

Effects of Front Desk Staff Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Some Selected Hotels in Tamale Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

The hotel sub-sector provides a plethora of services to stimulate the growth of the tourism sector. As a result, numerous governments offered a lot of incentives to support the growth of the hotel businesses in Ghana. However, it seems most of the hotels in the hospitality industry including those in Tamale Metropolis are not meeting the quality standards expected of them in connection with service delivery, good customer relationships, sufficient facilities, and provision of confidence and trust of services offered. The study, therefore, examined the effects of front desk staff service quality on customer satisfaction in some selected hotels in Tamale Metropolis. The SERVQUAL Model served as the study's foundation. The study employed cross-sectional survey design. Multi-stage sampling strategy was used. A convenient sampling approach was employed to select the 2 hotels in the Metropolis for the research. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze the data. The study found that guests had a positive perception of front desk staff at the two hotels. However, most of the guests did not have confidence that front desk staff inspire visitors, and that information about the two hotels was not sufficiently available. It was further revealed that front desk staff service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction. However, treatment equality, attention to details, and front desk staff language proficiency were the factors the front desk staff lack. The study recommends hoteliers engage highly motivated front desk staff; capacity building of front desk staff on how to inspire visitors to attract more customers; and training of front desk staff on how to be more attentive to guests' needs and preferences in order to improve the guest stay and overall experience.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Front Desk Staff, Lodging Quality Index, SERVQUAL, Quality Service.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry, a service provider, plays a critical role in the socio-economic development of Ghana. As a result, the ambition of various governments over the years is to develop the tourism industry which witnessed a significant growth in the number of hotels in Ghana from 420 in 1986 to 5,634 in 2022 (Ghana Tourist Board, 2022). The qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the supply of tourism accommodation services influence the type of tourism and tourists attracted to a particular destination. The hotel sector in Ghana is 100 percent private ownership. The total number of registered hotels in Ghana as of 2008 was 1,510 and only 3 percent of these hotels have more than 50 rooms with 69 percent having less than 15 rooms (Ghana Tourist Board, 2009 cited in Joseph, 2017). The hotel sub-sector contributed 44% of employment in the tourism sector in 2008 (Ghana Tourist Board, 2009). Similarly, in 2010, the service sector contributed 51.4% to Ghana's GDP, followed by agriculture and manufacturing which contributed 29.9% and 18.6% respectively (United States Central Intelligence Agency Report, 2012 cited in Poku, Zakari & Soale, 2013). A critical examination of the demand markets illustrates that demand from the ten top foreign tourist markets to Ghana has increased from 2020-2022 as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Top 10 Arrival Countries in Ghana from 2020-2022

2020			2021			2022		
Country	Arrival	%	Country	Arrival	%	Country	Arrival	%
USA	39,028	11	USA	92,139	14.8	USA	118,369	12.9
Nigeria	33,394	9.4	Nigeria	59,193	9.5	Nigeria	72,786	8.0
Britain	20,538	5.8	Britain	34,073	5.5	Britain	47,962	5.2
Germany	8,103	2.3	Germany	14,785	2.4	India	22,261	2.4
Cote D'ivoire	6,210	1.7	Netherlands	11,923	1.9	Germany	22,159	2.4
China	6,129	1.7	Canada	8,475	1.4	Liberia	16,149	1.8
Netherlands	6,028	1.7	Cote D'ivoire	8,413	1.3	Netherlands	14,541	1.6
Canada	5,522	1.6	China	8,088	1.3	Cote D'ivoire	14,284	1.6
South Africa	5,283	1.5	South Africa	7,591	1.2	Canada	13,051	1.4
France	5,219	1.5	France	7,048	1.1	South Africa	12,674	1.4

Source: Ghana Tourism Authority (2022)

Arrivals from the United States (14.8%), Nigeria (9.5%), Britain (5.5%), Germany (2.4%), Netherlands (1.9%), Canada (1.4%), Cote D'Ivoire (1.3%), China (1.3%), South Africa (1.2%), and France (1.1%) in 2021 are shown by the results in Table 1. This increased in 2022 with the USA recording (12.9%), Nigeria (8.0%), Britain (5.2%), India (2.4%), Germany (2.4%), Liberia (1.8%), Netherlands (1.6%), Cote D'Ivoire (1.6%), Canada (1.4%), and South Africa (1.4%) (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2022). A more thorough examination of the data on foreign visitor arrivals reveals that 41% of all visitors were from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region, which includes Ghanaians living abroad. Ghana contributed 13%, Nigeria contributed 11%, Cote D'Ivoire contributed 6%, Liberia contributed 4%, Togo contributed 4%, and Burkina Faso contributed 2% of this total. The numbers above demonstrate how crucial regional travel is to Ghana's tourism industry growth (Joseph, 2017). Since the restrictions placed by the COVID-19 epidemic were loosened, there has been a significant increase in the number of international arrivals in Ghana. The number of foreign arrivals in Ghana increased from 623,523 in 2021 to 914,892 in 2022, a growth of around 47%. The UNWTO reports that "Every global region recorded notable increases in international

tourist numbers" in their research "Tourism Set to Return to Pre-Pandemic Levels in Some Regions in 2023," which was posted on their website on January 17, 2023. While immigration in Africa and the Americas rebounded to roughly 65% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022, arrivals in the Europe region reached almost 80% of pre-pandemic levels. The recovery of arrivals in Ghana was 81% from pre-pandemic levels, which is comparable to the recovery levels in European markets and much higher than seen in most African countries (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2022).

Furthermore, the recent opening of Tamale International Airport coupled with the refurbishment of some tourist sites in northern Ghana comes along with a huge influx of people into the metropolis requiring some kind of service from the hotel industry. Although attempts have been made by successive and current governments to promote tourism in Ghana, little attention has been given to the quality of service provided by the hotels. It appears the Ghana Tourist Board is unable to adequately monitor and enforce the code of ethics governing the tourism sector (Munkaila, Zakaria & Clifford, 2018). As a result, most of the hotels in the hospitality industry including those in Tamale Metropolis are not meeting the quality standards expected of them in connection with service delivery, good customer relationships, sufficient facilities, and provision of confidence and trust of services offered (Berman, 2002 cited in Munkaila et al., 2018). Service quality is an important component of customer satisfaction and directly affects an organization's success, especially those in the hotel sub-sector (Yilmaz, 2009 cited in Amissah and Amenumey, 2015). The supply of tourist accommodation is highly influenced by the political and investment climate created by prevailing government policies, demand conditions as well as the culture and attitude of the host population (Joseph, 2017). Since customers participate in the consumption of the services provided by the hotels, they interact closely with the various aspects of the hotel business including the Front Desk Staff, which places them in a better position to be able to critically evaluate service quality by comparing the services they receive with the expectations of the service they desired. Therefore, to ensure an appropriate assessment of service quality offered by the hotels, there is a need for the service providers in the hospitality sector to have a better appreciation of the dimensions clients use to judge the quality of their service.

However, most of the literature on the guest's perception of service quality dimensions of Front Desk Staff such as (Joseph, 2017; Amissah & Amenumey, 2015; Poku, Zakari, and Soale, 2013) tends to be limited to the context of southern Ghana. Though these contributions are valuable and enhance the understanding of tourism businesses in Ghana, it is argued that researchers need to guard against context myopia and expand knowledge about the differences rather than concentrating on the similarities (Joynt and Warner, 1996 cited in Morrison, Carlsen, and Weber, 2009). This notwithstanding, research by Amissah (2013) which explored guests' satisfaction with hotel services in Elmina and Cape Coast found that; limited understanding, inadequate operational procedures, lack of training, and management's inability to understand customers' needs were factors affecting tourists' satisfaction of hotel services. A similar study by Eric (2014) that examined the satisfaction of hotel services in Kumasi Metropolis uncovered that the correlation between guests' characteristics and various measures of service quality (security and safety, physical facilities, and courtesy of staff) including guests' gender, age, marital status, country of origin, and number of visits to Ghana were significantly related to guests' security and safety. But again, Eric's study was limited to southern Ghana making it suffer from context deficits. Yeleduor (2009) had earlier researched the level of guests'

satisfaction with hotel services in the Northern Region of Ghana and discovered that poor hotel service, the unacceptable behavior of front desk staff, insufficient qualified staff, and unhygienic conditions of the region were factors that discouraged tourists from visiting the metropolis. This study by Yeleduor seems too outdated to be relied upon as the study constructs might have significantly changed with the passage of time. A more recent study by Munkaila et al (2018) which investigated service quality in the Northern Region tourism industry found that leadership styles employed the hotel managers, poor working equipment, overloaded work plans, lack of motivation, and absence of capacity building for front desk staff were factors affecting the provision of quality service to hotel guests in the metropolis. This research by Munkaila and his colleagues seems too outdated to be relied upon because with the passage of time the variables might have changed. This research was therefore conducted to bridge the gap in the literature and to examine the perception guests have about the Front Desk Staff at the Modern City and Mariam hotels in Tamale Metropolis and to determine which service quality dimension has the greatest impact on guests' satisfaction with hotel Front Desk Staff (FDS) at the two hotels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories of Service Quality

According to Gupta (2017), SQ is divided into two major categories: tangible services (such as furniture, buildings, rooms, and décor) and intangible services (such as particular touches, surprises, and making people feel appreciated). Additionally, Gupta argued that although all hotels in the modern world provide essentially the same practical amenities, it is their intangible services that compel guests to stay with them. Numerous studies have examined the CS traits that guests might find important in relation to the hotel business (Nomnga, 2015). In general, the main four models used to assess CS and SQ in the hotel business are SERVEQUAL, HOLSERVE, Lodging Quality Index (LQI), and DINESERVE. Each type has a unique strength and has been flexibly employed in the hotel business to display pertinent literature. The hotel industry has creatively used each model, each of which has a special strength, to present literature relevant to this study and provide a conceptual framework. Awara and Amaechi (2014) studied the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty in selected eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and analyzed the data using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method. The study found a statistically significant relationship between customer satisfaction and: loyalty, customer patronage, and customer retention. It was further discovered that with an improvement in customer satisfaction, a firm will find customers who are more loyal. However, the limitation of this research was the fact that it was conducted within the context of Nigeria and not Ghana. That notwithstanding, Nomnga (2015) observes that SQ is an elusive, complex, abstract, and subjective concept that can signify various things to various individuals. Eshetie et al. (2016) noted that in the service sector, how well a hotel satisfies the client's expectations has evolved into a gauge of the service's quality. Forozia et al (2013) asserts that hotel management must appropriately consider guest expectations because, in the majority of service sectors, SQ is crucial to a company's capacity to exist and succeed.

If guests experience poor service, they might decide not to patronize the firm again in the future or might swiftly migrate their business to other suppliers (Prentice, 2013; Cheng & Rashid, 2013). In order to evaluate SQ, Wu et al. (2014) contend that both expectations and perceptions must be measured. A set of crucial components categorized into five categories—tangibility,

reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. SQ is seen as a multidimensional term that is evaluated and understood by consumers (Mauri et al., 2013). More specifically, (Rauch et al., 2015) asserted that the SQ concept's original application was centering a framework of marketing operations around the consumer. Numerous studies have been conducted on the impact of SQ on CS in the hotel business, including those by Rauch, Collins, Nale, and Barr (2015), Mbuthia, Muthoni, and Muchina (2013), Minh, Ha, Anh, and Matsui (2017), Abukhalifeh & Mat Som (2012), Lalla, Cowden, and Karodia (2015), G/Egziabher (2015), and Eshetie et al. (2016). The five components of the SERVQUAL paradigm tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy have been identified in the literature. In a study by Eshetie et al. (2016) that examined the literature on the SQ and CS in the hospitality industry particularly hotels in Ethiopia, the Lodging Quality Index (LQI), a multidimensional scale based on the foundation of the SERVQUAL paradigm, was highlighted. It was understood that the LQI scale was initially developed using the 10 characteristics that were included in the first version of SERVQUAL. The LQI scale is a general measurement of hotel service quality. Rauch et al. (2015), Mbuthia et al. (2013), and Minh et al. (2017) highlighted the LQI model's 10 dimensions, which are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security access, communications, and comprehension.

The SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL model was developed in 1988 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry as a method for identifying SQ gaps. According to Waitiki (2014), the SERVQUAL model was built on the notion that customers might evaluate a company's SQ by contrasting their perception of that company's SQ with their own expectations. According to Eshetie et al. (2016), a commitment to quality increases customer satisfaction, increases revenue, and ultimately benefits both the customer and the employee. Poor customer service can actually cost a hotel money and hurt its reputation (Eshetie et al. (2016)). When substandard services are provided, any hotel management could feel threatened. However, dissatisfied customer typically does not complain to a hotel's management; instead, they typically tell at least nine other people about their negative experiences. The opposite is also true, contented guests tend to tell just a small circle of individuals about their positive hotel experiences. The five variables employed by SERVQUAL to explain the level of customer satisfaction within the context of the hospitality industry are assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles. Additionally, the SERVQUAL methodology gauges client expectations and SQ perceptions. By deducting the expectation (E) from the perception (P) value, $P-E=Q$, the quality gap (Q) is calculated. The sum of all the Q values yields an overall quality rating, which serves as a measure of the relative significance of the SQ characteristics that affect consumers' views of overall quality. A standardized tool called SERVQUAL has been used in a variety of service-related businesses. Two portions make up the SERVQUAL scale (Questionnaire): one measures consumer expectations with respect to a service segment, and the other evaluates perceptions of the company whose services are being evaluated. A 22-item Likert scale with five reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles components makes up SERVQUAL. The five dimensions are frequently used to construct a total of 22 statements that assess service quality and consumer expectations for the company being evaluated. Customers are typically asked to rate how much they think the service provider should offer in order to achieve their highest level of satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale. Researchers and scholars have paid close attention to front desk operations in the hotel sector because they believe that they can influence how SQ develops. The hotel sector can focus on the SERVQUAL model by comprehending SQ dynamics.

Customers can assess the quality of service using SERVQUAL's model based on five different criteria: dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy as illustrated in Figure 1.

Independent Variable

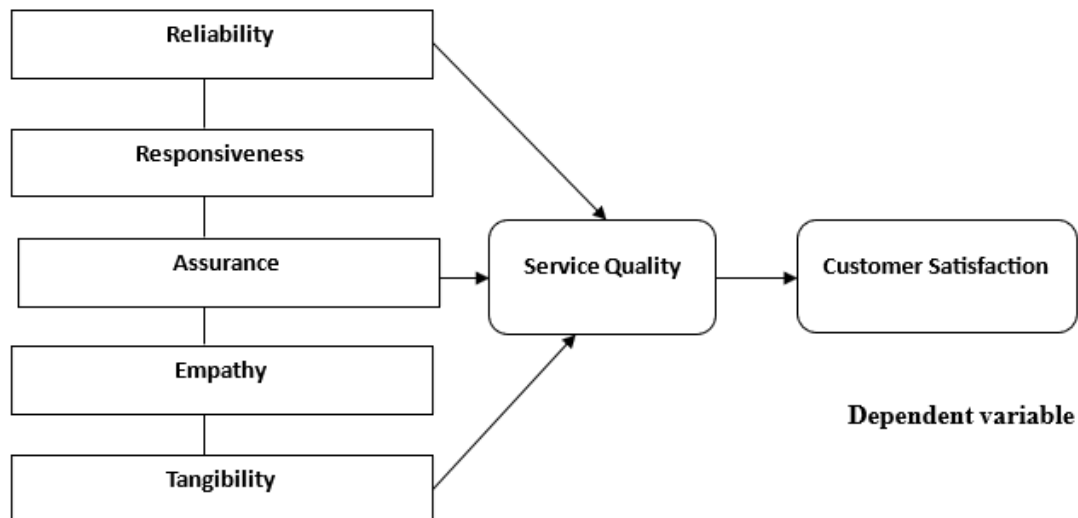


Figure 1: Service Quality Dimensions of Front Desk Operations

These elements of SERVQUAL (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility) captured in Figure 1 when present can improve service quality which can translate into an improvement in customer satisfaction. Similarly, Parasuraman et al., (1988) outlined four different categories of services including the banking industry, credit card companies, motor repair shops, and long-distance telecommunication companies and the results show that service quality had ten (10) dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, creditability, security, knowing the customers and tangibility. However, in 1988, these ten dimensions were cut down to five namely, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy as captured in Figure 1.

Reliability:

The capacity to deliver the promised services consistently and precisely is known as reliability. Accuracy, dependability, speed, and readiness to react are the components of reliability.

Response:

This refers to the readiness to assist clients and offer timely assistance. One of its components is dependability.

Assurance:

This refers to staff members' expertise, civility, and capacity to inspire confidence and trust. Element of knowledge skilled professional, communication, and customer care can be used to measure the assurance dimension.

Empathy:

Empathy is the ability to provide each consumer with individualized, compassionate attention. It has the same components as assurance.

Tangibles:

This dimension covers the outward look of buildings, staff, and correspondence materials used to interact with clients. The location, appearance of the server, environment, cleanliness, and space are all components of the tangibles dimension (Awara & Amaechi, 2018).

Zeithaml et al. (1990) asserted that there are additional aspects outside the dimension of Parasuraman et al. (1988) and presented a comprehensive perception of quality assessment. In his opinion, these aspects of service excellence include;

1. **Access:** It involves the ease of contacting the source. Position, hours of operation, supplier availability, and other technical amenities belong here.
2. **Communication:** It is the capacity to communicate clearly with customers in a way that comes naturally to them.
3. **Credibility:** This refers to the capacity to have faith in suppliers of the service or goods.
4. **Courtesy:** This refers to the actions of the service providers. Examples are kindness, respect, tolerance, civility, and love.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was quantitative research that employed a cross-sectional study design to examine how guests' perceptions of the front desk staff contribute to service quality in the two hotels in the Tamale Metropolis. A cross-sectional survey design is used to collect social and individual facts, attitudes, and beliefs (Kothari, 2014 cited in Sarah, Bariham & Quansah, 2023). It involves measurement grouping, examination, appraisal, and elucidation of data, which results in the establishment of critical philosophies of knowledge and the resolution of significant issues (Sarah et al, 2023). Cross-sectional studies are the most ideal for determining the prevalence of a specific occurrence, problem, scenario, attitude, or perceptions an individual or a group of people have about a particular within a given period of time. A cross-sectional design has three main unique features: no time dimension; a reliance on existing differences rather than change following intervention; and, groups are selected based on existing differences rather than random allocation (Akudugu, 2019). The population of the study were all guests who visited the hotels in the Tamale Metropolis at the time of the study. A multi-stage sampling strategy was adopted in this study. In the first stage of the sampling, a convenient sampling approach was employed to select the 2 hotels in the Metropolis for the research. The hotels were selected due to their proximity to the researchers and the willingness of their management to participate in the research. In the second stage of the sampling, out of 296 hotel guests, the Yammane formula for sample size determination was used to randomly sample 170 guests from the two hotels to complete a questionnaire for the study. The Yammane (1967) formula for computing sample size is quoted as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{296}{1 + 296(0.05^2)}$$

Where n=Sample size

- N=Sample frame

- $1 = \text{Constant}$
- $e = \text{Margin of error (considered at 5\%)}$.
- Therefore, using this formula, n (sampled size) = 170.

The simple random sampling strategy was employed at this stage to ensure that all the respondents at the chosen hotels had an equal opportunity to participate in the survey. For a sampling design to be referred to as a probability or random sample, each element in the population must have an equal and independent chance of selection in the sample so that the findings can be generalized to the entire population (Kumar, 1996).

Profile of Study Area

Tamale is the capital town of the Northern Region. It is located between the longitudes of $0^{\circ}34'$ and $0^{\circ}57'W$ and the latitudes of $9^{\circ}16'N$ and $9^{\circ}34'N$, with a total area of 922 km². The Metropolis is bordered by the Savelugu Municipality and the Nanton District to the north, the Mion District to the east, the East and Central Gonja districts to the south, the Tolon District to the west, and the Kumbungu District to the north-west. Due to the rapid development of Tamale, the Sagnarigu municipality was carved out from the Metropolis in 2018. The city has numerous financial and insurance institutions as well as an international airport. The capital city of Tamale serves as the entry point to northern Ghana. Football matches between local and international teams are played in Tamale's sports stadium. The presence of an international sports stadium and an international airport offers both domestic and foreign visitors' significant possibilities. Therefore, the hotel sector in the metropolis should be well-prepared to seize this fantastic opportunity. Recent data from the Ghana Tourism Authority indicates that the Northern Region had 139 standard accommodation facilities, 2 registered car rentals, 1 entertainment center, 27 recognized food and beverages facilities, 14 hotels, and 14 travel and tour companies (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2022).

Profile of the Selected Hotels for the Study

Two main hotels, namely; Modern City Hotel and Mariam Hotel were randomly sampled for this research. Further descriptions of the profile of these hotels are illustrated below.

Modern City Hotel:

The Modern City Hotel is one of the opulent lodgings in Tamale Metropolis. It was built in 2007 and has modern amenities befitting its status as a 2-star hotel. The 106 staff members at the 2-star Modern City Hotel comprise 8 security guards, 21 housekeepers, 8 office staff, 20 chefs, 6 laundry staff, 15 maintenance staff, 16 restaurant staff, and 12 front desk staff. As part of its additional attraction, the hotel offers a pool, gym, conference rooms, Wi-Fi, and digital room keys. International and domestic travelers frequently stay in this hotel. In January, 2024, the hotel hosted Failatu Abdul-Razak who had cooked over 110 hours as of Friday 6, January 2024 in her attempt to the Guinness World record for a cook-a-thon of 119 hours and 57 minutes currently held by Irish chef Alan Fisher.

Mariam Hotel:

One of the top hotels in the Tamale Metropolis is the Mariam Hotel, which was opened in 2002. The Mariam Hotel is quite unique in its standards due to the type of local-echo environment it is surrounded by, with a peaceful atmosphere and lovely decor. The hotel has 84 employees

and is rated as a 2-star establishment. Eight of these individuals are employed in security, thirteen in upkeep, fourteen in cleaning, five in administration, twelve in dining establishments, eighteen in the kitchen, four in the laundry, and ten at the front desk. The hotel uses a digital room key and offers WiFi, a gym, and conference rooms. Like the Modern City hotel, the Mariam hotel has 60 rooms. The information on the profile summaries of the chosen hotels used in this study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the Profiles of the Selected hotels for the study

Hotel	Year Established	Staff Strength	No of FDS	Grade	Depts
Modern City	2007	106	12	2-star	8
Mariam Hotel	2002	84	10	2-star	8

Source: Field data (2020)

Ethical Approval:

The research team made a commitment to uphold the respondents' rights by making sure that none of the respondents were mentioned directly in the research. Permission to carry out the study was obtained from the chosen hotels prior to the start of the data collection. All respondents were also told of the motivation behind the research. All those who took part in the research did so willingly. They were neither compelled nor monetarily induced to participate in the study. Their safety was not compromised as a result of participating in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

A questionnaire was the primary tool utilized in this study to gather data. Surveys have the advantage of allowing respondents to answer inquiries knowing their answers will remain anonymous. The reliability of the items on the questionnaires was validated using the Cronbach Alpha formula which yielded $\alpha = .70$ which was acceptable for the study. The questionnaire was made up of a total of thirty (30) closed-ended items. A 5-point Likert scale was employed in the survey, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree," 2 "disagree," 3 "uncertain," 4 "agree," and 5 denoting "strongly agree." The raw data was cleaned, coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20. Frequencies and percentages were used to compute reasons for the visits by the guests as well as mode of hotel booking. Mean, standard deviation and multiple regression were employed to analyze the data on guests' perception of service quality of the front desk staff as well as the effects of front desk staff service quality on customer satisfaction in the two hotels in Tamale Metropolis. The results are presented in the form of tables and graphs as illustrated below.

Reasons for Travelling

Figure 2 presents the data on the reasons why the guests visited the metropolis. Each guest's motivation for traveling was different.

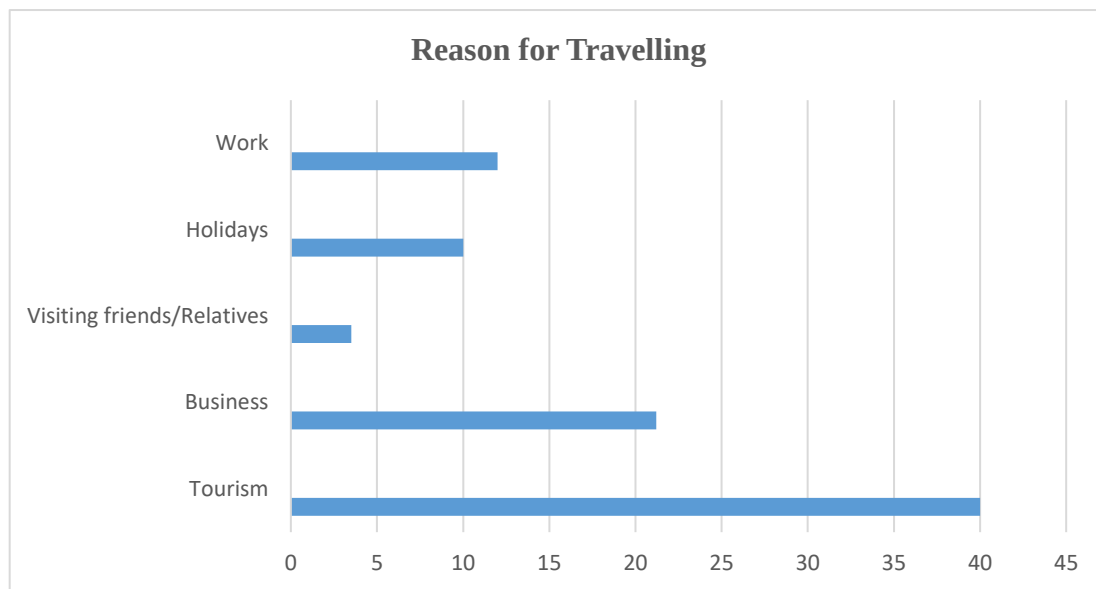


Figure 2: Reasons for Travelling

According to Figure 2, the responses showed that 40% of travelers were on vacation, 21.2% visited the metropolis for business, 16.8% visited friends and relatives, and 12% were there for other reasons like work. This result is similar to those by Amissah and Amenumey (2015) whose research on service quality dimensions of selected hotels in Accra concluded that almost 54% of the respondents disclosed that the main purpose of their visit was business followed by holidays (30%). In a similar survey by the Ghana Tourism Authority (2022) on reasons international tourist chose Ghana as their preferred destination, it was revealed that 42.28% of the respondents were in Ghana for family reunion, 17.45% were on vacation, 16.78% were on tour to enjoy and experience Ghanaian culture, 12.08% were on business trip, 5.70% were attending entertainment events, 2.01% were on educational tour, 1.68% were attending conferences in Ghana, and 1.34% were on transit.

Mode of Hotel Booking

Respondents were asked to describe the process they used to make hotel reservations. The majority, 57.8%, made personal reservations, followed by online reservations (24.2%) and friend bookings (18%) as shown in Figure 3.

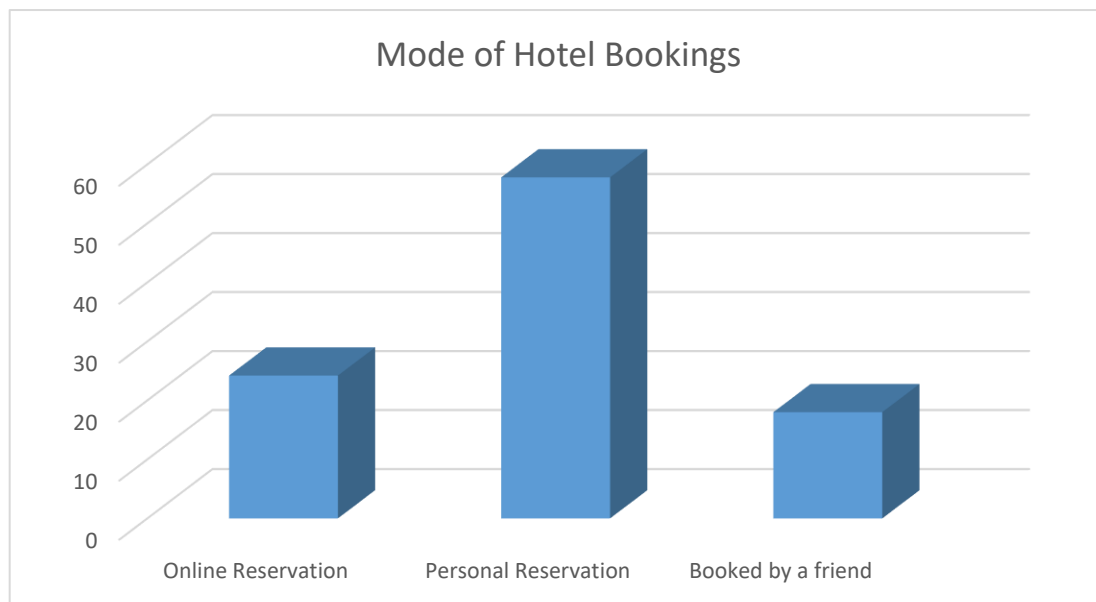


Figure 3: Mode of Hotel Booking

Guests Perception of Front Desk Staff Service Quality

The first set of questionnaires was used to investigate how front desk staff were viewed by guests as far as service quality is concerned. The information on how visitors perceive the service quality attributes of front desk personnel is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Guests' Perceptions of Front Desk Staff Service Quality (N=170)

Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Sig.
The Guests feel safe when staying in the hotel	4.23	0.351	0.001
Serving customers correctly for the first time	3.98	0.569	0.023
Materials with pleasing appearance (pamphlets, web sites)	3.92	0.221	0.022
Hotel staff members gives individualized service.	3.88	1.021	0.085
Orderly, tidy and clean hotel ground	3.69	0.225	0.001
Providing the requested service within the allocated time	3.49	1.452	0.321
Resolving the issues of the guests	3.44	1.531	0.001
Aesthetically attractive physical spaces	2.52	1.001	0.021
Delivering service immediately	2.45	0.862	0.001
Delivering a faultless service	2.42	0.685	0.045
Hotel has sufficient equipment and supplies	2.34	1.532	0.001
Hotel staff answer questions asked by guests	2.14	0.221	0.002
Clear information is available in the hotel	2.11	0.321	0.001
Hotel staffs' conduct inspires patrons with confidence	2.03	0.562	0.332

Source: Field data (2020)

The Guest Perceptions of Service Quality Dimensions of Front Desk Staff (FDS) are shown in Table 3. The most important customer opinion of the FDS service quality component was that customers feel comfortable and secure while staying at the hotel (M= 4.23; SD= 0.351; p 0.001). According to the study, respondents thought that safety and security was an important aspect of service quality. Customers' perceptions of the front desk staff's service quality dimensions were influenced by three factors: providing services correctly the first time (M= 3.98; SD=

0.569; $p = 0.023$), visually appealing materials (pamphlets, statements, and websites) ($M = 3.92$; $SD = 0.221$; $p = 0.022$), and hotel staffs providing individualized attention ($M = 3.69$; $SD = 0.225$; $p = 0.001$). Hotel staff members do spend some time responding to questions from visitors. The conduct of hotel workers inspires patrons with confidence was scored higher than the median point (3). This finding confirms those from Ghana Tourism Authority (2022) whose survey on the level of tourist satisfaction of service in Ghana concluded that 19.81% of tourists rated hotel facilities as excellent, 68.81% rated them as good, and 10.2% rated them as average. Similarly, 17.38% of the tourists surveyed rated the quality of hotel services as excellent, 67.02% rated the quality of hotel services as good, and 13.51% rated them as average. However, since this survey was a nationwide one, the context may vary from one region to another.

Also, hotels have sufficient equipment and supplies ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.532$); front desk staff provides faultless service to guests ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 0.685$); and hotels offer aesthetically attractive physical spaces ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.001$). This finding is similar to those by the Ghana Tourism Authority (2022) whose survey involving tourists' overall impression of Ghana had 19.1% rated Ghana as an excellent destination, 72% rated Ghana as good, and 8.31% rated Ghana as average. Further, the satisfaction levels of guests from Lizzie's Hotel, a 2-star hotel, were relatively low. Also, in all the hotels, the guests were least satisfied with the tangibility factor of their service quality. This may be because tangibility is a factor that accounts for physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel (Parasuraman et al., 1990), it is easily discerned and the impression may last for a short time because of the general desire of guests to experience new places and new things all the time (Geronikolas, 2012 cited in Poku et al, 2013).

Effects of Front Desk Staff Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

In order to determine which service quality factor most significantly affects customers' satisfaction at the two hotels, a questionnaire was administered. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL (Tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) provided basis for the design of the variables. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Effects of Front Desk Staff Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction (N-170)

Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Sig.
Front desk staff offer accurate information	4.41	0.343	0.001
Front desk staff always wear neat clothing	4.23	0.873	0.001
Front desk staff provide friendly service	4.22	1.069	0.041
Front desk staff always appear classy	4.21	1.063	0.724
Front desk staff deliver on their promises	4.11	0.454	0.032
Front desk staff adhere to service commitments	3.88	1.023	0.336
Front desk staff provide precise service delivery time	3.78	1.223	0.071
Front desk staff reply to inquiries as soon as they can	3.70	1.396	0.001
Front desk staff are constantly eager to assist guests	3.60	1.235	0.047
Front desk staff are knowledgeable about its offerings	3.55	0.343	0.001
Front desk staff are capable of providing services	3.50	0.673	0.001
Front desk staff have effective communication skills	3.35	1.009	0.041
You can trust the front desk staff	2.21	1.061	0.724
Front desk staff are multilingual	2.33	0.124	0.001
Front desk staff treat you personally	2.11	1.438	0.001

Front desk staff are always cognizant of your peculiar needs	1.45	1.023	0.001
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Source: Field data (2020)

Customers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the various SERVQUAL constructs in relation to front desk operations at the hotels under study as shown in Table 4. The reliability construct, which falls under the dependability construct of front desk staff providing accurate information, emerges as the most crucial aspect affecting customer satisfaction. This suggests that a sizable majority of clients are content with the way front desk staff deliver information about the hotels. Accuracy is crucial for information quality since the quality of information is determined by its timeliness, completeness, relevance, and ease of understanding by users. Furthermore, the correctness reflects all organizational actions. Furthermore, the degree of customer satisfaction was equally influenced by the front desk staff's neat uniform (M=4.23; p0.001) and their friendly service (M=4.22; p0.041). Customer satisfaction levels in the Tamale Metropolis were also influenced by the front desk staff's ability to deliver services as promised (M= 4.11; p0.032) and their ability to dress decently (M= 4.01; p0.001). Although front desk staff members were always aware of clients' unique needs (M=1.45; p0.047), they give clients personal attention (M=2.11; p0.001), can communicate with clients in any language other than English (M=2.33; p0.001), these factors did not have a significant impact on the degree of customer satisfaction.

These findings depart slightly from Sulemana et al (2023) whose research involving some selected hotels in Tamale Metropolis found that the dimensions of quality service such as empathy, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and tangibility significantly predict guests' loyalty. All the studies of quality service features were evaluated as influential determinants of customers' satisfaction, which leads to customer loyalty. They added that customer satisfaction is linked to both quality service and loyalty. Similarly, the Ghana Tourism Authority (2022) reports that with an average length of stay of 14 nights, expenditure by tourists summed up to \$10,627,381.80, and an overall average daily expenditure per tourist was \$606.79. Accommodation expenditure recorded the highest among the pattern of expenditures with 33.34% of the total, with entertainment and recreation being the second (17.25%) and food and beverage being third (16.56%). Tourists (89.1%), (31.74%), and (56.31%) had a good level of satisfaction with regard to the events they participated in and their overall experience of the 2022 DiGH program respectively. And that over 90% of visitors mentioned that they will visit Ghana in the future (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2022).

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate how guests view the front desk staff's contribution to service quality in some selected hotels in Tamale. From the discussion of the results, it can be concluded that guests had a positive perception of the front desk staff at the two hotels under study. The visitors feel secure and safe when staying in these hotels; have confidence that the front desk staff serves first-timers appropriately; and that most front desk staff provide guests with individualized service based on their peculiar needs. However, guests who participated in this research did not significantly have confidence that the front desk staff of these two hotels inspires visitors. On the issue of the effect of front desk staff service quality on customer satisfaction, the findings of the study discovered that front desk staff service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction. The perceptions of hotel service quality are a

measure of how essential different hotel amenities are to visitors in boosting the enjoyment of their stay. According to the results of the study, "first impression" was found to be one of the primary factors of perceived service quality in luxury hotels. First impression was the primary factor determining customer satisfaction in the two hotels. Again, the majority of respondents felt that staff members' smiles and friendliness had a substantial impact on how satisfied customers were. However, a number of variables, including treatment equality, responsiveness/attention to detail, and language proficiency were the factors the front desk staff of these two hotels should improve upon to attract more customers to further boost their hotel businesses.

Recommendations

1. The customer may be satisfied or disappointed depending on how the hotel personnel behaves and provides services. To demonstrate positive behaviors and offer top-notch services, hoteliers must take the required steps to increase employee productivity and attitudes. As a result, hoteliers should first engage in internal marketing to keep highly motivated and content workers who can serve the needs of external clients.
2. Advertising and selling the hotel's services, chauffeur services for airport pickups, and local transportation should be emphasized in order to increase the hotel's revenue. The managers of these two hotels should ensure that clear information about the two hotels is available both in print and in electronic media. This will help attract both local and international tourists to their facilities to boost their hotel businesses.
3. The front desk staff of the two hotels should be trained on how to inspire visitors. This will promote customer satisfaction and attract more customers to boost their hotel businesses.
4. Through briefings and constant training programs, front desk staff will be made more attentive to guests' needs and preferences in order to improve the guest stay and overall experience.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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