionnaire as the major instrument for data collection.

The questionnaire used was validated by two experts ensuring that the questionnaire measured what it was meant to measure. The degree of reliability of the questionnaire was based on adoption of test-re-test method applied. Data obtained were subjected to reliability test via Product moment correlation coefficient to arrive at 0.89 coefficient considered reliable enough. The questionnaire was self-administered by hand through drop - and - pick method to selected staff and customers of the hotels.

Data collected were tabulated and analyzed via weighted mean and the study hypotheses tested via parametric student t statistics.

Data Analysis/Discussion

A total of 150 respondents made up of 50 management/staff of five Hotels and 100 of the hotels customers were surveyed and the response shown below:

Research Question One: To what extent does servicescape enhance preference of the Hotels in Port Harcourt?

Table 1: The Extent to which Servicescape Enhanced Preference of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

Extent of Enhancement

Servicescape	(4) Great	(3) moderate	(2) Small	(1) Seldom	mber (n)	Mean (x)
State-of-the-art accommodation facilities.	35	10	4	1	50	3.58
	48	29	12	11	100	3.14
Quality Restaurant Services	31	12	5	2	50	3.44
	52	30	12	6	100	3.28
Laundry Service	36	10	3	1	50	3.62
	60	28	7	5	100	3.43
Indoor Sports/Games	33	15	1	1	50	3.60
	46	34	12	8	100	3.18
Background Music and Entertainment	28	20	1	1	50	3.50
	50	25	15	10	100	3.15

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

The standard average score or mean score is 2.50 for the four-point Likert scale ratings. Table 1 reveals that all the mean ratings of all the attributes measured are greater than the standard average value of 2.50, therefore, are all considered for the analysis of data.

Interestingly, respondents response weighted mean of 3.56 for management and staff as well as 3.14 for customers of the hotels indicated that state of the art accommodation facilities enhance preference of the hotels. Other are management and staff weighted mean response of 3.44 and customer weighted mean response

of 3.28 on quality restaurant service in the hotels, as well as management and staff weighted mean response of 3.62 and 3.60 for customers on laundry service, and management and staff mean response of 3.60 and customers mean response of 3.18 on the hotels indoor sports/games, along management and staff weighted mean response of 3.50 and customers weighted mean response of 3.15 respectively as servicescape that enhances preference for the hotel.

Table 2: Computation of Means and Variances of Data for the two Groups of Respondents

X_1	X_2	X_1^2	X_2^2
3.58	3.14	12.8164	9.8596
3.44	3.28	11.8336	10.7584
3.62	3.43	13.1044	11.7649
3.60	3.18	12.9600	10.1124
3.50	3.15	12.2500	9.9225
17.74	16.18	62.9644	52.4178

$\sum x_1 = 17.74, n_1 = 5, \chi_1 = 3.548, S_1^2 = 0.006$

$\sum x_2 = 16.18, n_2 = 5, \chi_2 = 3.236, S_2^2 = 0.015$

Test of Hypotheses Test of Hypothesis One

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between servicescape and customer preference of hotels in Port Harcourt.

I.e, Ho_1: *Xi ±X2;* two-tailed tested

Ha_1: There is significant relationship between servicescape and customer preference of hotels in Port Harcourt.

i.e, Ha_1: *X_1 ±X2;* two-tailed tested

Test statistic: Student t test is appropriate. Level of significance (∞): 5% or 0.05

Number of degrees of freedom (df) = $n_1 + n_2$-^{2} = 8 Critical value – t_8, 0.05 = 2.306

Rejection region (RR): t-cal > 2.306

Computation of t - value:

$$t = \frac{\chi_1 - \chi_2}{\sqrt{\dfrac{S_1^2}{n1} + \dfrac{S_2^2}{n2}}} = \frac{3.548 - 3.236}{\sqrt{\dfrac{0.006}{5} + \dfrac{0.015}{5}}}$$

$$= \frac{0.312}{0.0648} = 4.815$$

This is presented in a tabular form as;

Table 3: t - test of Relationship Between Service Scape And Preference of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

Group	Mean (χ)	S^2_2	N	Df	Std error	t_{cal}	t_{tab}
I	3.548	0.006	5	8	0.0648	4.815	2.306
II	3.236	0.015	5				

The calculated value of t is greater than the tabular value (i.e, $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$), hence, Ho is rejected.

This means that there is significant relationship between servicescape and preference of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Research Question Two
To what extent does aesthetics enhance customers repeat visit to hotels in Port Harcourt?

Table 4: The Extent to which Aesthetics Enhanced Customers Repeat Visit to Hotels in Port Harcourt.

Extent of enhancement

Aesthetics	(4) Great	(3) moderate	(2) Small	(1) Seldom	Number (n)	Mean (x)
Land Scape	30	16	3	1	50	3.50
	40	24	20	16	100	2.88
Elegant Furniture	33	14	2	1	50	3.58
	52	28	13	7	100	3.25
Pleasing Colour Combination	35	10	3	2	50	3.56
	55	23	12	10	100	3.23
State of the art sculpture display	31	15	3	1	50	3.52
	45	25	20	10	100	3.05

Source: Survey Data, 2017.

Standard reference mean, x= 2.50

Table 4 shows that all the mean ratings obtained for the various attributes measured are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50. This indicates the management staff and customers of the hotels were of the view that landscape, elegant furniture, pleasing colour combination and state of the art sculpture display in the hotels enhanced repeat visit of customers to the hotels.

Table 5: Computation of Means and Variances For The Two Groups Of Respondents:

X_1	X_2	X_1^2	X_2^2
3.50	2.88	12.2500	8.2844
3.58	3.25	12.8164	10.5625
3.56	3.23	12.6736	10.4329
3.52	3.05	12.3904	9.3025
14.16	12.41	50.1304	38.5923

$\sum x_1 = 14.16$, $n_1 = 4$, $\chi_1 = 3.54$, $S^2_1 = 0.001$

$\sum x_2 = 12.41$, $n_2 = 4$, $\chi_2 = 3.10$, $S^2_2 = 0.030$

Test of Hypothesis Two
Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between aesthetics and customers repeat visit to Ocabique hotels in Port Harcourt.   i.e, Hoa: $Xi \pm Xi$ \ (two-tailed tested)
Ha_2: There is significant relationship between aesthetics and customers repeat visit to Ocabique hotels in Port Harcourt   i.e, Ha_2: $Xi \pm X2'$, two-tailed tested

Test statistic: Student t test is appropriate. Level of significance (∞): 5% or 0.05
Number of degrees of freedom (df) = 6   Critical value = t_6, 0.05 = 2.447 Rejection region (RR): $t_{cal} > 2.447$

Computation of t - value:

$$ t = \frac{\chi_1 - \chi_2}{\sqrt{\dfrac{S^2_1}{n1} \quad \dfrac{S^2_2}{n2}}} = \frac{3.54 - 3.10}{\sqrt{\dfrac{0.001}{4} \quad + \quad \dfrac{0.030}{4}}} $$

$$ = \frac{0.44}{0.088} $$

Therefore, $t_{cal} = 5.00$ this is presented in a tabular form as;
Table 6: t - test of Relationship Between Aesthetics and Customers Repeat Visit to hotels in Port Harcourt.

Group	Mean (χ)	S^2_2	N	df	Std error	t_{cal}	t_{tab}
I	3.54	0.001	4				
II	3.10	0.030	4	6	0.088	5.000	2.447

Decision: $t_{cal} > t_{tals}$, fail to accept - Hi

This implies that there is significant relationship between aesthetics and Customers repeat visit to hotels in Port Harcourt.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS
Our study on physical facility and customer patronage of hotels revealed that servicescape involving state of the art accommodation, quality restaurant services, laundry services, indoor sports/games, music and entertainment enhanced customer preference for the hotels, The study equally found that aesthetics enhances customers repeat visit to hotels, in that the hotels landscape, elegant furniture, pleasing colour combination and state of the art sculpture display are measures that greatly enhance customer repeat visits to the hotels. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. That there is significant relationship between servicecape and customer preference of hotels.
2. That there is significant relationship between aesthetics and customer repeat visit to hotels. Based on the findings and conclusions thereof the study recommended the following:

I   That hoteliers should pay strict attention to their servicescape as one of the most powerful
     tools to leverage the image of their

hotels among competitors as they create serene, cozy environment to provide wonderful experience that calls for repeat patronage.

ii. That hotels should remain customer-focused, add talents, and launch new products that deepen relationships, improve customer satisfaction scores and increased retention in realization

of the fact that a lost customer can hardly be regained.

iii. Ambience conditions should therefore be made specific, and used as major tool in contributing

to the hotel's competitive advantage. Very importantly, ambience characteristics such as temperature, music, and lighting with colours should be used holistically to gain synergy, thereby

creating the desired atmosphere in hotels, put confidence in the mood of customers to patronize

their service always.

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