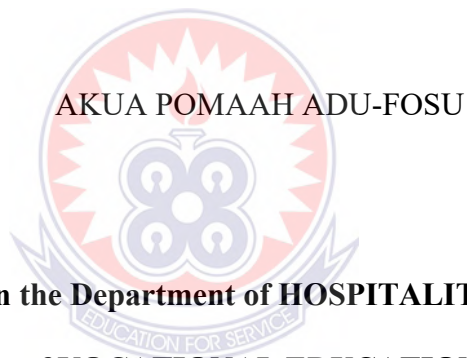


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN HOTEL
INDUSTRY IN KUMASI METROPOLIS



**A Dissertation in the Department of HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
EDUCATION, Faculty of VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, submitted to the School
of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for award of the Master of Technology (Catering and Hospitality)
degree**

NOVEMBER, 2016

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, AKUA POMAAH ADU-FOSU, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of the quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation were supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. MRS. ELLEN OLU

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Almighty Jehovah for His blessings and protection throughout my course of study. I am very grateful to Dr. Mrs. Ellen Olu my supervisor for her extreme patience, guidance and advise throughout the research period. Not forgetting my parents Mr. and Mrs. Gyem Nsiah for their love and care.



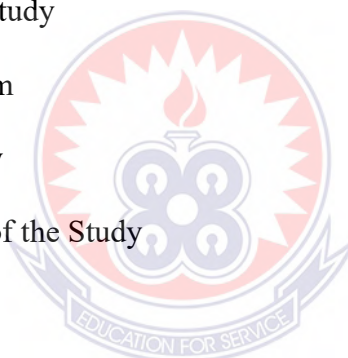
DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to my Husband Mr. Benjamin Adu-Fosu and children Awo Yaa Amoah Adu-Fosu, Maame Adwoa Adubeah Adu-Fosu, Papa Kwadwo Adu Adu-Fosu, Nana Kwadwo Gyem Adu-Fosu.



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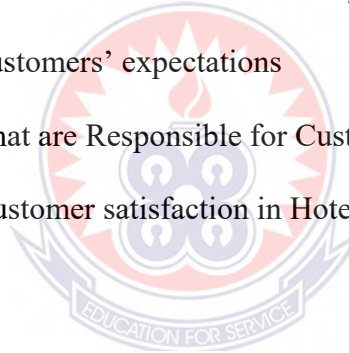
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis. This study adopted the case study strategy. The researcher used quantitative research methods for the study. The population for the study was two hundred and seventy (270). The population of the study was made up of customers and hotel operators in the Kumasi Metropolis. Random sampling and purposive sampling methods were adopted to select a sample size of two hundred and fifty nine (259) respondents for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was questionnaires. Primary data was collected through a field survey of selected hotel operators and customers in the Kumasi Metropolis. The data were analysed using SPSS and Microsoft excel. The study results revealed that the services provided by hotels in Kumasi is good but needs to be improved to sustain the growth of the hospitality business. Most of the customers were willing to continue doing business with the hotels. The customers recommended that to improve customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, the hotel must provide more customer service professionals, provide quality food and drinks, the hotel workers must clean rooms and wash bed sheets regularly and must provide moderate charges to enhance customer satisfaction. The study concluded that hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis have state of the art offices, rooms, conferences rooms etc. Moreover, the Service provided by staff is quality and professional. Furthermore, the hotel Staff are friendly and courteous. The hotel customers periodically inform customers about new products and services. The hotel's Promotions to reward customers are regular and consistent. It is recommended that, there is the need to organise periodic workshops and seminars to educate hotel workers regarding modern hospitality management techniques to satisfy customers. This is because customers' expectations are not static but changes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives of the Study, significance of the study, scope of the study and the organisation of the rest of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Food, accommodation and dress are the three most essential things of human. Hotel or hotel industry alone provides two basic things: food and accommodation. Hotel is a part of the hospitality industry which is an umbrella term for a broad variety of service industries including, but not limited to, hotels, restaurants and casinos. Hotel is often referred as a “Home away from home”. According to Cambridge dictionary, a hotel is a building where you pay to have a room to sleep in and where you can eat meals or a hotel is an establishment that provides paid lodging on a short-term basis.

According to Sheela (2014), a hotel is the place where the tourist stops being the traveller and becomes a guest. Hotel usually offer a full range of accommodations and services, which may include suites, public dining, banquet facilities, lounges and entertainment facilities. It is considered as an industry whose main aim is also to make profits for the hoteliers, though this may change at times. Hence a hotel should provide food, beverage and lodging to travellers on payment and has in turn the right to refuse if the traveller is drunk, not follow the rule of hotels or not pay the service fee. Traditional hotels provide rooms, banquets and restaurants. Additionally, hotels get revenues also from telephone call services, laundry services, travel services, internet services and recreational, entertainment activities in the hotels. Hotel management have to provide a quality service to their clients.

Service quality is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perception of the way the service has been performed (Gronroos, 2005; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). A number of experts define service quality differently. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) define it as the differences between customers, expectation of services and their perceived service. If the expectation is greater than the service performance, perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence, customer dissatisfaction occurs. Lewis and Mitchell (1990), Dotchin and Oakland (2012), and Asubonteng *et al.* (2009) define service quality as the extent to which a service meets customers need and expectation.

Most researchers agree that satisfaction is an attitude or evaluation that is formed by the customer comparing their pre-purchase expectations of what they would receive from the product to their subjective perceptions of the performance they actually did receive (Oliver, 2008). As defined by Kotler (2000) satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectation. Additionally, Yi (2010) also stated that customer satisfaction is a collective outcome of perception, evaluation and psychological reactions to the consumption experience with a product/service. Customer satisfaction is defined as a result of customer's evaluation of the consumption experience with the services. However, the customers have different levels of satisfaction as they have different attitudes and perceived performance from the product/service.

Davidow and Uttal (2012) proposed that customers, expectation is formed by many uncontrollable factors which include previous experience with other companies, and their advertising, customers, psychological condition at the time of service delivery, customer background and values and the images of the purchased product. In addition,

Zeithaml *et al.* (1990) stated that customer service expectation is built on complex considerations, including their own pre-purchase beliefs and other people's opinions. Similarly, Miller (2016) also stated that customers, expectation related to different levels of satisfaction. It may be based on previous product experiences, learning from advertisements and word-of-mouth communication. Santos (2013) added that expectation can be seen as a pre-consumption attitude before the next purchase, it may involve experience. Customers, expectation, is what the customers wish to receive from the services. The diversity of expectation definitions can be concluded that expectation is uncontrollable factors which include past experience, advertising, customers, and perception at the time of purchase, background, attitude and product's image. Furthermore, the influences of customers, expectation is pre-purchase beliefs, word of mouth communications, individual needs, customer's experiences, and other personal attitudes. Different customers have different expectation based on the customers' knowledge of a product or service.

The most common definition of service quality is the comparison customers make between their expectations and perceptions of the received service (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Grönroos, 1982). Quality is a multi-dimensional concept. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) defined three dimensions of service quality, namely, physical quality, interactive quality and corporate quality. Similarly, Grönroos (1984) argued that service quality comprises of technical quality, functional quality and corporate image. On the other hand, Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) developed the SERVQUAL scale, which became the most popular instrument for measuring service quality. They identified five key dimensions of service quality – reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

The SERVQUAL scale consists of 22 items for assessing customer perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of service. A level of agreement or disagreement with a given item is rated on a seven-point Likert scale. The results are used to identify positive and negative gaps. The gap is measured by the difference between perceptions and expectations scores and indicates the level of service quality. If the result is positive, perceived service exceeds expected service. A negative result means low quality of service. According to this instrument, service quality occurs when perceived service meets or exceeds customer's expectations. This study therefore sought to assess the quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Customer satisfaction has been viewed as an important issue for the hotel industry because of its impact on repeat business and word-of-mouth reputation. In reality, the hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis has not always responded satisfactorily to the customers' demands for improvement. In Ghana, each hotel has its own criteria to evaluate the level of customer satisfaction. Hence, the hotel industry in Ghana is in need of an effective customer satisfaction strategies to improve customer satisfaction. The restaurant is in need of an appropriate measure of customer satisfaction that will lead to customer loyalty from its primary source of customers. This suggests that management may wish to seek attributes that are responsible for customers' return business. Customers who receive poor service will typically relate their dissatisfaction of the restaurant service to others customers. If the service is particularly poor most of customers will not return to the restaurant. Satisfied customers improve business and dissatisfied customers ruin business. It is therefore important to customer monitor satisfaction and manage it continually to ensure customer satisfaction.

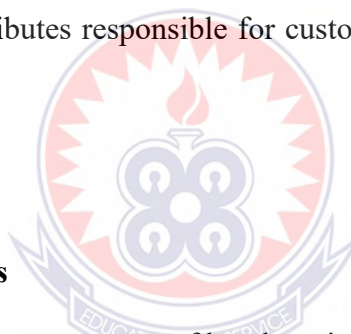
1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis.

1.4 Specific objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were to:

1. assess the quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis.
2. identify customers perceptions of service quality in Hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis.
3. evaluate the attributes responsible for customers' return business in the Kumasi Metropolis.



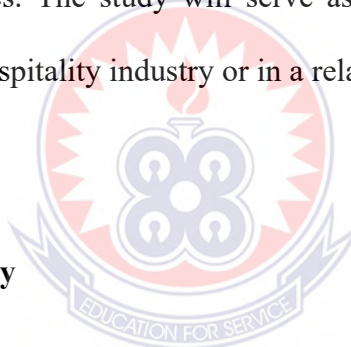
1.5 Research Questions

1. To what extent are customers of hotels satisfied in Kumasi Metropolis?
2. What are customers' perceptions of service provided in Hotels industry in Kumasi Metropolis?
3. What attributes are responsible for customers' return business in the Kumasi Metropolis?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study identifies quality dimensions significant to Hotel management in the Kumasi Metropolis to enable the hotels in Kumasi to develop strategies to improve the service delivery and customer satisfaction. This will enable the hotels in the Kumasi

Metropolis to be in competitive position in the hospitality industry and ensure survival of the hotel business in the midst of stiff competition. By measuring the satisfaction level of customers, the Hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis can develop customer centric survival approach to deal with customers in order to avoid the tendency of existing of customers switching to competing Hotels in the industry. By identifying what customers expect and perceive to be quality. The Hotels in Kumasi Metropolis can revise, redesign, repackage its service operations and tailor them to meet the expectation and perception of its customers. By this the service delivered will bring satisfaction to the customers and retain them while making all efforts to attract new ones. Customers have become quality conscious and that compare services of companies and will opt for superior quality services. The study will serve as a guideline for further research in service quality in the hospitality industry or in a related field.



1.7 Scope of the Study

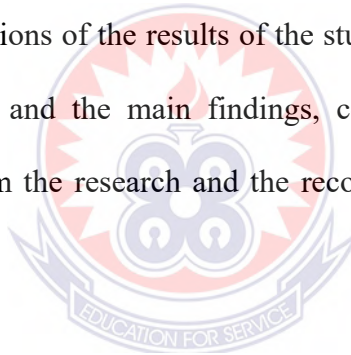
The study is limited to quality service practices of the hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis. The study would be geographically limited to the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Moreover, the study is conceptually limited to service quality and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study will be logically arranged in five chapters. Chapter one will give a brief description of the research and will highlight the principal discussion on the effects of service quality delivery on customer satisfaction and retention. The chapter also

presents a statement of the problem, the objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and organisation of the rest of the study. Chapter two will describe quality management from the historical perspective, the concept of quality and description of service established on the literature from numerous writers. The service quality dimensions or model, customer satisfaction and the significance of service quality to businesses will also be scrutinized in this chapter, as well as the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter three will present the methodological perspectives of the study. The strategies adopted in the study will be fully discussed in this chapter. The strategies will include sampling procedures and the questionnaire survey. Chapter four will present the analysis and the discussions of the results of the study. Chapter five will present a brief summary of the study and the main findings, conclusion with regards to the new knowledge derived from the research and the recommendations for improving service quality.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter contains a comprehensive review of literature related to service quality and its influence on customers' satisfaction in the hotel industry. The chapter reviewed theoretical literature like the SERVQUAL and the customers' perceptions of service quality in the hotel industry. Moreover, the attributes that are responsible for customers' return business was critically reviewed.

2.1 Customer Satisfaction in the hotels industry

2.1.1 The Quality of Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry

Customer perceived service quality is the customers own perception of the service based on different factors contributing to the service, from the process to the final outcome. According to Grönroos (2001), "quality is what customers perceive". Customers buying service consider everything that contributes to the process and the final outcome in making their assessments of the service. However the subjective assessment of the actual service experiences is the customer perceived service quality as pointed out by Looy *et al* (2003), Zeithaml *et al* (2006), and Grönroos (2001).

Sureshchander *et al* (2002), points out that service firms have a difficulty envisioning and understanding what aspects of the service that define high quality to the consumers and at what levels, they are needed to be delivered. Also, that the aspect of managing a service interaction also requires understanding the complicated behaviour of employees that find its way into the customers perception of the service quality. On a careful inspection of the dimensions of quality, a major focus rests on the component of human interaction in the service delivery that consists of human behaviour and attitudes. Looy *et al* (2003) is also of the same opinion that customers are not one-dimensional in

judgment, because a lot of other factors influence service quality. Most researchers agree on these dimensions of service quality as a measure of service quality.

Tangibles: the appearance of physical facilities, the personal. The tools or equipment used to provide the service and communication material in other words, every material that is used to give tangibility to service.

Reliability: this is the consistency of the service performance, which breeds dependability, from the first time the service is correctly performed to the ability of the firm to keep its promises. According to Zeithaml *et al* (2006), it is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness: this is the willingness on the part of the service supplier (employee) to assist the customer and provide prompt service.

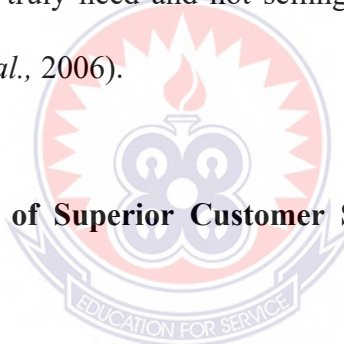
Assurance: the knowledge-ability and courtesy of employees towards the customers, their ability to inspire trust and confidence in handling the customers.

Empathy: This is a quality of the employee to care for the customer and give them individualized attention. The ability to put him/herself in the customer's shoes by seeing things through the customer's eyes. According to Zeithaml *et al* (2006), "it means treating customers as individuals, giving them customized service".

Various studies in service management have shown that the perception of the quality of services through the eyes of the customer is formed by a judgment of many encounters, with an organization. According to Zeithaml *et al* (2006), "customers perceive services in terms of quality of the service and how satisfied they are overall with their experiences." However, these encounters are mainly the joint effort of the employees who have contacts with the customers, and the customers themselves, who therefore may be in better position to understand them, and solve their service related problems.

2.1.2 The Importance of Good Customer Service to the Client and the Service Providers

Good customer service is about meeting the needs of the Customer. Customers have an inherent expectation that they will be treated well, i.e. in a friendly, kind, and respectful manner. Answering their questions and being knowledgeable about the product or service is also a characteristic of good customer service. If you deliver the product or service you promised, in the manner in which you promised, and help the customer with any difficulties or challenges they may have with the product or service, and the customer is ultimately happy with the experience, that's good customer service. Good customer service is also about ensuring the customer is receiving the appropriate product or service they truly need and not selling them more product or service than they need. (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).



2.1.3 The Importance of Superior Customer Service to the Client and Service Providers

Superior customer service includes all of the above as well as exceeding the expectations or needs of the customer. It's about going the extra mile to please the Customer. A person who experiences a negative customer service is more likely to share it among others than someone who experience a positive customer service. It is therefore important for businesses to go out of their way and strive for an exceptional customer service in order to avoid the negative image and response for that matter. (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

2.1.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Customers perceive service in terms of quality, but how satisfied they are with the overall experience, is what defines their satisfaction. Whether the customer is

satisfied after purchase depends on the offer's performance or the customer service in this case, in relation to the customer expectations. However, according to Zeithaml *et al* (2006) although service quality and customer satisfaction are used interchangeably, there is indeed a distinction. Customer Satisfaction is when the outcome of the service matches the expectations of the service. As pointed out by Looy *et al* (2003), even though they differ one is a component of the other. Zeithaml *et al* (2003) defines it as the customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether the product or service has met his needs or expectations. Failure to meet needs results in dissatisfaction, or a poor perception of the service quality.

Satisfaction can be acknowledged in various senses depending on what needs the customer had before the service; it ranges from feelings of fulfilment, contentment, pleasure, delight, relief, and ambivalence. Although it tends to be measured as a static quantity, it is dynamic and evolves over time being influenced by a variety of factors. Service quality is one of those factors that contribute to customer satisfaction, in other words a component of customer satisfaction measure. As Looy *et al* (2003), points out the distinction between the two is a very important one. The level of customer satisfaction is the result of the customers comparison of the service quality expected in a given service encounter, with the perceived service quality. In addition, the distinction is that in measuring customer satisfaction, the actual experience of the customer is the basis of assessments while in service quality measurement the customer experience is not required. According to Zeithaml *et al*, (2006), satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a measure or evaluation of a product or service's ability to meet a customer's need or expectations.

If the customers of an organization are satisfied by quality services the result is that, they will be loyal to them and consequently be retained by the organization, which is positive for the organization because it could also mean higher profits, higher market

share, and increasing customer base. Kondo (2001), argues that customers value satisfaction and quality in many different ways. Therefore, the expression “no customer dissatisfaction”, does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with “customer satisfaction”. Fornell (1992) argues that changes in satisfaction are consequences from past decisions. He continues to explain that quality is judged by the consumer and that the most important measurement of quality is how it affects customer satisfaction (Fornell, 1992). This is further strengthened by Herrmann, Huber and Braunstein (2000), who argue that whether or not a customer considers their purchase to live up to their expectations, i.e. whether the customer is satisfied or not, is dependent on the perceived quality.

According to Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994), there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and economic profit for the company. Arguably, customer satisfaction is an important component in order for the company to be profitable. Increased global competition has led to a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction (Johnson & Fornell, 1991). Matzler, Hinterhuber, Bailom, and Sauerwein (1996), argues that there are an increasing number of companies that starts to recognize the importance of customer satisfaction for future business. In attempting to increase customer satisfaction it is necessary to understand what the customer wants before they realize it themselves. One major challenge that companies are facing is how to improve customer satisfaction and continue keeping their customers satisfied, which becomes a way for companies to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Torbica & Stroh, 2000).

According to Berry *et al* (1985), customer satisfaction has ten dimensions as enumerated below:

Access- it refers to the how easily a service can be obtained. That is flexibility of working hours of the service provider, method of contact, and waiting time.

Communication- addresses how information is conveyed and received from customers among others, it entails empathetic listening, the use of common language, explanation of the service, its advantages and disadvantages.

Competence – it deals with the level of skills and knowledge of the service provider

Courtesy- it is indicated by friendliness and politeness of service provider(s).

Credibility- it is the trust that customers repose in the organisation and the staff providing the service. Reliability- it implies the consistent performance or rendering of the right service at the right time, done right the first time.

Responsiveness - willingness and readiness of employees to provide immediate service.

Security-absence of danger, doubt and risk. It implies physical safety and confidentiality.

Tangibles-is the evidence that the service and the organisation are credible and trustworthy.

Understanding- refers to how well the organisation understands the expectations of its customers in their feeling about services being provided.

It should however be noted that, not every one of the ten points listed above needed to be present for a customer to be satisfied.

2.1.5 The Importance of Providing Quality Service to Customers

Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994) say that companies that strive for high customer satisfaction are more likely to receive larger economic returns. They also recognize that these economic returns are not immediately realized. Matzler *et al.*, (1996) argue that customer satisfaction act as an indicator of future business opportunities, where a satisfied customer is loyal to the company, which implies a stable future cash-flow. This is strengthened by Anderson *et al.* (1994) who acknowledge the fact that there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability.

2.1.6 The Negative Aspect of delivering Quality Service to Customers

Rust and Oliver (2000) say that a customer that is satisfied with a product or service will raise their repurchase frequency and future expectations. Due to the customers higher expectations it will become more difficult for the firm to satisfy the customers in the next purchase cycle. According to Rust and Oliver (2000), this might damage the company in the long run. A company that raises customer's expectation too high will get problem with retaining the same customer satisfaction in the future. The company would be better of reducing the expectations and then deliver more than expected (Ciavolino & Dahlgaard, 2007). Furthermore, Rust and Oliver (2000) wonder if satisfactions are a suitable goal and argues that companies do not gain advantage by seeking a high level of customer satisfaction when it just raises expectations that are hard to reach and, in turn, increases cost for trying to reach these higher expectations.

Anderson, Fornell, and Rust (1997) further argued that, productivity within the company will be damaged because of the cost and the search after customer satisfaction. Furthermore, in addition to higher cost, the company must add more effort in improving product attributes or overall product design to keep satisfaction at desired level (Anderson *et al.*, 1994).

2.1.7 The Importance of Exceeding Customers' Expectations

Often companies and organisations claim in their publicity that they will "exceed" customer expectations. Such phrases are often included in mission/vision/values type statements. The message may even be shown on posters prominently displayed in the hotel reception areas. Customers normally have high expectations. But it is very rare for customer service representatives to regularly meet the expectations of customers, let alone exceed them.

Service expectations are met when customers are provided with the right product/service, at the right quality, at the right price, every single time.

The emphasis here is on "every single time". Few questions can be asked about regular transactions customers have. Do they receive prompt, efficient and courteous service every time? Does the company or organisation manage busy and quiet times equally well? (Anderson *et al.*, 1994)

2.1.8 The Value of Customer Loyalty

The term customer loyalty is used to describe the behaviour of repeat customers, as well as those that offer good ratings, reviews, or testimonials. Some customers do a particular company a great service by offering favourable word of mouth publicity regarding a product, telling friends and family, thus adding them to the number of loyal customers. However, customer loyalty includes much more. It is a process, a program, or a group of programs geared toward keeping a client happy so he or she will provide more business. Oliver (1980) defines brand loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product / service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same-brand set purchase, despite situational influences and marketing efforts have the potential on cause switching behaviour”. Thus customer loyalty was considered bi-dimensional, including both attitudinal commitment and behavioural re-purchase intention, based on prior studies (Lin & Wang, 2006), customer loyalty was defined as the customer’s favourable attitude toward a brand, resulting in repeat purchase behaviour. Consumer satisfaction is believed to mediate consumer learning due to prior experience and to explain key post purchase behaviours such as complaints, word of mouth, repurchase intention and product usage (Oliver, 1980, Westbrook & Oliver, 1991).

Anderson and Sullivan (1993) suggested that “a dissatisfied customer is more likely to search for information on alternatives and more likely to yield to competitor overtures than a satisfied customer”. In addition, a past research shows that satisfaction is a reliable predictor of re-purchase intentions (Wang, 2001). Maximization of customer loyalty is a priority for most industries. Loyal customers are individuals who remain clients of their original supplier even if a competitor proposes more advantageous conditions. They are the most profitable ones and they are free marketing channels in terms of benefits received by companies from word-of-mouth. These customers are the most liked. Lejeune (2001) mentioned in his research that, Churn management consists of techniques that enable firms to keep their profitable customers and its aims at increasing customer loyalty.

2.2 Customers’ Perceptions of Quality service in the Hotel industry

SERVQUAL provides a technology for measuring and managing service quality (SQ). Since 1985, when the technology was first published, its innovators Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, have further developed, promulgated and promoted the technology through a series of publications (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1994; Zenithal *et al.*, 1993). The ABI/Inform database “Global edition”, (September 1994) reports that service quality has been a keyword in some 1,447 articles published in the period January 1992 to April 1994. By contrast SERVQUAL has been a keyword in just 41 publications. These publications incorporate both theoretical discussions and applications of SERVQUAL in a variety of industrial, commercial and non-profit settings. Published studies include tire retailing (Carman, 2000) dental services (Carman, 2000), hotels (Saleh & Ryan, 1992) travel and tourism (Fick & Ritchie, 2001), car servicing (Boatman & Van der Wiele, 1992), business schools (Ricottas & Pitt, 1992), higher education (Ford *et al.*, 2003), hospitality (Johns, 2005), business-to-business channel partners (Kong & Mayo,

2003), accounting firms (Freeman & Dart, 2008), architectural services (Baker & Lamb, 2006), recreational services (Taylor et al., 2003), hospitals (Babakus and Mangold, 2005; apparel retailing (Gagliano & Hathcote, 2004) and local government (Scott & Shieff, 2008).

There have also been many unpublished SERVQUAL studies. Service quality (SQ) has become an important research topic because of its apparent relationship to costs (Crosby, 2009), profitability (Buzzell & Gale, 2007; customer satisfaction (Bolton and Drew, 2009), customer retention (Reichheld & Sasser, 2010), and positive word of mouth. Service quality is widely regarded as a driver of corporate marketing and financial performance. SERVQUAL is founded on the view that the customer's assessment of SQ is paramount. This assessment is conceptualized as a gap between what the customer expects by way of SQ from a class of service providers and their evaluations of the performance of a particular service provider. SQ is presented as a multidimensional construct. In their original formulation Parasuraman et al. (1994) identified ten components of SQ. These components include reliability; responsiveness; competence; access; courtesy; communication; credibility; security; understanding/knowing the customer; tangibles. In their 1988 work these components were collapsed into five dimensions: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, responsiveness, Reliability, tangibles and responsiveness remained distinct, but the remaining seven components collapsed into two aggregate dimensions, assurance and empathy. Parasuraman et al. developed a 22-item instrument with which to measure customers' expectations and perceptions (E and P) of the five RATER dimensions. Four or five numbered items are used to measure each dimension.

2.2.1 Model of Service Quality Gaps

As an extension to their 1985 SERVQUAL model, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry identified four potential gaps within the service organization that may lead to a fifth and most serious final gap, the difference between what customers expected and what they perceived was delivered. The model has however been refined and extended to identify a total of seven types of gaps in the service quality concept (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1994; Curry, 1999; Luk & Layton, 2002). According to Brown and Bond (1995), the “gap model is one of the best received and most heuristically valuable contributions to the service literature”.

2.2.2 The Lovelock Wirtz gap model

As explained by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), the first gap, the knowledge gap is the difference between what service providers believe customers expect and customers’ actual needs and expectations. The standards gap is the difference between management’s perceptions of customer expectations and the quality standards established for service delivery. The delivery gap, the third in the gaps model is the difference between specified delivery standards and the service provider’s actual performance on these standards. The fourth gap, the internal communications gap is the difference between what the company’s advertising and sales personnel think are the product’s features, performance and service quality level and what the company is actually able to deliver (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007).

The perceptions gap is the difference between what is in fact delivered and what customers perceive they received (because they are unable to evaluate service quality accurately). The interpretation gap is the difference between what a service provider’s communication efforts (in advance of service delivery) actually promise and what a customer thinks was promised by these communications. The seventh and final gap, the

service gap, is the difference between what customers expect to receive and their perception of the service that is actually delivered. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) have concluded that gaps 1, 5, 6 and 7 represent external gaps between the customer and the organization and that Gaps 2, 3 and 4 are internal gaps that occur between various functions and the departments within the organization. According to the following explanation (ASI Quality Systems, 1992; Curry, 1999; Luk & Layton, 2002), the three important gaps, which are more associated with the external customers, are Gap1, Gap5 and Gap6; since they have a direct relationship with customers. They are also, however, of the view that (Gap1, Gap 2, Gap3, Gap 4 , Gap 6 and Gap 7) are identified as functions of the way in which service is delivered. The Gap on which the SERVQUAL model has influence is Gap 5, since it pertains to the customer and such is considered to be the true measure of service quality. Gaps at any point in service design and delivery can damage relationships with customers. The service gap (no. 7) is the most critical; hence the ultimate goal in improving service quality is to close or narrow this gap as much as possible. However, to achieve this, service organizations usually need to work on closing the other six gaps. Improving service quality requires identifying the specific causes of all the gaps and then developing strategies to close them.

2.2.3 Grönroos's Service Quality Model

The American perspective of service quality is based primarily on Parasuraman *et al.*'s (1985, 1988) proposition that service quality may be evaluated based on the functional quality dimension, characterized by five components. Grönroos (1990) suggests that this perspective does not account for additional dimensions of service quality. A more complete representation of service quality, based on the European perspective (Grönroos, 1990), should include three dimensions, technical, functional, and image. Grönroos suggests that starting with the proposition that service quality is

multidimensional, it is possible to develop a framework to illustrate the structure of service quality. Developing such a framework involves identifying the dimensions of service quality (technical and functional), and the components thought to make up each dimension.

Marketing scholars have yet to identify attributes (or components) that define the technical quality dimension, although it is widely accepted that technical quality significantly affects customers' perceptions of service quality (Grönroos, 1990; Rust and Oliver, 1994). Attempts to measure technical quality have generally involved the use of qualitative methods (Brady and Cronin, 2001). Brady and Cronin (2001) administered open-ended surveys that asked respondents to complete a questionnaire about the specific attributes they perceived regarding service experiences. Powpaka (1996) and Richard and Allaway (1993) employed in-depth interviews to discover relevant determinants of technical quality. The various studies have each used different items to measure technical quality.

The findings to date suggest that there is no underlying latent variable associated with a technical quality dimension. The lack of attention to technical quality requires that researchers develop their own measures to assess the dimension. Several authors have utilized the SERVQUAL instrument to measure the functional quality dimension (Powpaka, 1996; Richard & Allaway, 1993). Brady and Cronin (2001) suggested that the SERVQUAL model uses the terms that describe one or more determinants of a “quality service encounter”. That is, they suggested that the instrument may be used to assess the service delivery process which happens during the encounter between a service provider and customers, in order to shed some light on our understanding of functional quality. The Gronroos model proposes that service quality consists of technical and functional dimensions, and that a service organization's image functions as a filter in the perception of service quality.

The model also proposes that there are direct relationships between service quality perception and the technical and functional quality dimensions, in addition to the indirect effects of technical and functional quality on service quality perception. Finally, the model suggests that service quality leads to customer satisfaction.

2.3 The Attributes that are Responsible for Customers' return Business

2.3.1 Responsiveness as a component of Service Quality

Many service companies worry about the length of their queues because customer waiting time is considered as having a negative influence on consumer service perception. Time is valued by both partners (Service providers and customers). On the one hand, service companies may lose transactions if waiting time is too long; and on the other, consumers consider waiting time as a sacrifice to get the service. It is one of the reasons that more and more service customer-oriented companies' position their offer on time advantage for consumers. Lovelock and Gummesson (2004), insist on the central role played by time in most services and recommend paying more attention to improving the understanding of how customers perceive, budget, consume and value time. The waiting time has four aspects: objective, subjective, cognitive and affective:

1. The objective waiting time is the elapsed time as measured by a stopwatch by customers before being served (Davis & Vollman, 2002; Taylor, 2003)
2. The subjective waiting time is the customers' estimation of time waited. In previous research studies, the subjective aspect is measured by means of the perceived waiting time (Hui & Tse, 2006; Pruyn & Smidts, 2008). Unsurprisingly, the estimated time depends on objectively measured elapsed time (Antonides et al., 2002).
3. The cognitive aspect of the wait is the consumers' evaluation of the wait as being (or not being) acceptable, reasonable, tolerable (Durrande-Moreau, 2009) as well as considered to be short versus long (Pruyn & Smidts, 2008).

4. The affective aspect of the wait consists of emotional responses to waiting such as irritation, boredom, frustration, stress, pleasure, happiness, etc ... (Taylor, 2003; Hui & Tse, 2006; Pruyn & Smidts, 2008). According to Pruyn and Smidts (2008), these affective and cognitive aspects form the appraisal of the wait. Along with income and price, time can be considered as a constraint in consumer purchasing choice (Becker, 2005).

In choosing a service provider, consumers weigh up a number of benefits against the money, effort, and psychic costs of buying and using the service; time spent in obtaining the service is just such a cost. The authors consider waiting time satisfaction and service satisfaction as being two constructs related to a specific transaction. Service satisfaction is the overall evaluation of the service transaction and waiting time satisfaction is a determinant of the latter. Several studies show that delays have negative effects on the overall service evaluation (Hui & Tse, 2006); and, more precisely, on satisfaction with the service (Pruyn & Smidts, 2008). Furthermore, customers' anger and their evaluation of punctuality affect the overall service performance (Taylor, 2003).

Similarly, Hui and Tse (2006) find that the affective response to the wait influences the service evaluation. Moreover, Pruyn and Smidts (2008) demonstrate that the appraisal of wait, i.e. both cognitive and affective dimensions, positively influence the service satisfaction. Another element of responsiveness is customer complaint handling. A major reason why customers switch service providers is unsatisfactory problem resolution (Hart *et al.*, 2005).

When customers face a problem, they may respond by exiting (switching to a new supplier), voicing (attempting to remedy the problem by complaining) or loyalty (staying with the supplier anticipating that “things will get better” (Hirschman, 2007).

In fact, anecdotal evidence suggests that when the service provider accepts

responsibility and resolves the problem, the customer becomes “bonded” to the organization (Hart *et al.*, 2005). When customers complain, they give the firm a chance to rectify the problem and, interestingly, if the firm recovers successfully, to increase loyalty and profits (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 2007). Thus, customer complaint handling can have an influence on customer satisfaction and retention.

2.3.2 Assurance as a Component of Service Quality

Assurance is defined as a promise that will certainly happen or be true about the other party’s intentions within the relationship. In the context of relationship marketing, assurance has been linked to trust and is defined as the dimension of a business relationship that determines the level to which each party feels they can rely on the integrity of the promise offered by the other (Callaghan *et al.*, 2009, pp. 10-60). It is a widely accepted basis for relationships (Sullivan and Peterson, (2009). It has been documented in the form of an exchange relationship (Grönroos, 1990), considered by some (Moorman *et al.*, 1992; Martin & Sohi, 1993) as a critical component of business relationships, and identified as a key construct in modeling relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Trust has also been linked to a component of the other three dimensions (bonding, reciprocity and empathy) leading to cooperation (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Morgan & Hunt, 1994), communication (Bialaszewski & Giallourakis, 2005; Anderson & Narus, 1990) and bargaining (Schurr & Ozanne, 2009). Generally, it appears that the higher the level of trust between customer and supplier, the greater the probability of continuance or long-term existence of the relationship (Martin and Sohi, 1993).

Since relationships require strong element of interpersonal obligation, and are undertaken between individuals or networks of individuals rather than between organized corporate groups (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 2010), the concept of trust can be

postulated as coming primarily from personal trust rather than system trust. In the context of this study, trust refers to personal trust that is the basis for person-to-person as well as customer-supplier relationships. Morgan and Hunt's (1994) conceptualised trust as existing when one party has confidence in a partner's reliability and integrity. Indeed, trust could exist at the individual level (Rotter, 2007) or at the firm level (Moorman et al., 1993). Furthermore, trust, when conceptualized as a dimension of service quality, could also be thought of as “trust in the service itself” (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1994).

2.3.3 Tangibility as a Component of Service Quality

Tangibility refers to the physical evidence of the service, consisting of physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools or equipments, physical presentation of the service, and other customers in the service facility (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1994).

2.3.4 Empathy as a Component of Service Quality

Empathy is the dimension of a business relationship that enables the two parties to see the situation from the other's perspective. It is defined as seeking to understand somebody else's desires and goals. It involves the ability of individual parties to view the situation from the other party's perspective in a truly cognitive sense (Hwang, 2008). The empathy dimension plays a major role in Chinese business relationships (Hwang, 2008) and is also apparent in western business relationships (Ferguson, 1990). These indicate that empathy is a necessary condition to foster a positive relationship between two parties.

2.3.5 Reliability as a Component of Service Quality

Service reliability means consistently performing the service dependably and accurately. According to Berry et al. (1990), service reliability is the service “core” to most customers and managers should use every opportunity to build a “do-it-right-first” attitude. Specifically, managers are encouraged to include reliability issues in their mission statements, set reliability standards, teach the importance of reliability in training programs, appoint reliability teams to study specific services and recommend ways to improve reliability, measure error rates and reward error-free service. Portraying the reliability and consistency with which the service is delivered can take two routes (Berry *et al.*, 1990).

The first involves emphasizing the technological superiority and dependability of the process by which the service is produced – a high tech approach. While technological drivers such as advances in telecommunications, satellite, digital, and web technology are increasing the tradability of services (Braga, 1995) and expediting the globalization of services (Lovelock, 2004), there still remains a chasm in the level of technological development between developed and developing countries. The second concerns the consistent and dependable performance of the service personnel a high touch approach social interaction and personal connectivity that form the basis for emotional bonds, especially in services with high credence properties, are highly relevant (Berry *et al.*, 1990).

2.3.6 The Importance of Coproduction in Providing Quality Service to Customers

In order to implement the satisfaction programs, there is the need to focus on the involvement of the customer. The interaction between customers and service providers is an important determinant of perceptions of service quality (Zenithal *et al.*, 2008). Sometimes the interaction will be largely transactional in nature but most common

interactions will be within the context of an ongoing service relationship. Building effective and significant relationships can contribute significantly to customer satisfaction, loyalty. Retention and improvement of performance (Reichheld & Sasser, 2010; Rust & Zahorik, 1993). If transaction is without customer involvement, the provision of many services cannot occur, and the way in which customers participate in the delivery process can have an important implication for both customer and the service provider (Farquahar, 2004). Customers who willingly participate in service delivery process expect better quality of service for various reasons.

First of all, customer participation means that the provider has a clear understanding of their needs and circumstances. Secondly, customers who participate may be aware of some of the constraints on the service providers in terms of what they can deliver and what they cannot. For that matter, such customers are more likely to form more realistic expectations about service quality and as a consequence the gaps between expectations and performance may be smaller. Finally, it is possible that, willingness of customers to participate actively in the provision of a service can provide the organisation with an opportunity to enhance service productivity (Lovelock & Young, 1997) if they consider the contribution of customers.

Ford (1990) suggests, customers will and can only be expected to participate in a relationship if they anticipate benefits from that relationship. Generally, the quality of the interaction between the supplier and buyer and the degree of customer participation in the relationship has been identified as possible antecedents of customer satisfaction. There are three important elements of a customer's interaction with a subscription business to consider and understand.

2.4 Barriers to Customer Satisfaction

Most hotels have realised the need to offer customer service to other customers. But most often, this is just on paper. The actual service or the quality of the service is most at times not present as promised. This often leads to customer dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, customer service interactions can often be frustrating, and client requests can frequently appear demanding, there may be barriers in the organization that might make reasonable consumer requests seem excessive. Hotels therefore need to understand the barriers to customer satisfaction and take that into consideration in order to satisfy their customers. The barriers may range from management, environment, self, processes or systems, and communication. Some of the specific barriers to customer satisfaction include:

2.4.1 Overworked Staff

Overworked staff can be the result of understaffing, layoffs, rapid growth or assigning too many tasks to too few people. The result is that the staff will quickly lose their energy. Those that don't will be stretched too thin and no single client will appear as a priority to them. Since the representatives will have many clients to service, steps will be skipped, staff and customers will become frustrated and clients will receive insufficient attention to their issues (Carman, 2000).

2.4.2 Under worked Staff

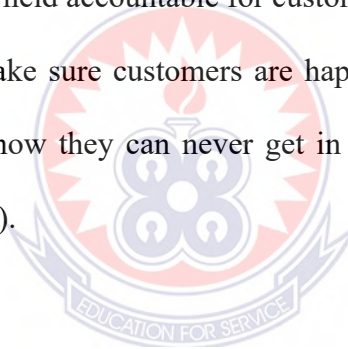
The exact opposite can have a similar effect on customer service. If the staff is under worked, they will feel less challenged, under-appreciated and unimportant. Work has a habit of expanding to fit whatever timeframe is allotted. So if the staff is under worked, case handling turnaround time can drag on longer than reasonably expected, and customers will get frustrated (Carman, 2000).

2.4.3 Having a Non-Caring Culture

The workplace culture can have a substantial effect on how customer service cases are handled. If the workplace climate is one where customers are not cared for, where staff doesn't care about their work, or if the environment is not empowering, your staff will under-deliver whenever presented with a customer service case. This culture prevents your staff from caring enough about your customers to make them happy. Customers are not a priority, and the repercussions of an unhappy client are not apparent to them (Carman, 2000).

2.4.4 Poor Accountability

If the staff is not held accountable for customer service, there is no reason for the staff to try harder to make sure customers are happy. Your staff can always place the blame elsewhere and know they can never get in trouble for letting a customer leave unhappy (Carman, 2000).



2.4.5 Insufficient Systems

If the systems used in working with clients perform poorly, are slow, contain insufficient data or doesn't track your client data appropriately, there will always be problem. Customers will get frustrated very quickly if the turnaround time is long. Therefore they may start looking elsewhere (Braga, 1995).

2.4.6 Communication of Customer Value

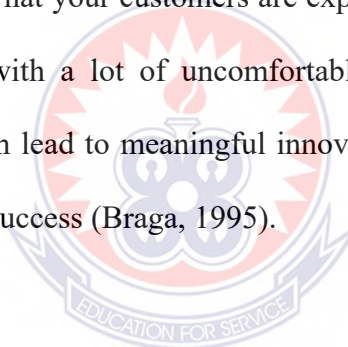
Customer satisfaction is the responsibility of everybody in the hotel; from the hotel Manager to the cleaner. All staff members must always be reminded of how valuable customers are, so your staff knows how to treat clients in the appropriate and valued manner (Braga, 1995).

2.4.7 Lack of Incentive

Appropriate incentive to staff who give clients outstanding service. If they are not motivated, they have no reason to go that extra mile for your customers. Provide rewards, both monetary and non-monetary to ensure your staff is motivated and empowered enough to want to service your clients to the best of their abilities (Braga, 1995).

2.4.8 Lack of Understanding about Customer Needs

If there's no data, it is easy to make the claim that you are customer-centric. But it's just words. Information leads to the realization that there is a gap between what your company is doing and what your customers are experiencing. Once this gap is surfaced, management is faced with a lot of uncomfortable decisions about what to change. Reliable information can lead to meaningful innovation that will find greater customer acceptance and market success (Braga, 1995).



2.4.9 Failure to Deliver on Brand Promise

The old advice of “under promise and over deliver” was never truer than it is in a world dominated by customers. Adjectives and hyperbole can get companies into trouble. Companies must therefore make sure their marketing claims are aligned with how the customer really sees the firm (Braga, 1995).

2.5 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the SERVQUAL model. Parasuraman et al. (1994) defined service quality as “a global judgment or attitude relating to the overall excellence or superiority of the service” and they conceptualized a

customer's evaluation of overall service quality by applying Oliver's (1980) disconfirmation model, as the gap between expectations and perception of service performance levels. Furthermore, they propose that overall service quality performance could be determined by the measurement scale SERVQUAL that uses five generic dimensions:

1. Tangibility (the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and Communication materials);
2. Reliability (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately);
3. Responsiveness (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service);
4. Assurance (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service); and
5. Empathy (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customer needs).



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to look at the research design, target population, data sources, sampling procedures (size and technique), data collection instruments, fieldwork/ data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the case study strategy. Among the various research designs, case studies are frequently regarded as using both quantitative and qualitative research and a combination of both approaches (Bryman, 2004). The researcher used both primary and secondary data sources, which were considered to be more appropriate for this study. These types of research were used because it eventually enables the researcher to make judgement about the effectiveness, relevance or desirability of the programme. Research methods can be placed into two basic categories: quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative research gathers information that is not in numerical form.

For example, diary accounts, open-ended questionnaires, unstructured interviews and unstructured observations. Qualitative data is typically descriptive data and as such is harder to analyze than quantitative data. Qualitative research is useful for studies at the individual level, and to find out, in depth, the ways in which people think or feel (e.g. case studies). The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research approach for the study.

3.2 Population

The population for the study will be two hundred and seventy (270). The population of the study is made up of customers and hotel operators in the Kumasi Metropolis.

3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

According to Punch (1998), one cannot study everyone, everywhere, doing everything and so sampling decisions are required not only about which people to interview or which events to observe, but also about settings and processes. In view of this, a sample size of two hundred and fifty nine (159) was selected for the study. Random sampling and purposive sampling methods was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling was adopted to select the hotel operators since the intention was to gain an insight into the quality of customer satisfaction in hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis hence, the need to choose personnel who were well versed with the concept of quality customer service and satisfaction.

As a result of this, top ranking members of staff were approached and questioned. Basically the selected respondents in the managerial roles involved with decision making in the service quality at the selected hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis were identified and questioned. The ever increasing need for a representative statistical sample in empirical research has created the demand for an effective method of determining sample size. To address the existing gap, Krejcie & Morgan (1970) came up with a table for determining sample size for a given population for easy reference. According to the Krejcie & Morgan (1970), table of determining sample size, a population of 270 requires a sample size of 159. (Please refer appendix C).

The lottery method was used to select the customers who patronised the hotel services in the Kumasi Metropolis for the study. This method of sampling therefore ensured that all participants have an equal opportunity of being selected for the study.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

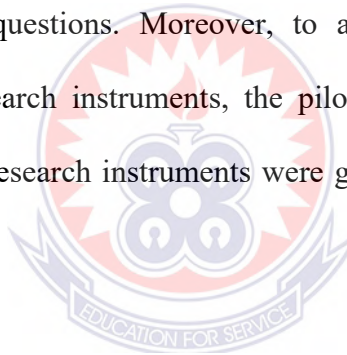
The main instrument that was used to collect information for the study will be questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured to consist of closed ended and open ended type of questions in order to elicit feedback from the respondents. Other information that were collected include how long respondents had patronised the services of the selected hotels and most of the questions were centered on service quality and customer satisfaction. From a review of literature, a survey questionnaire was developed to collect data for the study. Data was collected through the use of a written questionnaire personally delivered to participants in their workplaces. Questionnaires were filled out by participants and returned to the researcher. Names of staff were randomly selected from the various levels. Numbers 1-200 were written on pieces of paper including blank papers for the customers to pick. All those who picked the first 159 numbers formed part of the sample. The lottery method was used here because the researcher wants the sample method to be free from preconception and unfairness. These were the main areas around which data gathered from clients were analyzed. Questionnaires were administered to staff in their offices in the selected hotels. Responses categories mainly ranged from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree to strongly agree. Personal observations were also made throughout the data collection period. Care was taken in order not to be biased but to come out with objective interpretations of what was questioned.

3.4.1 Interview

The study obtained information from the selected hotel senior and junior officers in managerial positions using face to face interview. This was aimed at finding out from participants certain information needed, of which satisfactory response may not be obtained through written questionnaire. These interviewed participants were chosen purposively.

3.5 Pilot Testing

The pilot questionnaire were given to 20 people to answer to correct errors which could take the form of repetition of questions and typographical mistakes and the avoidance of double questions. Moreover, to assess its authenticity, validity and consistency of the research instruments, the pilot testing was undertaken. The pilot testing shows that the research instruments were grammatically and conceptually valid for mass distribution.



3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Primary data was collected through a field survey of selected hotel operators and customers in the Kumasi Metropolis. Data was collected through the use of a designed questionnaire and interview guide administered to participants in their offices. Moreover, the questionnaires were given to hotel customers when they are submitting their keys to the hotel receptionists. Questionnaires were filled out by participants and the researcher had to go for the questionnaires in five days' time. However, the researcher interviewed senior officers in their hotel offices.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data were organized into tables and figures based on the questionnaire given to respondents. The result was analyzed and converted into percentages and other charts. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the analysis of the data. The result were subsequently computed into percentages. Percentage (%) values, which were not round figures, were approximated to the nearest whole numbers. Diagrammatic representations of the statistical summaries of the result were presented in the form of pie charts, graphs frequency tables.

Computer data analysis such as SPSS and other relevant software such as Microsoft excel were the main tools employed to analyse the data in order to help interpret results. The statistical programme for social scientist (SPSS) was used to analyze the pre-coded questions. This packaged were used to compute the percentages because it is easier to use. It can also be used to make a tables needed for discussions of the results. Also Ms Excel was used to draw the graphs for the computed data. This was used by the researcher because of the ease in using Ms excel for this purpose over the other software. The other questions that were open-ended were analyzed by listing all the vital response given by the respondents. These will then be considered based on their relevance to the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Demographic information of the Respondents

This section shows the respondents gender, age range, occupation and number of years in doing business with the hotel.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender of the Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	84	52.8
Female	75	47.2
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.1 shows that 52.8% of the respondents were males and 47.2% were females.

Table 4.2: Age range of Respondents

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Less than 30 years	35	22.0
30-39 years	47	29.6
40-49 years	46	28.9
More than 50 years	31	19.5
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

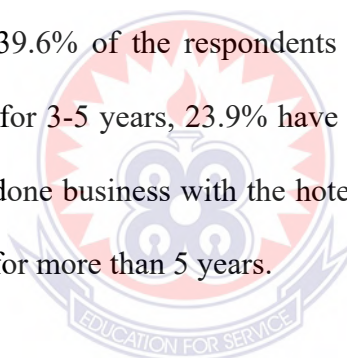
Table 4.2 indicates that 29.6% of the respondents were between the ages 30-39 years, 28.9% were between the ages 40-49 years, 22% were less than 30 years and 19.5% were more than 50 years.

Table 4.3: Working Experience of the Respondents

How many years have you been doing business with this hotel?	Frequency	Percent
Less and 1 year	38	23.9
1-3 years	35	22.0
3-5 years	63	39.6
more than 5 years	23	14.5
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.3 depicts that 39.6% of the respondents affirmed that they have been doing business with the hotel for 3-5 years, 23.9% have done business with the hotel for less than 1 year, 22% have done business with the hotel for 1-3 years and 14.5% have done business with the hotel for more than 5 years.

**Table 4.4: Occupation of the Respondents**

Occupation of the Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Business Personnel	52	32.7
Traveller	36	22.6
Driver	41	25.8
Civil servant	30	18.9
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.4 shows that 32.7% of the respondents were business personnel, 25.8% of the respondents were drivers, 22.6% were travellers and 18.9% were civil servants.

Table 4.5: The Highest Qualification of the Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	43	27.0
Diploma	43	27.0
First degree	37	23.3
Master's degree	36	22.6
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.5 shows that 23.3% of the respondents were first degree holders, 27% of the respondents were holding certificate and Diploma respectively and 22.6% were Master's degree holders.



4.2 Customers' Perceptions of Service Quality in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis

Table 4.6 shows the customer's perception regarding the service quality in the hotel industry in the Kumasi Metropolis.

Table 4.6: The Respondents ranking of the hotel staff performance

How will you rank the staff of this hotel?	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	51	32.1
very good	34	21.4
Good	74	46.5
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.6 indicates that 46.5% of the respondents ranked the performance of the hotel as good, 32.1% of the respondents ranked the staff of the hotel excellent and 21.4% ranked the performance of the hotel staff very good. In order to implement the satisfaction programs, there is the need to focus on the involvement of the customer. The interaction between customers and service providers is an important determinant of perceptions of service quality (Zenithal *et al.*, 2008). Sometimes the interaction will be largely transactional in nature but most common interactions will be within the context of an ongoing service relationship. Building effective and significant relationships can contribute significantly to customer satisfaction, loyalty. Retention and improvement of performance (Reichheld & Sasser, 2010; Rust & Zahorik, 1993). If transaction is without customer involvement, the provision of many services cannot occur, and the way in which customers participate in the delivery process can have an important implication for both customer and the service provider (Farquahar, 2004). Customers who willingly participate in service delivery process expect better quality of service for various reasons.

Moreover, Carman (2000), said that if the staff is not held accountable for customer service, there is no reason for the staff to try harder to make sure customers are happy. Your staff can always place the blame elsewhere and know they can never get in trouble for letting a customer leave unhappy.

Table 4.7: Attributes Customers like about hotel

What do you like about this hotel?	Frequency	Percent
staff attitude	71	44.7
short turnaround time	55	34.6
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.7 shows that 44.7% of the respondents affirmed that they like the staff attitude and 34.6% liked short turnaround time. This findings contradicts with Carman (2000), overworked staff can be the result of understaffing, layoffs, rapid growth or assigning too many tasks to too few people. The result is that the staff will quickly lose their energy. Those that don't will be stretched too thin and no single client will appear as a priority to them. Since the representatives will have many clients to service, steps will be skipped, staff and customers will become frustrated and clients will receive insufficient attention to their issues.

Figure 4.1 depicts the scope of influence of the customers

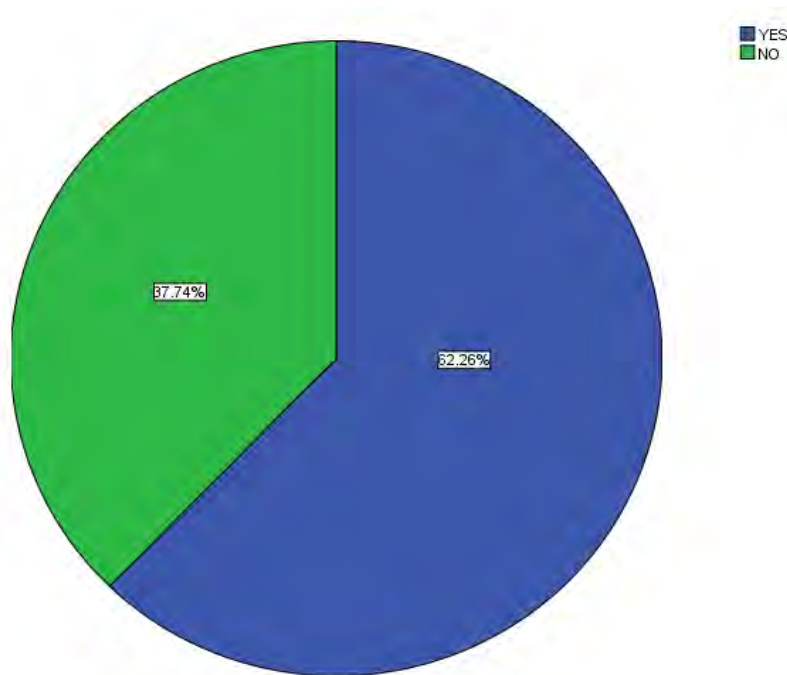


Figure 4.1: Customers recommendation of the hotel to others

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Figure 4.1 shows that 62.3% of the respondents affirmed that they will recommend the hotel to others while 37.7% said that they will not recommend the hotel to others. Lejeune in 2001 mentioned in his research that, Churn management consists of techniques that enable firms to keep their profitable customers and its aims at increasing customer loyalty. If the customers of an organization are satisfied by quality services the result is that, they will be loyal to them and consequently be retained by the organization, which is positive for the organization because it could also mean higher profits, higher market share, and increasing customer base.

Table 4.8: The Respondents intention to continue doing business with the hotel

Do you intend to continue doing business with this hotel?	Frequency	Percent
YES	107	67.3
NO	52	32.7
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.8 shows that 67.3% affirmed that they intend doing business with the hotel while 32.7% said that they do not intend to do business with the hotel. This shows that the customers were satisfied with the hotel services. Customer satisfaction is the responsibility of everybody in the hotel; from the hotel Manager to the cleaner. All staff members must always be reminded of how valuable customers are, so your staff knows how to treat clients in the appropriate and valued manner (Braga, 2005). Anderson and Sullivan (1993) suggested that “a dissatisfied customer is more likely to search for information on alternatives and more likely to yield to competitor overtures than a satisfied customer”. In addition, a past research shows that satisfaction is a reliable predictor of re-purchase intentions (Wang, 2001). Maximization of customer loyalty is a priority for most industries. Loyal customers are individuals who remain clients of their original supplier even if a competitor proposes more advantageous conditions. They are the most profitable ones and they are free marketing channels in terms of benefits received by companies from word-of-mouth. These customers are the most liked. Lejeune in 2001 mentioned in his research that, Churn management consists of techniques that enable firms to keep their profitable customers and its aims at increasing customer loyalty.

Table 4.9: Expression of customers' expectations

What would you like this hotel to do to meet your needs?	Frequency	Percent
provide more customer service professionals	61	38.4
provide quality food and drinks	55	34.6
Clean rooms and wash bed sheets regularly	34	21.4
Provide moderate charges	9	5.7
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

Table 4.9 depicts that 38.4% of the respondents recommended that the hotel must provide more customer service professionals to enhance customer satisfaction, 34.6% recommended that the hotel must provide quality food and drinks, 21.4% affirmed that the hotel workers must clean rooms and wash bed sheets regularly while 5.7% said that the hotel must provide moderate charges to enhance customer satisfaction. The workplace culture can have a substantial effect on how customer service cases are handled. If the workplace climate is one where customers are not cared for, where staff doesn't care about their work, or if the environment is not empowering, your staff will under-deliver whenever presented with a customer service case. This culture prevents your staff from caring enough about your customers to make them happy. Customers are not a priority, and the repercussions of an unhappy client are not apparent to them (Carman, 2000).

4.3 The Attributes that are Responsible for Customers' Return Business in the Kumasi Metropolis?

Table 4.10 depicts the attributes that are responsible for customers return business in the Kumasi Metropolis.

Table 4.10: The Attributes that are Responsible for Customers' Return Business

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
The Hotel has state of the art offices, rooms, conferences rooms etc.	44 (27.7%)	97 (61%)	12 (7.5%)	6 (3.8%)	-	159 (100%)
The Service provided by staff is quality and professional	67 (42.1%)	79 (49.7%)	5 (3.1%)	5 (3.1%)	3 (1.9%)	159 (100%)
The hotel Staff are friendly and courteous	52 (32.7%)	104 (65.4%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (0.6%)	-	159 (100%)
The hotel Staff will tell customers about new products and services	59 (37.1%)	88 (55.3%)	2 (1.3%)	3 (1.9%)	7 (4.4%)	159 (100%)
The hotel's Promotions to reward customers are regular	98 (61.6%)	48 (30.2%)	6 (3.8%)	5 (3.1%)	2 (1.3%)	159 (100%)
The hotel's Customers are given individual attention	143 (89.9%)	8 (5%)	4 (2.5%)	3 (1.9%)	1 (0.6%)	159 (100%)
the hotel officers show a high level of willingness in addressing my issues	63 (39.6%)	70 (44%)	6 (3.8%)	12 (7.5%)	8 (5%)	159 (100%)

1--Strongly agree, 2--Agree, 3--Neutral, 4--Disagree, 5--Strongly disagree

Source: Field survey, (2016)

The study results holds that 88.7% of the respondents agreed that the Hotel has state of the art offices, rooms, conferences rooms etc, 7.5% were neutral while 3.8% disagree. The study results revealed that 91.8% agreed that The Service provided by staff is quality and professional while 5% disagreed while 3.1% were neutral. Companies must therefore make sure their marketing claims are aligned with how the customer really sees the firm (Braga, 2005).

The study findings shows that 98.1% of the respondents agreed that the hotel Staff are friendly and courteous, 1.3% were neutral while 0.6% disagreed. If the staff is under worked, they will feel less challenged, under-appreciated and unimportant. Work has a habit of expanding to fit whatever timeframe is allotted. So if the staff is under worked, case handling turnaround time can drag on longer than reasonably expected, and customers will get frustrated (Carman, 2000).

The findings shows that 92.4% of the respondents agreed that the hotel staff informs customers about new products and services, 6.3% disagreed while 1.3% were neutral. This agrees with Braga (2005), if there's no data, it is easy to make the claim that you are customer-centric. But it's just words. Information leads to the realization that there is a gap between what your company is doing and what your customers are experiencing. Once this gap is surfaced, management is faced with a lot of uncomfortable decisions about what to change. Reliable information can lead to meaningful innovation that will find greater customer acceptance and market success.

The study finding shows that 91.8% of the respondents agreed that the hotel's Promotions to reward customers are regular, 4.4% of the respondents disagreed while 3.8% were neutral. The study shows that 94.9% of the respondents agreed that the hotel's Customers are given individual attention, 2.5% of the respondents were neutral and disagreed respectively. The study revealed that 83.6% of the respondents agreed

that the hotel officers show a high level of willingness in addressing their issues, 12.5% disagreed while 3.8% were neutral. If they are not motivated, they have no reason to go that extra mile for your customers. Provide rewards, both monetary and non-monetary to ensure your staff is motivated and empowered enough to want to service your clients to the best of their abilities.

4.4 The Quality of Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis

Table 4.11 assessed the quality of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry in the Kumasi Metropolis.

Table 4.11: The quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis



What is the quality of customer satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Highly satisfied	92	57.9
Somewhat satisfied	57	35.8
Not satisfied	10	6.3
Total	159	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2016)

The study findings shows that 93.7% of the respondents affirmed that they are satisfied with the quality of services provided to them by the hotel while 6.3% of the respondents were not satisfied. In order to implement the satisfaction programs, there is the need to focus on the involvement of the customer. The interaction between customers and service providers is an important determinant of perceptions of service quality (Zenithal et al, 2008). Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994) say that

companies that strive for high customer satisfaction are more likely to receive larger economic returns.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis. This study adopted the case study strategy. The researcher used quantitative research methods for the study. The population for the study was two hundred and seventy (270). The population of the study is made up of customers and hotel operators in the Kumasi Metropolis. Random sampling and purposive sampling methods were adopted a sample size of two hundred and fifty nine (159) respondents for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was questionnaires. Primary data was collected through a field survey of selected hotel operators and customers in the Kumasi Metropolis. Questionnaires were filled out by participants and the researcher had to go for the questionnaires in five days' time. The data was organized into tables and figures based on the questionnaire given to respondents. The result was then analyzed and converted into percentages and other charts. Computer data analysis such as SPSS and other relevant software such as Microsoft excel were the main tools employed to analyse the data in order to help interpret results.

5.2 Key findings of the Study

5.2.1 Customers' Perceptions of Service Quality in Hotel Industry

The study indicates that 46.5% of the respondents ranked the performance of the hotel as good, 32.1% of the respondents ranked the staff of the hotel excellent and 21.4% ranked the performance of the hotel staff very good. The study shows that 44.7% of the respondents affirmed that they like the staff attitude. The study revealed

that 67.3% affirmed that they intend to continue doing business with the hotel. The study depicts that 38.4% of the respondents recommended that the hotel must provide more customer service professionals to enhance customer satisfaction, 34.6% recommended that the hotel must provide quality food and drinks, 21.4% affirmed that the hotel workers must clean rooms and wash bed sheets regularly while 5.7% said that the hotel must provide moderate charges to enhance customer satisfaction.

5.2.2. The Attributes that are Responsible for Customers' Return Business

The study results holds that 88.7% of the respondents agreed that the Hotel has state of the art offices, rooms, conferences rooms etc, moreover, 91.8% agreed that the Service provided by staff is quality and professional. Also, 98.1% of the respondents agreed that the hotel Staff are friendly and courteous. The findings shows that 92.4% of the respondents agreed that the hotel staff informs customers about new products and services. The study finding shows that 91.8% of the respondents agreed that the hotel's Promotions to reward customers are regular. To add more, 94.9% of the respondents agreed that the hotel's Customers are given individual attention. The study revealed that 83.6% of the respondents agreed that the hotel officers show a high level of willingness in addressing my issues.

5.2.3 The Quality of Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry

The study findings shows that 93.7% of the respondents affirmed that they are satisfied with the quality of services provided to them by the hotel.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that the services provided by hotels in Kumasi is good but needs to be improved to sustain the growth of the hospitality business. Most of the customers were willing to continue doing business with the hotels. The customers recommended that to improve customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, the hotel must provide more customer service professionals, provide quality food and drinks, the hotel workers must clean rooms and wash bed sheets regularly and must provide moderate charges to enhance customer satisfaction.

This concluded that hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis have state of the art offices, rooms, conferences rooms etc. Moreover, the Service provided by staff is quality and professional. Furthermore, the hotel Staff are friendly and courteous. The hotel customers periodically inform customers about new products and services.

The hotel's Promotions to reward customers are regular and consistent. To add more, customers are given individual attention. The hotel officers show a high level of willingness in addressing my issues. The study findings concluded they are satisfied with the quality of services provided to them by the hotel.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the key findings and conclusion remarks, the researcher recommended that;

1. The management of the hotels should recruit qualified customer service professionals to work effectively and improve customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.
2. There is the need to provide quality food and drinks to satisfy customers.
3. The hotel workers must clean rooms and wash bed sheets regularly and must provide moderate charges to enhance customer satisfaction.

4. There is the need to organise periodic workshops and seminars to educate hotel workers regarding modern hospitality management techniques to satisfy customers. This is because customers' expectations are not static but changes.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Studies

According to the recommendations made, the researcher suggested that a similar study should be conducted to assess the impact of providing quality food to customers and the growth of the hospitality business in the Kumasi Metropolis.



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APPENDIX A

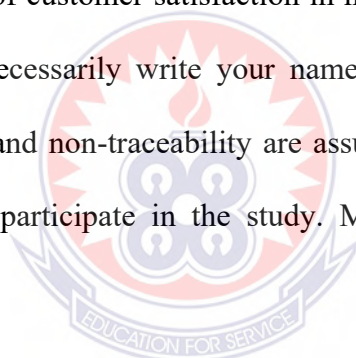
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOTEL CUSTOMERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher is a product of UEW, Kumasi Campus conducting a piece of research on ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KUMASI METROPOLIS. I respectfully request that you form part of this research by completing the attached questionnaire. This is seeking to solicit your opinion on the quality of customer satisfaction in hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis. You do not need to necessarily write your name so that you will not be traced or identified. Anonymity and non-traceability are assured. It is my fervent hope that you will be exonerated to participate in the study. May I thank you for your valuable cooperation.



Part I: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

1. Sex

Male Female

2. How many years have you been doing business with this hotel?

a. Less and 1 year b. 1-3 years 3-5 years more than 5 years

3. Age:

a. Less than 30 years b. 30-39 years c. 40-49 years d. More than 50 years

4. What is your Occupation?

a) Business Personnel b) Traveller c) Driver d) Civil servant e) Other

please specify.....

5. The highest qualification you have attained?

Certificate Diploma First degree Master's degree PhD

Part 2: Customers' Perceptions of Service Quality in Hotel Industry in Kumasi

Metropolis

6. How will you rank the staff of this hotel?

Excellent very good good satisfactory poor

7. What do you like about this hotel?

staff attitude short turnaround time Lack of information on products

others, specify.

8. What do you dislike about this hotel?

staff attitude long turnaround time Lack of information on products others,

specify.

9. Have you recommended this hotel to others?

Yes No

10. Do you intend to continue doing business with this hotel?

Yes No cannot tell

11. What would you like this hotel to do to meet your needs?

provide more customer service professionals provide more chairs for waiting

Visit or call you regularly Extend working hours

12. Is there any other thing you think this hotel can do to make you more satisfied?

.....

Part 3: The Attributes that are Responsible for Customers' Return Business in the Kumasi Metropolis?

Please tick the appropriate box against each statement indicating your rating of the hotel's services.

SA--Strongly agree, A--Agree, N--Neutral, D--Disagree, SD--Strongly disagree

Hotel Customer Retention Attributes	SA	A	N	D	SD
Tangibility					
13.The Hotel has state of the art offices, rooms, conferences rooms etc.					
14.The Service provided by staff is quality and professional					
15.The Location of the hotel is convenient and free from noise					
Assurance					
16.The hotel Staff are friendly and courteous					
17.The hotel Staff perceive customers as very important personalities					
Reliability					
18.The hotel Staff will tell customers about new products and services					
19.The hotel's Promotions to reward customers are regular					
Empathy					
20.The hotel's Customers are given individual attention					
21.The hotel Staff have my best interest at heart					
Responsiveness					
22.Turnaround time is swift					
23.The hotel officers show a high level of willingness in addressing my issues.					

Part 4: The Quality of Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry in Kumasi Metropolis

24. What is the quality of customer satisfaction in Hotel industry in Kumasi Metropolis?

- a) Highly satisfied [] b). Somewhat satisfied [] c). Not satisfied []

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HOTEL OPERATORS

1. On the average, what number of customers do you serve in a day?
2. Which of the under listed best describes the customer service goal of your hotel?
Meeting customer expectation [] meeting organizational expectation []
delighting the customer []
3. What is the quality of customer satisfaction in your Hotel?
4. What are your customers' perceptions of service quality in your Hotel?
5. What are the attributes that are responsible for customers' return business in your hotel?
6. Are you equipped with the right resources to deliver quality customer service to your hotel clients?
7. Are you always trained on new technologies to improve customer satisfaction in your hotel?