


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
OF GHANA: THE CASE OF MODERN CITY HOTEL IN TAMALE

COMFORT TALHATU ABUDU

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

AUGUST, 2016

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROF. SAMUEL B. OWUSU-MINTAH

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my family members, friends and course mates for their support and cooperation throughout the course period.



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ABSTRACT

Poor service quality has the potential of harming the service provider in the long term, if not instantly. This is because, the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is direct. This position is most crucial especially when the goal of a business is to attract and maintain a large customer base for its services. But most often than not, issues of service failure hinder the fulfilment of this organizational goal especially in the hospitality industry. For this reason, this study assessed the quality of customer service delivery in the hospitality industry of Ghana with specific focus on the Modern City in the Tamale Metropolis. It focused on the dimensions of service quality as proposed by Parasuraman et al. A 20 item questionnaire was designed to collect data from guests of the hotel. Convenience sampling was used to select 108 guests for the study and questions relating to their expectations and perceptions of quality of service received at the hotel were asked. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 20. The findings of this research pointed to the fact that there was poor performance in the services provided by the hotel despite doing relatively well in one of the dimensions of service quality i.e. assurance. This is because, customers are very concerned about such things as facilities and technology. Their high expectations in the reliability and empathy of the hotel were met with lower perceptions of service quality. The success influencing factors of the hotel are however, the dimensions of assurance and empathy. It was however found that, for a successful quality service delivery, all the five dimensions of service quality must be properly addressed. To this end, management of the hotel is advised to focus on such dimensions as assurance and empathy as it captured the highest expectations from customers. Typically, the hotel's management was advised to adjust the operating hours of their facility and to make significant investments in modern infrastructure and service delivery systems. Also, they are advised to share service encounter information among staff and with industry players to ensure harmonious hotel services so as to satisfy and retain their guests for a long time.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Quality service delivery to customers is an essential feature for successful operation in the hospitality industry. According to Bitner (1990), there is evidence to suggest that satisfaction may be a vital antecedent of service delivery quality. Literature on the subject matter also suggests that service delivery quality is indeed a vital antecedent to customer satisfaction (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The quality of service rendered to customers is key towards ensuring a successful market system. Customers will only be satisfied when a service lives up to or exceeds their expectation. It is the level of service quality that drives consumer behavior and therefore it is very imperative to manage quality levels well in order to achieve long-term success.

Fawcett *et al.* (2007) emphasized that a poor service quality can harm a service provider. There is a direct relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and the fact remains that the nexus between them is a strong one. Thus, satisfaction affects assessment of service quality and assessment of service quality affects satisfaction (McAlexander *et al.*, 1994). -This indicates that both are vital in helping buyers develop their future purchase intentions.

In an empirical study of the relationship between satisfaction and service quality, Iacobucci, Ostrom, and Grayson (1995) concluded that the key difference between the two constructs is that quality relates to managerial delivery of the service while

satisfaction reflects customers' experience with that service. Goldstein et al. (2002) therefore put it that, for a service organization to deliver quality service it must integrate (or outsource) investments in numerous assets, processes, people, and materials.

The goal of every successful business is to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction by providing their clients with value added transactions through positive customer interaction. In turn, the customer's expectation is to feel important and assisted during the interactions that ultimately lead to fulfillment of their desire and positive end result (Leon & Lestlie, 2000). -Customer service representatives are often trained to know the basic elements of providing good service. In order to know what quality is, managers have to get into the minds of customers to understand how they define quality.

The hospitality industry makes a significant contribution to the economic development of many countries with some being reliant on tourism as a major catalyst for growth and development. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to assess the service delivery of the various players in the hospitality industry of the Tamale metropolis especially Modern City hotel.

1.2 The Study Area

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was established by legislative instrument (LI 2068) which elevated the then Municipal Assembly into a Metropolis in 2004. At present, it is one of the six Metropolitan Assemblies in the country and the only Metropolis in the three Northern regions namely: Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions. It has Tamale as the Metropolitan capital city and at the same time the regional capital of the

Northern Region. It is located in the central part of the Region and shares boundaries with the Sagnarigu District to the west and north, Mion District to the east, East Gonja to the south and Central Gonja to the south-west. The Metropolis has a total estimated land size of 646.90180 sq km (GSS-2010).

Geographically, the Metropolis lies between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 West. Tamale is strategically located in the Northern Region and by this strategic location, the Metropolis has a market potential for local goods from the agricultural and commerce sectors from the other districts in the region. Besides the comparative location of the Metropolis within the region, the area stands to gain from markets within the West African region from countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and the northern part of Togo and also en-route through the area to the southern part of Ghana. The Metropolis receives only one rainfall season in a year and this has affected effective agricultural production in the area. Daily temperature in the Metropolis varies from season to season.

The Metropolitan Chief Executive is the political head of the Metropolis. There are four major markets in the Metropolis namely: *Central Market, Aboabo, Kuku* and *Lamashegu*. In addition to these, there are satellite markets in other communities. The Central market comprises of mini shops and stalls. Plans are underway, to upgrade the market with modern facilities. The Central Business District (CBD) is also fast developing with new business ventures. The Metropolis is a transit point to many tourist sites in other districts and regions in the northern part of the Country. For instance, many tourists moving to the Mole National Park do make a stopover in Tamale before

embarking on their trip to the West Gonja District. There are also a few tourist sites in the Metropolis namely: Tugu Crocodile Pond, the Python Sanctuary, the German Cemetery as well as a Cultural Centre. The Centre for National Culture is located right in the Central Business District of Tamale; a place many tourists would cherish visiting to have a look at many items of local Arts and Craft exhibitions. There is also a vibrant hospitality industry. More hotels, guest houses, restaurants are springing up. Some of the prominent ones are Mariam Hotel, Picorna, Gariba Lodge, Modern City Hotel, Radach Memorial Centre and Hamdallah Guest house among many others.

The population of Tamale Metropolis, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 233,252 representing 9.4 percent of the region's population. Males constitute 49.7 percent and females represent 50.3 percent. The proportion of the population living in urban localities (80.8%) was higher than those living in rural localities (19.1%) of the metropolis. The population of the metropolis is youthful (almost 36.4% of the population is below 15 years) depicting a broad base population pyramid which tapers off with a small number of elderly persons (60 years and older) representing 5.1 percent. The metropolis has a total of 219,971 households, living in 19,387 houses. The average household size in the metropolis is 6.3 persons per household.

There are more people (48.6%), 12 years and older, who are married than those who have never married (44.2%). Persons who are widowed constitute 4.0 percent of the population of the metropolis. The population of the divorced in the community, make up 1.6% while those in consensual relationships constitute only 0.7%. There was a dominant proportion of Ghanaians by birth in the metropolis, constituting 94.6 percent of the

population. Those who had naturalized constituted less than one percent (0.8) while those who had dual nationality were 2.1 percent of the total population of the metropolis.

Of the population 11 years and above, 60.1 percent are literate and 39.9 percent are non-literate. The proportion of literate males (69.2%) is higher than that of females (51.1%). Five out of ten people (54.8%) indicate they can speak and write both English and Ghanaian languages. About 63.3 percent of the population aged 15 years and above in the metropolis are economically active and 36.7 percent are economically not active. Of the economically active population, 92.6 percent are employed while 7.4 percent are unemployed. For those who are economically not active, a larger percentage of them are students (56.0%), 20.9 percent perform household duties and 12.4 percent are either too young or old to work.

About five out of ten (52.9) of unemployed persons in the metropolis were seeking work for the first time. Of the employed population in the Tamale Metropolis, the highest proportion (33.0%) was engaged as service and sales workers. The second largest occupation is craft and related trade workers who constitute 21.5 percent of the employed population. The number of skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers represents 17.6 percent of the employed population. Those employed as professionals constitute only 8.1 percent. Of the population 15 years and older, the highest proportion (60.6%) are self-employed without employees, 19.5 percent are employees, 5.9 percent are contributing family workers and 6.9 percent are self-employed with employees.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In today's global increasingly competitive market place; and dynamic growth in the hospitality industry various outlets such as hotels, fast food, leisure and travel, catering, bars, and restaurant are being introduced to the market thereby increasing the demands of customers as they require improved excellent service. To assure quality service, the organization must be committed and also involve all their employees even the new ones in the process.

Benefits arising from high quality service are reflected in a more competitive positioning on the market, but also in a better business result. Bitner (1990) and Boltan (1998) revealed that, satisfying customers is based on knowing or understanding customers' needs and behaviour and address such with suitable quality products and services as demanded by the customers.

The increasing expansion of the industry with the proliferation of varying activities under the umbrella of hospitality, many are the complaints of service recipients. This study will attempt to assess quality customer service delivery in the Modern City Hotel, Tamale.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine quality customer service delivery in the hospitality industry of Ghana with specific focus on Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis, while the specific objectives were to:

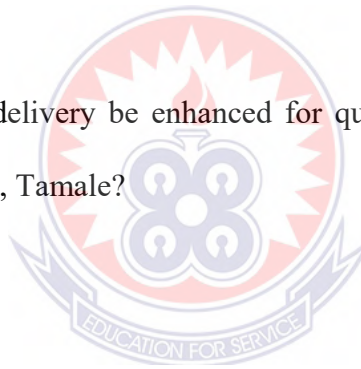
1. Assess the service quality gap that pertains in the Modern City Hotel, Tamale.

2. Ascertain the determinants of service quality in Modern City Hotel, Tamale.
3. Make useful recommendations that will enhance performance and efficient quality service delivery in the Modern City Hotel, Tamale.

1.5 Research Questions

Towards achieving the stated objectives, answers would be sought to the following research questions.

1. To what extent is a service quality “gap” in the Modern City Hotel, Tamale?
2. What are the real determinants of service quality in the Modern City Hotel, Tamale?
3. How can service delivery be enhanced for quality customer service delivery in Modern City Hotel, Tamale?



1.6 Scope of the Study

The study encompasses the various service quality issues in Modern City Hotel, Tamale Metropolis. Regarding the operations and the quest to satisfy customers’ needs in the hospitality industry, this study is only limited to Modern City Hotel as the employees and management of the hotel deal with service quality. The problems that arise from their service deliveries will be examined as well as their performance in terms of the quality of service they render to customers.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will provide insight into the theories of service quality levels and how they impact on customer satisfaction and the service provider(s) as a whole. It is expected that the primary beneficiary of the study will be the management of Modern City Hotel in the Tamale metropolis and that they may utilize the findings of this research to adopt new strategies.

The research will provide an integrative framework for managing service quality and customer-driven service innovation. In addition, the study will also point to the direction needing attentions towards successful service delivery systems thereby making the services more efficient and effective. It is also hoped that the research findings will be useful in the formulation of a Human Resource Policy for the sector and will also help identify service quality problems and fix them accordingly.

Finally, the findings will serve as a useful tool for educating the service providers on the relevance of service quality and the ultimate aim of providing satisfaction to customers. Above all, these research findings will make a modest addition to the huge body of knowledge on transportation and service quality levels and also serve as a starting point for others to progress their research.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This study would be organized in five chapters. The first Chapter provides a general introduction of the entire study in terms of the background to the study, the problem statement, the research objectives, questions and the scope of the study. The second Chapter of the study covers the review of relevant literature on the subject matter. The third chapter outlines the methodological sequence of the study, while Chapter four presents the field data collected and their analysis. The final Chapter covers the summary of the findings, the conclusions to be drawn and the recommendations made.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing relevant literature on the subject matter of quality service delivery and its components in the hospitality industry in general and on the Tamale Metropolis, in particular. It highlights definitions on some keywords making the subject matter, the need for service quality, the extent of gaps in the hospitality industry, the determinants of service quality in the sector and also strategies often employed to manage quality service delivery in the hospitality industry.

2.2 Quality Service Delivery

According to Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons (2006), a service is a time-perishable, intangible experience performed for a customer acting in the role of a co-producer. One striking aspect of Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons (2006) definition is the fact that customers act as co-producers in the service process. A service cannot take place without the direct involvement of the customer and for this reason the customer is an integral part of any service. Services are different from physical products. Unlike physical products services have 4 peculiar characteristics namely perishability, intangibility, simultaneity and heterogeneity. Services cannot be seen or touched. It cannot be experienced before the actual purchase. Customers are won through creative advertising, goodwill and reputation. Customers can own physical and tangible objects (Lovelock & Wright, 2002).

To Zeithaml *et al.* (2002), services are activities, experiences and not things. Services cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched as tangible goods, which can be readily displayed and easily transferred to customers. Service rendered to customers may vary because of their peculiar needs and the kind of problem confronting them at a particular point in time. The productivity and quality of the produced goods can be controlled under fixed conditions (Lovelock & Wright, 2002).

Adding to these definitions of service, Grzinic (2007) espoused that the quality of service in hotel industry is an essential factor of successful business and the current trend of quality management in hotel industry ensures the achievement of competitive advantage of hotel companies. Further that, towards ensuring and keeping the quality expectation of today's customer/client, there are two aspects of quality in general. First, the concept of 'design quality' seeks to present products/services directed to the needs of the customers. That is to say, the hotel company can satisfy the demands of the customer only if those demands were included in the service or product design of the hotel. The other is the quality of conformity with the design. To Grzinic (2007), this aspect of quality represents the level to which the products/service meets the demands of the market.

Undoubtedly, it is relatively common among customers and service recipients to use 'quality' to evaluate the service provided to them in hotels. Pride and Ferrell (2006) defined service as an intangible commodity and it includes the performance of certain work or effort, but cannot be owned; and usually services are offered through the effort of persons or through a mechanical effort towards certain people. Sureshchandar *et al.*

(2002) established that there is a two-way relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality provision. They noted that, the average customer thus wishes to be satisfied but quality is an indispensable and important item. Therefore, quality should be a common concern for both guests and service providers in a hotel.

To Feigenbaum (1983), quality is the total composite product and service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacture and maintenance through which the product in use will meet the expectations of the customer. Gitlow et al. (1983) concurred that, quality is the extent to which the customers or users believe the product or service surpasses their needs and expectations. To Grönroos (1990), quality is about keeping the service promise while Johnson (1991) asserts that, quality is how a company's products and services compare to those of competitors or how they compare with those offered in the past. Spencer (1994) wraps it all that, quality is satisfying or delighting the customer. To North (1998), the concept of quality is characterized by its dynamic process which is not stable, not unchangeable and not absolute. To Russell (2003), customers' concept of quality includes psychological aspects: the company's knowledge of its products, the courtesy and sensitivity sales and support staff, and the reputation of the product.

From these definitions and descriptions, hotels such as Modern City Hotel need to understand the service demands of customers before attempting to provide their services. This is because, the quality of a service is dynamic to varying customers and there is the need to ascertain each customer's demand(s) before attempting to serve the customer. It

thus represent that, ensuring quality service is about keeping the customer happy about the service received by way of satisfying the needs of the customer.

2.3 The need for Quality Service delivery in the Hospitality Industry

The service sector dominates the economic landscape today, because it yields significant sizes of returns and contributions to many countries and also engages a good number of the national workforce (Grzanic, 2007). To Purdy (2001) cited in Crawford (2002), the reasons which indicate the importance of focusing on customer service include the following: (1) Poor services that would cause customers and consumers to stop doing business with a company. (2) Companies that hire customer service representatives without strong service capabilities are at risk of losing valuable lifetime customers. And (3) Seventy percent of customers will buy products from companies that have excellent customer-service reputations.

Zemke and Woods (1998) therefore put it that, it is vital to be concerned with customer service employees because they have the ability to retain the customer base. Spinelli and Canavos (2000) also found a statistical connection between employee satisfaction and guest satisfaction. This is because, loyal consumers are essential and according to Tschohl (1998), 65% of a typical company's business comes from current loyal customers. This was in concurrence with the view of Reichheld (1996) that, loyalty is one of the great producers of business success.

Zemke and Woods (1998) stated that, customer service is a relationship with people who are essential to everything you do; meeting the needs and expectations of the

customer as defined by the customer and used to create a mutually beneficial relationship between itself and those it serves. To Harris (2000), customer service is anything we do for the customer that enhances the customer experience. This experience is then critical to maintaining the relationship between the organisation and the customer. Organizations must constantly strive to develop and maintain their customer's loyalty or, as is common in the majority of relationships, risk losing it to someone else (Kandampully, 1998). Quality drives consumer behavior and it has been argued by some analysts that it is an important factor in achieving long term success. Despite its influence on customers, poor quality can be detrimental to a company's performance. Companies that do not take quality issues serious end up using 25% of their cost finding and fixing quality problems. (Fawcett et al, 2007).

According to Kukoyi and Iwuagwu (2015), customer satisfaction is the 'holy grail' of success for businesses in the customer service industry. Leon and Leslie (2000) also asserted that, the customer's expectation is to feel important and assisted during the interactions that ultimately lead to fulfilment of their desire and positive end result. This is because, high quality of services contributes to increased profitability and competitiveness (Yoo & Park, 2007). Furthermore, a successful service quality enhances business growth and prosperity. Torres and Kline (2013) also put out that, service quality promotes customer satisfaction, stimulates intention to return and encourages recommendations. That is to say, customer satisfaction eventually increases profitability, market share and return on investment. Service quality is a way to manage business processes in order to ensure total satisfaction to the customer on all levels (internal and

external). It is an approach that leads to an increase of competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility of the entire company (Grzanic, 2007).

In order to know what quality is, managers have to get into the minds of customers to understand how they define quality. One Harvard Professor named David Garvin identified eight factors that comprise quality in the minds of the end user (Fawcett et al., 2007). Performance: refers to the core operating characteristics of the service; Features: they are the “bells and whistles” or extras that make a service distinct from competitors’ offering. Serviceability: refers to the speed of repairs when quality problems arise. Conformance: measures how well a service matches with established specifications. Reliability: the notion that a service can be counted on and not fail. Durability: refers to a service’s mean time between failures and its overall life expectancy. Aesthetics: deals with perceptions of fit and finish or artistic value, while Perceived quality: deals with how customers perceive a particular service or brand’s quality reputation.

From the assertions above, it could be inferred that service providers likewise service recipients ought to be concerned with service quality. This is because, the latter gets the satisfaction of a bridged gap or a problem solved while the former gets returned visits and continuous referrals which culminate into assets and growth for the business.

2.4 Extent of Service Quality Gaps in the Hospitality Industry

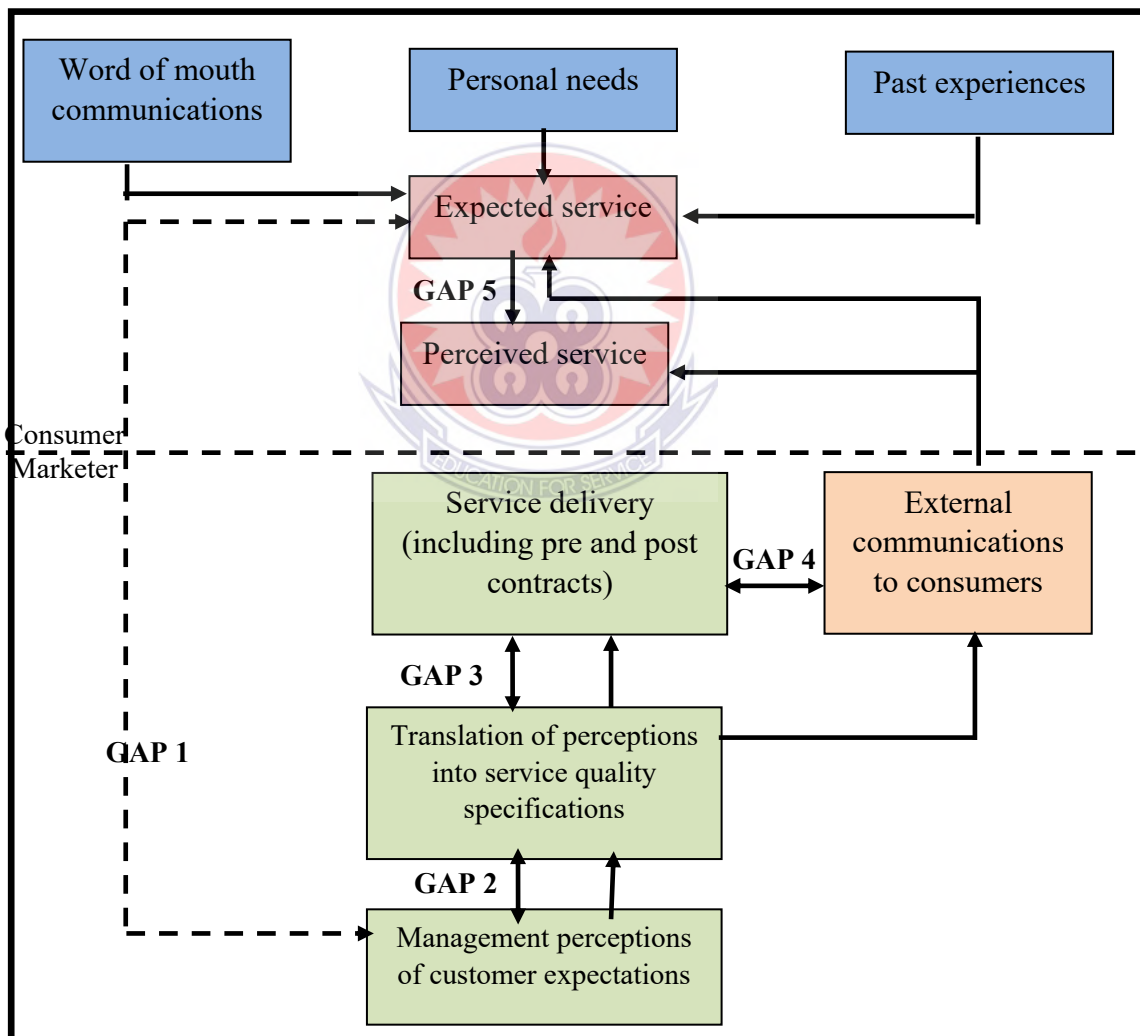
In the work by Bateson (1991), quality service delivery has been found to be essential to customer satisfaction. This satisfaction from the perspective of the service provider is based on knowing or understanding customers need and behaviour and addressing these needs with a suitably qualified product or services with regard to competition in the service landscape. According to Fornell and Anderson (1996), it is this satisfaction among customers that leads to loyalty to a service or product. Ueltschy et al. (2004) also held that, service quality is the consumer's rating of the overall excellence or superiority of the service offered.

This rating though perceived, is crucial to the success of any service organisation because customers play sensitive roles in delivery and consumption of services. They therefore interact with various service aspects and the knowledge obtained from these interactions gives them the opportunity to evaluate the service received from the organisation. Basically, the evaluation revolves around a simple comparison of the level of service received and the desired level of service anticipated (Shahin & Debestani, 2010). This comparison underpins the service quality gap model developed to measure the quality of service received from a service provider.

2.5 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used for discussing this study is the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1988). As shown in Figure 2.1, the service quality model known as the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) has been used to evaluate service quality. The SERVQUAL model views service quality as the gap that exists between guest expectations and perceived performance.

Figure 2.1: Service Quality Model



Source: Parasuraman et al., (1985)

From figure 2.1, it can be noted that the model has five gaps needing closure to ensure service quality.

Gap one is the difference between actual customers' expectations and management's perception of customers' expectations. Gap two is the difference between manager's perceptions of service quality and service quality specifications. Gap three is the difference between service quality specifications and actual service delivery. Gap four is the difference between service delivery and what is communicated externally. Gap five is the difference between what customers expect of a service and what they actually received (Douglas & Connor, 2003).

According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), the SERVQUAL measurement scale uses five generic dimensions: “*tangibles* (the appearance of Physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communications materials); *reliability* (the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately); *responsiveness* (the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service); *assurance* (the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service); and *empathy* (the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs)”. Theron and Strydom (2009) held that, the five service dimensions developed from the perspective of the customer serve a dual purpose as the service standards that the organisations should meet and also as evaluation criteria to determine whether these standards have indeed been met.

To Hussain and Nadiri, (2005), the original SERVQUAL scale was composed of two sections with the first section containing 22 items for customer expectations of excellent firms and the second section containing 22 items for consumer perceptions of

service performance of the firm being evaluated, and the results from the two sections being compared and used to determine the level of service quality. Mey et al. (2006) added that the instrument has been designed to be applicable across a broad spectrum of services.

Gaps within each item of evaluation are determined using scores assigned to varying degrees of responses on a Likert-Scale. The actual gap score is calculated ($G = P$ [Perceptions] – E [Expectations]). From this calculation, the largest negative gaps, combined with assessment of where expectations are highest, facilitate prioritization of performance improvement. In this same vein, low service quality is represented by a wider gap between customer expectations of service quality (i.e. what the customer expects of a service prior to receiving the service), and the perception of the quality of the service actually received (i.e. post-consumption judgment).

Since SERVQUAL results can be used to identify which components of a service are good or bad at the company, the instrument can be used to monitor service quality over time, to compare performance with its competitors, or to measure customer satisfaction within a particular service industry generally. Information collected through SERVQUAL by an organization or industry can help improve its position and meet customers' expectations continuously (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).

Put differently, the gap model as re-emphasized by Zeithaml et al. (1990) defines service quality service through customer satisfaction by identifying problems and mistakes through recognizing gaps in the model and trying to avoid them. As a result, service delivery can be influenced by narrowing organisational gaps and by improving

service quality and customer satisfaction. Simply, the model assumes that the difference between the service expected by the customers and the service they actually received is due to organisational gaps (McCarthy & Keefe 1999). Uran (2003) re-identified these gaps as i) position gap ii) specification gap iii) service execution gap iv) communication gap and v) evaluation gap.

2.5.1 Gap One: The Positioning Gap

According to Candido and Morris (2000), this gap is defined as a management lack of understanding of customers' expectations and perceptions of service. It is motivated both by lack of initiatives to listen to the customer and by the lack of correct understanding when these initiatives are taken. McCarthy and Keefe (1999) also identified that this gap can be caused by a lack of consumer orientation, management commitment to service quality, service quality leadership and mission/vision clarity. The view of Uran (2010) is not different as he identified that, the positioning gap can be influenced by marketing research orientation, customer orientation, service quality improvement leadership, management's commitment to service quality and concepts of quality.

2.5.2 Gap Two: Specification Gap

To Uran (2010), this occurs when hotel management correctly perceives guest expectations, but unable to translate this information into clear specification. Zemke and Schaaf (1989) asserted that, specifications along the service quality dimensions, are

useful to define the actual context of quality. Frequently, organizations do not possess any kind of formal specification, which results in aggravated service variability and lower quality. A good thing about identifying the various specifications in customer expectations is that it guides employees on their tasks. It helps to make constructive comparison towards effective evaluation of the service rendered. To Candido and Morris (2000), this gap emerges as a result of lack of service provider's analysis, design and definition of the various service specifications, or when specifications exist because of an inconsistency between those specifications and the strategy content or management's perceptions of customer expectation. Gronroos (1990) noted that the specification gap can be influenced by personnel task standardization, perception of feasibility, management levels, staff management coordination, amongst others.

2.5.3 Gap Three: Service Execution Gap

This is the gap between the service delivery and Service expectation. It is as a result of the influences exerted from the customer side and the shortfalls (gaps) on the part of the service provider. In this case, customer expectations are influenced by the extent of personal needs, word of mouth recommendation and past service experiences. This gap is very important and considered the true measure of service quality. It has a direct relation with external customer also is the gap that SERVEQUAL model influences on. All of providers try to satisfy the needs and expectations of customers which are really diversified. However, their perception of service delivered is not based only on

service itself, their needs and expectations but also external impacts such as word of mouth and the breakthrough of competitors (Na, 2010; Luk & Layton, 2002).

2.5.4 Gap 4: Communication Gap

Represents variation between delivered service and what customer was actually told about the service itself. This gap is the actual difference between what a firm promises about a service and what it delivers. If the firm promises more than can be delivered it will raise initial expectations but will lower perceptions of quality when promises are not fulfilled. So, external communications can affect consumer expectations about a service, as well as, consumer perceptions of the delivered service.

2.5.5 Gap 5: Evaluation Gap

Represents difference between customers' expectations regarding the service and their perception about the specific service. The last gap is the result of all the previous gaps (Nitin et al., 2005). From the consumer's stand point, good service quality is meeting or exceeding what consumers expected from the service. Perceived service quality is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected service and perceived service. It is also the discrepancy between what happens in actual service encounters and customers' perceptions of service quality.

With knowledge of the above gaps, it worthy of notice as well that, the service delivery system is an integral part of the whole service system. The service delivery system includes the tangibles of the service operating system, i.e. employees and the

physical facilities and also the exposure to other customers (Bebko, 2000). Service delivery is concerned with whether the service product is provided to the customer at the right place and time. Lovelock and Wright (2002) stated that a good service delivery system should be a continuing self-correcting system by comparing and measuring the results of the service quality. In view of the development of electronic technology, communication on service delivery is changing from higher to lower levels of contact, from personal service to self-service (Lovelock & Wright, 2002).

2.5.6 The Concept of Customer Expectation of Service

According to Bebko (2000), customer expectations are usually elastic and it is one kind of human perceptions based on verbal information. Based on this therefore, customer's personal needs, experience and commercial information, and customer service expectations are usually dynamic. Expectations impact greatly on customer behaviour. Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) posit that customer expectations are beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards or reference points against which performance is judged or measured.

There is always a gray area between the desired level of service and the adequate service level and this is what is referred to as the 'zone of tolerance' (Ma, Pearson & Tadisina, 2005). Mostly, the desired service is more stable than adequate service. So Gilbert and Wong (2003) held that fluctuations in the zone of tolerance mostly focus on the adequate service level rather than the desired service. The zone of tolerance concerns both the perception of the service and also the perception of the service delivery process.

An individual customer's zone of tolerance may increase or decrease, depending on a number of factors including those that are company-controlled. The more important the factor, the narrower the zone of tolerance is likely to be (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

2.5.7 Customer Perceptions of Service

Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) describe customer perceptions as the subjective assessments of actual service experiences. It is how customers perceive services; assess the quality of service they received; their satisfaction or otherwise; and the value of service received. Customers' perceptions are the way that people see services, interactions and service encounters in general due to their personal experience. It varies from person to person. Nowacki (2005) states that, the criteria that count in evaluating service quality, are those defined by the customer. Nowacki (2005) also noted that, 10 service quality dimensions to judge the quality of the service received. This was established by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). Grönroos (2000) combined the ten original determinants into five dimensions of quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance (including competence, courtesy, credibility, security) and empathy (including access, communication and understanding).

a. Reliability

To Bebeko (2000), reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. It is a key dimension that customers used to evaluate the quality between what they received and what the provider promised during the delivery

process. This may include service provision, problem resolution, and even pricing information. Reliability of a service is therefore of keen interest to the customer.

b. Responsiveness

Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) posit that, service providers should be active and voluntary to help their customers and to provide prompt service. Responsiveness demands flexibility on the part of the service provider in solving their customers' problems and requests. The ability to customize services for customers is an act of responsiveness as it makes each customer feels special.

c. Assurance

Robledo (2001) identifies assurance as employees' knowledge and courtesy and the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence". This dimension consists of four original determinants: competence, courtesy, credibility and security.

d. Empathy

Empathy is made up of access, communication and understanding/knowing the customer. The basic target of the dimension is to afford more facilities for the current or potential customers and enhance the services capacity, through personalized or customized service. Curry and Sinclair (2002) describe empathy as the caring, individualized attention that the firm provides its customers.

e. Tangibles

Tangibles are related to 'the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials' (Robledo, 2001). Since the tangible and visual elements of the site will be critical to efficiency as well as to overall perceptions of the

firm and the brand, service companies are likely to use tangibles to enhance their image and convey quality service to customers. Most companies also combine tangibles with another dimension to create a service quality strategy for the firm (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

2.6 Determinants of Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry (Hotels)

In China, India and other developing and fast-growing nations, it is apparent that service (s) is an economic force to reckon with (Bitner & Brown, 2008). Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) described that, service quality is a global judgment or attitude relating to the overall excellence or superiority of the service. To this description, Kusluvan *et al.* (2010) concurred that, employees are major determinants of service quality. According to Angelo and Roy (2014), a customer's quality perception is highly influenced from outside the hotel with the information feeds such as brochures, billboards and advertisements and recommendations in general. More simple things, such as availability of parking or a friendly service at the reception desk also plays a role. The absence of a car park or bad experience at the reception desk will not secure a satisfactory customer's quality perception.

According to Zeithaml *et al.* (2006), there are three main categories (people, physical evidence and the services that may influence the quality of a service in the service delivery process. These are discussed in the following sections.

2.6.1 The People

Metters *et al.* (2006) mentioned that, many researchers place more focus on the role of service employees and customers in the service delivery process in terms of the essential role of the people in the current service marketing theory. Also, marketers and organisational behaviourists pay more attention to the relationship between people and quality in the course of service delivery.

a. Service Employees and the Service Delivery

The place of service employees is quite important to any service delivery process, because service employees can directly influence all of the following five dimensions of service quality (Lovelock and Wright, 2002): The appearance and dress of employees display the tangibles dimension of service quality; Service employees can totally control the reliability dimension of service quality. They present and deliver the corresponding service in term of service promise; Frontline employees directly show the reliability dimension of service quality by offering their personal willingness to help customers; The assurance dimension of service quality is due to the behaviours of employees in communicating their credibility and instil trust in the customers; and Empathy implies that employees will provide individualised attention to help customers.

Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) therefore espoused that, service employees, are part of the service delivery system, and they will influence the image of the whole service organization. Discussed below is how employees influence the process. First, the view of Silvestro (2005) presents that service employees can directly influence customer

satisfaction when they frequently deliver or perform the service to clients. Frontline service employees play a link role between the external customer and environment and the internal operations of the organisation. They interpret information and standards of the organisation for its external customers. Customers also expect front line staff to know about their company's products and services and give customers professional help. These contact employees may still personify the firm in the customer's eyes (Silvestro, *ibid*).

Second, front line employees see more than customers see and they see the service delivery system from a different angle. Lai (2006) also indicates that the front line service employees, as internal customers of a service operator, are the only people who can assess internal service quality.

Third, the knowledge and skills of key employees is crucially important for a service firm in high competitive market. Since sophisticated employees have more experience to the service delivery system, they often predict the failure before it takes place. If the best service employees leave the firm, it can be very detrimental to customer satisfaction, employee morale, and overall service quality (Metters, *et al.*, 2006).

b. Customers and the Service Delivery Process

The other set of people capable of influencing the quality of service through its delivery process are the customers. Since customers have and play more complicated roles in the domain of services than other industries, many researchers and academicians have to constantly identify these services. One of the most significant changes of the customers' role is from an external acceptor to an appropriate participator in the service

creation and delivery process. According to Pérez *et al.* (2007), customers cannot only impact on the organisation's productive capacity and both quality and quantity of service, but also control and contribute these outcomes to their own satisfaction.

As a result of the customers' participation in service delivery and production, the gap 3 within the GAP model of service quality is also influenced. Zeithaml *et al.* (2006: 396) identify the following three main roles of the customer in the current service delivery system.

Firstly, customers are considered as a kind of productive resource and can bring some obvious productivity benefits for service operations. Since more and more advanced technologies and devices (e.g. ATM, vending machines) are applied in the service market, the interaction of customers and self-service automations are increasingly replacing roles that low-technology and front-line service employees played before by enhancing the service capacity of service operations. Some management experts have even called the self-service customers as "partial employees" of the service organisation, although the uncontrollability and uncertainty of customers' attitudes and actions still puzzle all service academicians and researchers (Grönroos, 2000: 106).

Secondly, the role of customers in service delivery is a contributor to their own satisfaction in terms of the service and the ultimate quality of services they received. Many researchers have shown that customer participation to the service delivery process and interaction with the service providers are based on their own needs (Pérez *et al.*, 2007).

Lastly, the role of service customers is also viewed as a potential competitor because some self-service customers could perform the entire or part-service by themselves and not depend on the service operations at all (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, customer participation in the service process can impact on an organisation's productivity, its service quality, and its customers' satisfaction.

2.6.2 Physical Information and Service Atmosphere

According to Echeverri (2005), service customers are more attracted by price reductions, greater convenient services, or some other tangible benefit. Before the actual interaction takes place, a customer finds it difficult to obtain a clear understanding of what he or she will receive. The service interaction is surrounded by physical and communication elements that provide information on the nature of the service and clues to its quality.

The tangible cue of the service, namely, physical evidence, relates to all aspects of a service and influence the customers' perceptions and decisions in the different service contexts (Bruhn & Georgi, 2006). Customers look out for clues and information on the kind of service they could receive when they visit a service facility. At the same time, service operators strive to provide safe and efficient delivery of services. However, Akbaba (2006) noted that the actual physical evidence that service operators offer is not always in accordance with customer thinking and physical movements in the service delivery process. Such shortcomings have an effect on customers' perceptions of service quality.

Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) added that, physical information refers to knowledge available in the environment in which the service is delivered and in which the firm and the customer interact, and any tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service. Bruhn and Georgi (2006) indicate that service physical evidence has the following three general types: servicescape, service environment and service materials: (1) The servicescape is the physical location where the service is delivered; (2) The service environment refers to the overall surroundings of a service location; (3) Service materials refer to the physical cues with a supportive function in the encounter for the employee or the customer.

2.6.3 Other Determinants of Service Quality in the Service Delivery Process

When service providers make strategies and decisions for packaging and delivering quality service, they often pay attention to three important factors in service delivery process: location, time and channel (Lovellock & Wright, 2006).

a. Service Location

Simply, service location is a place, in which the service is produced, delivered and consumed. The primary principle of determining an appropriate service location is to make it more convenient for customers. Based on the characteristics of service types and the needs of customers, service operations usually have three options for the service location: at the provider's location, at the customer's location and at a third party's location (Lee *et al.*, 2000).

Moreover, the development of new technologies brings in the service place splitting in the service delivery process. The service place splitting means the same service is delivered at a different place (Metters *at el.* 2006). The service place splitting lets the customer decide regarding the place of service delivery and offers more convenient and attractive. The service delivery location, as a type of physical evidence, can have an important impact on the customers' behaviours (Zeithaml *at el.*, 2006). Bruhn and Georgi (2006) indicate the following three aspects: the relevance of quality characteristics in the customers' perception, the customers' integration into the service process, as well as customers' purchasing decisions. Although customer is important, service operators have to take into account other constraints when they decide the location of service delivery. In particular, the profitability-oriented effects are concerned by all service providers (Nowacki, 2005).

b. Service Timing

Timing aspects of service delivery often limit service availability and cause a lot of in for customers. At the same time, service resources, capacity and other many external factors also restrict the time flexibility and operating time of service providers (Lovelock & Wright, 2002). On the topic of many timing issues in the service delivery system, Bruhn and Georgi (2006) summarised the following four dimensions of service timing.

First, the length of service delivery, as a crucial standard of service delivery, is concerned by both customers and service providers. Some customers' needs focus on service length. They select the different service providers by the different length of service delivery. To gain more profits and get the particular segment of the service

market, service management control and vary the length of service delivery within their capacity (Ma *at el.*, 2005).

Second, the time flexibility of service delivery means that the service timing of service providers can meet the requirements of some customers at a certain time. There are three levels of the customer's flexibility in the service market. First of all, all times of service delivery is predetermined by service providers. This is a fixed time which customers cannot choose. Then, all the times of service delivery are listed in advance by service providers. Customers can choose a certain time from the timetable. Finally, delivery times of service are no fixed. However, service resources and capacity often limited the time flexibility of service delivery (Lee *at el.*, 2000).

Third, the permanence of service availability means the actual operating time of service providers (Bruhn and Georgi, 2006). Since different industries have different availability hours, customers often experience a great deal of in. Therefore, the current trend of service availability is "24 hours a day, 7days a week" (Lovelock & Wright, 2002).

Lastly, there is a time interval, namely, time-tag, between the customers' order of a service and actual delivery of the service. In the service delivery process, both customers and service providers expect to reduce the time-tag between order and delivery because customers' needs can be met in a timely way and service providers can gain more profits through serving more customers (Lidén, 2003).

c. Channel of Service Delivery

According to Metters *et al.* (2006), the channel of service delivery is regarded as an intermediary of distributing and delivering service from service provider to customer. There are various types of service delivery channels in today's service industries. In general, two types of service channels are widely accepted by many researchers in terms of the different service carriers, namely, personal channels and electronic channels.

The classic delivery channel for a service is personal service delivery. According to the inseparability of production and consumption in service, the direct contact between the service producer and the consumer is necessary. The two types of personal channels used in service delivery are company-owned channels and the third-party channels (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

For most services, service organisations have a company-owned channel. The advantage of company-owned channels is that the owner can maintain consistency in the service delivery process. Since all departments in the whole service system comply with a common standard, the service organisation has complete control over the quality of service. At the same time, company-owned channels have two obvious disadvantages. One is the increasing service chains results in a potential financial risk. The other is that service organisations, with company-owned channels, lack experts in local markets (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006).

On the contrary, the third-party channels can reduce the financial risk and make services locally available. Furthermore, many legal, cultural and language barriers of personal interaction facilitate service organisations to pay more attention to the cost-

effective channels (Lovell & Wright, 2002). The third-party channels of service delivery include franchisees, agents and brokers (Metters, *et al.*, 2006).

However, the third-party channels are not without its disadvantages. For example, the original service providers find it difficult to maintain the consistency of service quality. The most evident reason is due to customer relationships that are controlled by the third-party service firms (Nowacki, 2005). With the rapid development of telecommunications and computer technology during the last two decades, electronic channels, as another type of service channel, have been realized and applied by more and more service providers and customers (Bovée, Thill & Schatzman, 2004). Bruhn and Wright (2006) summarized four main types of electronic delivery channels: service machines, telephone, internet and mobile channel.

2.7 Effective Management of Quality Customer Service Delivery in Hotels

According to Mola and Jusoh (2011), hospitality managers who want to close the service quality gaps and improve customer satisfaction need to measure the actual service delivery against customer expectations with reference to the gaps. It is significant for each service provider to know how customer expectations develop. Having knowledge about customers' expectations helps service providers to be conversant with the appropriate definition of service quality employed by their customers. It is common knowledge that, most of the time, customers who choose a service provider, have certain expectations. Guests without prior experience may have general expectations. First-time guests at a hotel expect attractive beds, comfortable mattresses, clean surroundings,

satisfactory meals and a reasonable tariff. But, experienced guests have more specific expectations based on past experience (Mola & Jusoh., 2011).

To Lidén (2003), service organisations should focus attention on the vital role of service employees and develop strategies to solve human resources issues for the effective customer-oriented service and closing the service delivery gap. Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) suggest four strategies, namely, hiring and recruiting the right people, training and developing people to deliver service quality, providing the needed support system, and retaining the best people, respectively.

Zeithaml *et al.* (2006) also held that, in order to overcome the problem associated with service inseparability and non-standardization in the personal service and also provide more facilities to customers most service providers use electronic channels that depend on technology and/or equipment for service production. The same electronic channels are used to interact with customers more effectively. For example, ATM, as a service produced entirely by the customer through service machines, not only entirely integrate customers into the service delivery process to save the potential employees' cost, but also provides facilities to customers and increase customer satisfaction. That notwithstanding, service providers are confronted with serious challenges when they use electronic channels as a mode of delivering service.

2.8 Conclusion

From the literature discussed above, customer expectations are what the customers think a service should offer rather than what might be on the offer. The factors that may be responsible for this insight may be word-of-mouth about the service or its provider, expectations, personal needs, past experience and external communications. On this basis therefore, a gap is realised when there emerge a discrepancy between the customers' thinking about the service to be offered and what has been offered as service. Addressing the difference or gap therefore requires the identification and implementation of strategies that affect customer perceptions or expectations or even both.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This third chapter highlights the methodological procedures employed for collecting data for the study. Items presented include the research design, the sources of data, the population and sample size determination, sampling techniques, and the tools for data collection. It also presents the tools for the analysis of the data to be collected from the field.

3.2 The Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method to the research such that, both qualitative data and quantitative data were collected. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed in the course of the study and especially in the selection of the sample elements for the study. Creswell (2007) distinguished between quantitative and qualitative research methods stating that, quantitative approach is one in which the investigatory primarily uses postpositive claims for developing knowledge.

Buber, Gadner and Richards (2004) however noted that, if a researcher uses numbers in a research, interpretation would still be needed and if the data gathered are texts, counting may still be appropriate. It is therefore obvious that variables do not necessarily have clear-cut meanings, since processes can be revealed through numeric analysis as well as through narratives. Based on this understanding, the study employed a mixed research method to enable a clear understanding of issues to be dealt with by the

study.

3.3 Sources of Data

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of data were the responses of guests regarding the service received at the Modern City Hotel. The primary data were thus collected as a form of first-hand information from the guests. It enabled the researcher to obtain direct insights regarding service recipients' expectations and perceptions of quality service delivery. The primary data were collected with the aid of questionnaires. Sindhu (2012) defined primary data as information collected first hand by a researcher specifically for a research assignment.

Secondary data for the study took the form of existing but relevant data on service delivery and service quality dimensions. This was sourced from textbooks, journals, organisational profiles and other printed materials on the subject matter. The essence of it was to help situate the study into the context of existing studies relating to the subject matter and to obtain a wide views of the subject. The use of secondary data guided the flow of the work towards achieving its objectives.

3.4 The Population and Sample Size Determination

The population studied was the customers of the hospitality industry in the Tamale Metropolis, specifically, customers of the Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis during the period of the study. The population herein also included all guests of the hotel who lodged at the hotel, customers who visited the hotel for conferences and

workshop activities, and also customers who visited the hotel for its restaurant services. To these categories of people, the service quality received on first encounter or previous encounter instilled high confidence in them for repeated visits and it also helped to attract new customers through referrals. By this, value was created for the service provider as customers got satisfied, so their retention was quite easy to achieve.

From the hotel's log book as at February 2016, there was an average visit of 150 customers in a week. This excluded conference and group customers as they were counted as one customer through the organisation they represented. Therefore, this study settled on a population of 150 customers which was obtainable in a week of seven days. It would have been most feasible to conduct this study on a larger scale (say, all major hotels in the Metropolis) but the limited time and resources available to the student did not permit this scale of research, hence, the chosen hotel and the population thereof.

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the ever increasing demand for research has created a need for an efficient method of determining the sample size to be representative of a given population. Therefore, based on the formula: " $s = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$ " a population of 150 implies a representative sample of 108 as given in Krejcie and Morgan (1970) 'table for determining sample size a given population'. This was further confirmed by The Research Advisors (2006). For a period of one week (seven days), the investigator was at the hotel with the consent of the management of the hotel, to plead the responses of the service recipients. This sample size might have been woefully inadequate to ensure representation especially with the sensitivity of the subject under study, but the student believed that the number was sufficient for an academic

study of this nature. At a confidence level of 95% leaving 5% to chances, the study sampled 108 customers of the hotel in a week of seven days from Sunday to Saturday.

3.5 Sampling Technique Used

The study employed a non-probability sampling procedure, specifically, convenience sampling technique such that, service recipients who were readily available were studied. This choice of this sampling technique allowed the researcher to focus on collecting data from a homogeneous group of people as customers. This choice of sampling also enabled the researcher to select respondents who were willing to respond to the questionnaire. It was used on purpose to ensure that no respondent was coerced to respond to the questionnaires.

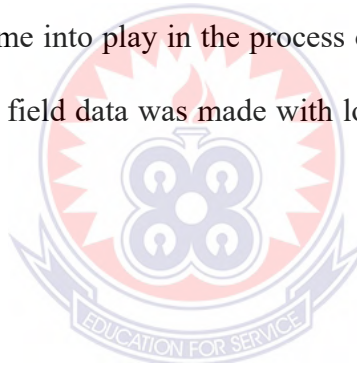
3.6 Tools for Data Collection - the Questionnaire

According to Akbaba (2006), the SERVQUAL instrument has emerged as the most reliable standardized questionnaire to measure service quality. The instrument suggested service quality as the gap between customers' expectations and their perception of the service provider's performance. The instrument is a five-point Likert scale that is rated on 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) response categories and was used to score the questions. To Leedy and Ormrod (2005), the Likert scale is the most widely used form of scaled items where the respondent chooses a point on a scale that best represents his/her view.

3.7 Data Analysis

The field data collected were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 20). Quality of the data was ensured by first of all assessing the accuracy of the manner in which the questions were answered by the respondents. The researcher advised the respondents to provide only answers appropriate to the questions. Extraneous variables found as responses to any question(s) were edited before coding the questions into the software for processing.

Self-discipline and data management ethics were strictly adhered to, in ensuring that only responses collected from the field were entered into the system and the analyst's own judgment did not come into play in the process of the data entering and analysis. A descriptive analysis of the field data was made with logical deductions making reference to existing literature.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation and analysis of the field data collected from among one hundred and eight customers of the Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region. It presents amongst others, information on the demographics of the respondents, a summary of the responses, an analysis of the service quality gap, determinants of service quality at the Modern City Hotel.

4.2 Socio-Demographics of Respondents

This section of the presentation reveals some information on the demographics of the respondents studied. It considers their gender, age and educational levels.

4.2.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Of the one hundred and eight (108) respondents studied, 51.9% were males whilst 48.1% were females. Table 4.1 shows data on the gender distribution of the respondents.

Table 4. 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	56	51.9
Female	52	48.1
Total	108	100.0

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

It can be seen from Table 4.1 that the number of men involved in the study was more than that of females. While this does not mean there are more men than females in the Tamale metropolis, it tells that more men than women were willing and allowed themselves to be interacted with (studied).

4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

With reference to the age of respondents, it was revealed that about 5.6% of the respondents were aged under 20 years, 11.1% were aged above 20 years but not above 30 years while 25.9% of the respondents were aged above 30 years but not above 40 years.

Figure 4.1 shows the data on the ages of respondents studied.

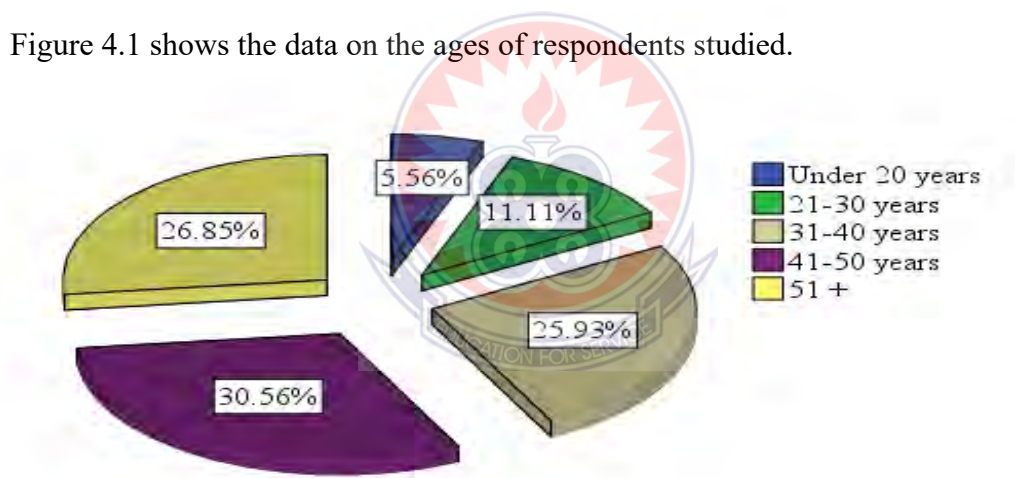


Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

It could be seen from Figure 4.1 that 30.6% of respondents were aged between 41 years and 50 years while about 26.8% of the respondents noted to have aged above 51 years. It shows that the majority of the respondents studied were aged between 41 years and 50 years and this was followed by respondents who aged above 50 years. It could be

inferred therefore that, the major customers of the Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis are aged above 30 years. It is therefore not surprising to have this age range being the major customers of the hotel since visits to a hotel are basically on purposes of business related activities and pleasure.

4.2.3 Educational Attainment of Respondents

Inquiries into the educational background of respondents revealed that 16.7% of the 108 respondents had Secondary, Technical and Vocational education while 26.9% of them had Post-Secondary education. Table 4.2 displays the figures as mentioned regarding the education attainment of respondents.

Table 4.2: Education Attainments of Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Secondary /Technical /Vocational	18	16.7
Post Sec	29	26.9
Tertiary	30	27.8
Postgraduate	31	28.7
Total	108	100.0

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

The survey also showed that 27.8% and 28.7% of the respondents respectively had Tertiary and Post Graduate levels of education. Comparing the figures, it could be seen that majority of the hotel customers interacted with, had at least Post-Secondary School education and hence, the high possibility of being caught among the work force of the metropolis. It also implies that, there is high possibility of respondents having knowledge on service delivery and its qualifying features.

4.2.4 *Occupation of Respondents*

A survey on the occupations of the respondents also revealed that 30.6% of respondents were civil or public servants working government established institutions and organisations while 48.1% of them were self-employed. Table 4.3 provides data relating to respondents' occupations.

Table 4.3: *Occupation of Respondents*

Occupation Type	Frequency	Percent
Civil/Public Servant	33	30.6
Self employed	52	48.1
Retired	18	16.7
Unemployed	5	4.6
Total	108	100.0

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

It could be noted from Table 4.3 that about 16.7% of the respondents were retired civil or public servants. About 4.6% of the respondents noted to be unemployed. It can be drawn from this data that majority of the respondents belong to the working class. Perhaps, their visits to the hotel might have been for business purposes but this is revealed in the next presentation.

4.2.5 *Nationality of Respondents*

In an enquiry to ascertain the nationality of the respondents who visited the hotel at the time of the study, it was seen that about 22.2% of the guests were not nationals. They had travelled into the country and into the Tamale Metropolis from countries near and far. However, about 77.8% of the respondents were nationals who might have moved

in from outside the metropolis for various reasons. Table 4.4 shows respondents' distribution according to their nationality.

Table 4.4: Nationality of Respondents

Nationality of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Ghanaian	84	77.8
Non-Ghanaian	24	22.2
Total	108	100.0

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

The data on Table 4.4 show that the Modern City Hotel just like any other place of hospitality is opened to both nationals and foreigners who may need its services.

4.2.6 Purpose of Visitation

Of the 108 guests of the Modern City Hotel studied in a period of One Week (Seven Days), 58.3% visited the hotel for business purposes while 25.9% of them visited the hotel on tourism. Figure 4.2 shows the purpose of the guests' visit to the Modern City Hotel.

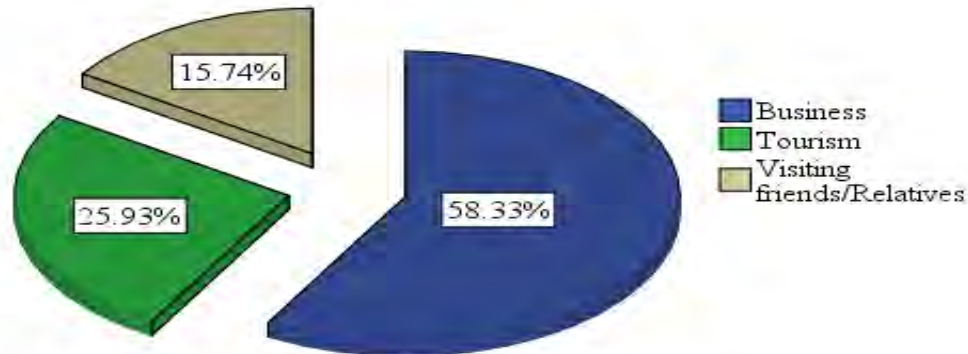


Figure 4.2: Respondents' Purpose of Visit to the Hotel

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

The data in Figure 4.2 show that about 15.7% of the respondents were in the hotel to visit their friends and relatives who dwell in the Tamale metropolis and its neighbouring communities. This implies that, hotel guests usually have purposes on which they travelled and the quality of services received during these visits could add up to the success or failure of the purpose of the visits.

4.3 Summaries of Guests' Responses

In this section, the summaries of the responses given by the guests in relation to their expectations and perceptions of service quality at the Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis, are presented and analyzed. These are basically the respondents' degree of agreement with the various expectation and perception dimensions with their corresponding standard deviations from the largest group of responses.

4.3.1 *Customer Expectations of Service from the Modern City Hotel*

During the survey to ascertain passengers' expectations from the Modern City Hotel, the following responses as summarized in Table 4.5 were obtained.

Table 4.5: Summary of Customer Expectations from Modern City Hotel (MCH)

S/N	Expectation Axioms	SD%	D%	N%	A%	SA%	MN	STD.
Tangibles								
1.	Excellent hotels will have modern looking equipment	-	3.7	19.5	62.1	14.5	3.87	.694
2.	The physical facilities at excellent hotels will be visually appealing	-	-	28.4	44.7	26.8	3.98	.744
3.	Personnel at excellent hotels will be neat in appearance	-	-	7.4	53.4	39.2	4.32	.604
4.	Materials associated with service in excellent hotels will be neat in appearance	-	-	7.4	46.8	45.8	4.38	.620
Reliability								
5.	When excellent hotels promise to do	-	3.9	11.1	53.7	31.3	4.12	.754

	something at a certain time they do it								
6.	When a client has a problem excellent hotels will show a sincere interest to solve it	-	-	3.9	43.2	52.9	4.49	.574	
7.	Excellent hotels will get things right the first time	-	4.2	7.4	50.0	38.4	4.23	.749	
8.	Excellent hotels will provide their services at the time they promise to	-	-	8.4	49.7	41.8	4.33	.626	
9.	Excellent hotels will insist on error free records	-	-	7.1	45.3	47.6	4.41	.620	
Responsiveness									
10.	Personnel in excellent hotels will tell customers exactly when services will be performed	-	-	4.2	57.4	38.4	4.34	.557	
11.	Personnel at excellent hotels will provide prompt services to customers	-	-	3.9	43.9	52.1	4.48	.574	
12.	Personnel in excellent hotels will always be willing to help customers	-	4.2	-	55.3	40.5	4.32	.687	
13.	Personnel in excellent hotels will never be too busy to respond to customers' requests	-	-	-	65.5	34.5	4.34	.476	
Assurance									
14.	The behaviour of personnel in excellent hotels will instil confidence in customers	-	-	4.2	51.8	43.9	4.40	.570	
15.	Customers of excellent hotels will feel safe in their dealings with the hotel	-	-	3.2	50.3	46.6	4.43	.556	
16.	Personnel in excellent hotels will be consistently courteous with customers	-	12.4	84.7	1.3	1.6	1.79	.827	
17.	Personnel in excellent hotels will have the knowledge to answer customers questions	-	3.2	3.2	47.1	46.6	4.37	.698	
Empathy									
18.	Excellent hotels will give customers individual attention	-	-	-	55.0	45.0	4.45	.498	
19.	Excellent hotels will have operating hours convenient to all customers	-	-	-7.1	61.6	31.3	4.24	.571	
20.	Excellent hotels will have staff who give customers personal attention	-	-	-	56.3	43.7	4.44	.497	
21.	Excellent hotels will have customers interest at heart	-	-	-	55.5	44.5	4.44	.498	
22.	Excellent hotels will understand the specific needs of their customers	-	-	-	43.9	56.1	4.56	.497	

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

From Table 4.4 showing the summaries of the respondents expectations, it can be observed that the highest expectation of customers is that the hotel must understand their (customers') specific needs' as indicated by the mean mark of 4.56 with all other responses just a little about half of point one ($<.5$) away from this position of customers. Knowing customer specific needs is the basis of service delivery and its quality. This concurs with the position of Fawcett et al. (2007) that, managers must have to get into the minds of customers to understand how they define quality of a service they wish to receive. This response from customers presupposes that, knowledge of a customer's specific need could help the hotel or the hotel's service agent to tailor every necessary activity towards satisfying the need of the customer.

Next to knowing customer specific need is the fact that, an excellent hotel would show sincere interest to solving customer problem(s). This response attracted a mean mark of 4.49 and with a standard deviation of a little above half point one ($>.5$) which shows that majority of the respondents share in this position that an excellent hotel is one which shows sincere concern towards solving customer needs/gap/problem. The two factors above, (i.e. knowledge of customer specific needs; and hotel staff's sincere interest in solving customer problems/needs) could therefore help rank the services of Modern City Hotel as reliable for quality service delivery.

Other key expectations of customers which recorded high mean mark responses are the provision of prompt services to customers; insistence on error free services to customers; customer safety guarantee; staff behaviours that instill customer confidence in customers amongst others as indicated on Table 4.5. It can be said therefore that,

customer expectations from Modern City Hotel are several and therefore, the hotel management must have to take extra steps to achieve service quality in each service encounter with a customer.

Very interesting among the findings of the survey is that, the guests least expected the hotel staff to be uncourteous with them. This statement attracted a mean mark of 1.79 which suggests that, the respondents considered it a necessity for hotel staff to be courteous when dealing with customers, especially when the industry in which they work is expected to be hospitable to those needing their services.

4.3.2 Customer Perceptions of Service Quality at the Modern City Hotel

Having noted the key expectations of respondents/customers from the Modern City Hotel located in the Tamale Metropolis, the survey attempted to ascertain customers' perception of service quality delivery at the hotel. This attempt was to identify what constitutes quality service to the customers and what they perceive about the hotel.

Table 4.6: Summary of Customer Perceptions of Service Quality from MCH

S/N	Perception Axioms	CD%	D%	N%	A%	CA%	MN	STD.
Tangibles								
1.	This hotel has modern looking equipment	31.3	33.4	4.2	20.5	10.5	2.46	1.386
2.	This hotel has physical facilities that are visually appealing	22.6	29.7	7.1	27.1	13.4	2.79	1.404
3.	Personnel at this hotel are neat in appearance	39.5	23.4	10.8	17.1	9.2	2.33	1.382
4.	Materials associated with service in this hotel are neat in appearance	32.4	27.9	13.4	14.5	11.8	2.46	1.379
Reliability								
5.	When this hotel promises to do something at a certain time they do it	28.7	23.4	7.9	35.5	4.5	2.64	1.337
6.	When a client has a problem this hotel shows a sincere interest to solve it	22.6	23.4	7.9	28.4	17.6	2.95	1.460
7.	This hotel gets things right the first time	36.6	30.3	-	20.3	12.9	2.43	1.470

8.	This hotel provides their services at the time it promises to	25.5	27.6	15.8	19.7	11.3	2.64	1.349
9.	This hotel insists on error free records	44.2	22.9	12.4	10.5	10.0	2.19	1.362
Responsiveness								
10.	Personnel in this hotel tell customers exactly when services will be performed	25.3	30.8	19.5	7.4	17.1	2.60	1.387
11.	Personnel at this hotel provide prompt services to customers	31.3	22.1	9.2	12.9	24.5	2.77	1.592
12.	Personnel in this hotel are always be willing to help customers	30.8	27.6	11.6	12.1	17.9	2.59	1.476
13.	Personnel in this hotel are never be too busy to respond to customers' requests	19.7	21.3	20.0	20.5	18.4	2.97	1.396
Assurance								
14.	The behaviour of personnel in this hotel instils confidence in customers	15.8	21.3	17.9	25.8	19.2	3.11	1.365
15.	Customers in this hotel feel safe in their dealings with the hotel	21.1	23.7	13.9	32.4	8.9	2.84	1.319
16.	Personnel in this hotel are consistently courteous with customers	23.7	19.7	5.0	21.6	30.0	3.14	1.596
17.	Personnel in this hotel have the knowledge to answer customers questions	28.2	16.6	12.1	21.1	22.1	2.92	1.545
Empathy								
18.	This hotel gives customers individual attention	15.8	19.7	10.8	38.2	15.5	3.18	1.343
19.	This hotel has operating hours that are convenient to all customers	26.1	22.6	7.9	19.5	23.9	2.97	1.620
20.	This hotel has staff who give customers personal attention	31.6	23.9	11.1	26.3	7.1	2.53	1.356
21.	This hotel has customers interest at heart	40.0	19.7	15.0	24.2	1.1	2.27	1.244
22.	This hotel understands the specific needs of the customers	20.0	31.3	15.5	27.1	6.1	2.68	1.236

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

Regarding customers' perceptions of the quality of service received from the Modern City Hotel, the data on Table 4.6 by the customers revealed that staff of the hotel give individual attention to customers in order to ascertain and serve their needs. This axiom attracted a mean mark of 3.18 and an associated standard deviation of 1.343, showing that quite a significant number of customers did not subscribe to this position. It

was also realized that the second highest perception of customers about the hotel is the courteousness of its staffs as depicted by a mean mark of 3.14. It means that, staff of the MCH are very well-mannered in their interactions with customers. This was also followed by statement 14 which also attracted a mean mark of 3.11 which represents the third highest mean obtained from the responses among the respondents. Another well-perceived axiom among customers (with a mean mark of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 1.6) was the operating hours of the hotel which were deemed to have been convenient to all customers. This was followed by customers' perception of staff knowledge of the hotel and its services which enables hotel staff to answer customer inquiries regarding services.

Table 4.6 also shows that customers perceived the staff of MCH to have been quick and attentive to responding to customer requests. They also perceived the hotel to have ensured customer safety while delivering prompt services to customers. These axioms attracted mean marks within the range of 2.60 and 2.97. It is worthy of mentioning that these perceptions were not unanimous among the respondents as depicted by the high standard deviations.

4.4 Service Quality Gap Analysis of the Modern City Hotel

According to Zeithaml et al. (2002), there are five dimensions in the expectations-perceptions gap scores and they include Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. Whilst these dimensions may be more in some other service quality gap measurement, this study concentrates on the five dimensions of the Zeithaml et al. (2002). This section of the presentation attempts to analyze the service quality gaps

in the service delivery of the Modern City Hotel with focus on the five dimensions of service quality.

4.4.1 Tangibles Dimension Gap Analysis

According to Robledo (2001), the tangibles dimension of service quality considers the physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. Zeithaml et al. (2006) added that, the tangibles are those factors that most companies combine with the other dimensions of service quality to create a service quality strategy for the firm. The data for these dimensions are presented on Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Gap Analysis of the Variables of the Tangible Dimension

Tangible Dimension Axioms	Expectations Mean (SD)	Perceptions Mean (SD)	Gap (PM-EM)
This hotel has modern looking equipment	3.87 (.694)	2.46 (1.386)	-1.41
This hotel has physical facilities that are visually appealing	3.98 (.744)	2.79 (1.404)	-1.19
Personnel at this hotel are neat in appearance	4.32 (.604)	2.33 (1.382)	-1.99
Materials associated with service in this hotel are neat in appearance	4.38 (.620)	2.46 (1.379)	-1.92

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

From Table 4.7, it can be observed that the highest expectation of customers in terms of the tangibles with a mean score of 4.38, scored a very low mean (2.46) in terms of perceptions of the quality of service received by customers, therefore resulting in a gap (negative score) of -1.92. It implies that, customers' expectation of the hotel and its staff having professional appearance in terms of neatness of materials associated with services in the hotel was not perfectly met by the Modern City Hotel.

Also, a glossary look at the mean scores of the tangibles reveals that, many customers had high expectations from the hotel in terms of modern looking equipment, visually appealing facilities and neat appearance of the hotel's personnel. However, these expectations were not adequately met and therefore, there are significant gaps in the quality of the service delivered by the hotel. These gaps were more pronounced in areas of appearance of the hotel staffs, hotel facilities and equipment, materials associated with service delivery. It suggests therefore that, the tangible dimension which is basically the physical appearance of equipment, facilities and personnel appeals significantly to the desire of customers and therefore contributes to service quality.

4.4.2 Reliability Dimension Gap Analysis

To Bebeko (2000), reliability defines the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. It is regarded as a key measuring rod of service quality among customers. A comparison of the expectations and perceptions of quality service delivery showed that, expectations for the variables under this dimension of service quality is very high among customers. Yet, their perceptions of the quality of service received were relatively very low, which left very wide gaps in the service delivery of the Modern City Hotel. These data are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8: Gap Analysis of the Variables of the Reliability Dimension

Reliability Dimension Axioms	Expectations Mean (SD)	Perceptions Mean (SD)	Gap (PM-EM)
When this hotel promises to do something at a certain time they do it	4.49 (.574)	2.64 (1.337)	-1.85
When a client has a problem this hotel shows a sincere interest to solve it	4.23 (.749)	2.95 (1.460)	-1.28
This hotel gets things right the first time	4.33 (.626)	2.43 (1.470)	-1.90
This hotel provides their services at the time it promises to	4.41 (.620)	2.64 (1.349)	-1.77
This hotel insists on error free records	4.34 (.557)	2.19 (1.362)	-2.15

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

As shown on Table 4.7, the highest expectation for this dimension however was the timeliness of service per promises, hence a service quality gap of -1.85 was realized. The least expected axiom for this dimension (sincerity of the hotel in solving customer problems) rather attracted the least service quality gap of -1.28 during the field survey. The highest gap identified was in the inability to ensure error free services, and this was followed by the difficulty of getting things done rightly at the first encounter of a customer.

4.4.3 Responsiveness Dimension Gap Analysis

Zeithaml et al. (2006) argued that service providers should be active and voluntarily ready to help their customers and to provide prompt service. This implies that, service providers need to be more flexible in solving customers' problems and serving their requests. On assessment of this dimension, it was found that the second highest expectation for this dimension was for staff of the hotel to tell customers when exactly

service would be performed. The expectation mean score for this variable was 4.43 and its perception mean score was 3.11 which left a service quality gap of -1.32, the least service quality gap identified with the responsiveness dimension of the services provided by the Modern City Hotel.

Generally, customer expectations with regard to the company's responsiveness were higher than that of the reliability dimension with the least mean expectation of 4.32. However, the associated service quality gaps not so severe as compared to the gaps identified with the reliability and the tangibles dimensions of service quality of the Modern City Hotel. The highest gap identified with this dimension was -1.88 and it is associated with the highest expectation from the hotel (i.e. personnel in this hotel always tell customers exactly when services would be performed).

Table 4.9: Gap Analysis of the Variables of the Responsiveness Dimension

Responsiveness Dimension Axioms	Expectations Mean (SD)	Perceptions Mean (SD)	Gap (PM-EM)
Personnel in this hotel tell customers exactly when services will be performed	4.48 (.574)	2.60 (1.387)	-1.88
Personnel at this hotel provide prompt services to customers	4.32 (.687)	2.77 (1.592)	-1.55
Personnel in this hotel are always be willing to help customers	4.34 (.476)	2.59 (1.476)	-1.75
Personnel in this hotel are never be too busy to respond to customers' requests	4.40 (.570)	2.97 (1.396)	-1.43
Personnel in this hotel tell customers exactly when services will be performed	4.43 (.556)	3.11 (1.365)	-1.32

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

4.4.4 Assurance Dimension Gap Analysis

Robledo (2001) saw the assurance dimension of service quality as employees' knowledge and courtesy and the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence. It has to do with employee competence, courtesy, credibility and security. Expectations for the assurance dimension of service quality were most centered on staff's in-depth knowledge of their jobs. This variable had a mean score of 4.45 and was least on personnel not instilling confidence in customers. There were high expectations for other variables such as safety of customers in their transactions with staffs, staff politeness, and staff behaviour. In terms of perceptions, staffs' in-depth knowledge of their jobs and also customer safety during transactions with staffs were met by the hotel but not sufficiently.

The gap between these two variables shows that, the Modern City Hotel performed encouragingly well in these areas. The best performed variable under the assurance dimension with a positive gap (1.05) and was the behaviour of staff which instills confidence in customers. This is shown in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4. 10: Gap Analysis of the Variables of the Assurance Dimension

Assurance Dimension Axioms	Expectations Mean (SD)	Perceptions Mean (SD)	Gap (PM-EM)
The behaviour of personnel in this hotel instils confidence in customers	1.79 (.827)	2.84 (1.319)	1.05
Customers in this hotel feel safe in their dealings with the hotel	4.37 (.698)	3.14 (1.596)	-1.23
Personnel in this hotel are consistently courteous with guests	4.31 (.904)	2.92 (1.545)	-1.37
Personnel in this hotel have the knowledge to answer customers questions	4.45 (.498)	3.18 (1.343)	-1.27

Source: Field Survey, March 2016

It can be inferred from the data on Table 4.10 that the poorly performed area for this dimension is the politeness of the staff. It suggests that, staffs of the hotel get rude to customers sometimes when attending to customers' requests.

4.4.5 Empathy Dimension Gap Analysis

To Curry and Sinclair (2002), empathy is about caring for the customer, and the individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers. This was confirmed by respondents' high expectation in the variables making up this dimension. The survey showed that expectation in this regard was highest for the hotel staff's ability to give each customer a personal attention to know what the customer needs and how to meet this need. Next to this expectation were the need for the hotel staff to give individual attention to each customer whiles the hotel choses operation hours that are convenient to all customers.

Perceptions of quality of service received were highest for hotel staff's individual attention given to customers. Similar to this perception was that of convenient working or operating hours. The other variables also attracted reports of high service quality, however, there were significant gaps identified with the services received by customers. The most pronounced gap was the operating hours of the hotel which ins some customers. It implies that, the operating hours of the Modern City Hotel does not seem convenient to all customers, though it seemed appropriate for others. There were also problems with the hotel's understanding of customer specific needs.

Table 4.11: Gap Analysis of the Variables of the Empathy Dimension

Empathy Dimension Axioms	Expectations Mean (SD)	Pe3rceptions Mean (SD)	Gap (PM-EM)
This hotel gives customers individual attention	4.44 (.497)	2.53 (1.356)	-1.91
This hotel has operating hours that are convenient to all customers	4.44 (.498)	2.27 (1.244)	-2.17
This hotel has staff who give customers personal attention	4.56 (.497)	2.68 (1.236)	-1.88
This hotel has customers interest at heart	4.04 (.778)	2.64 (1.317)	-1.36
This hotel understands the specific needs of the customers	4.22 (.722)	2.62 (1.455)	-1.60

Source: Field Survey, June 2014

4.4.6 Summary of Gap Analysis

In summary, it could be held that expectations from the Modern City Hotel were very high and specifically, most high for dimensions such as empathy, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and even tangibles. The hotel in its managerial capacity attempted to deliver the best of hospitality services to its customers and this saw reports of relatively good perceptions of the company's service delivery from customers. However, there were still very significant gaps in the quality of service rendered by the Modern City Hotel. The only positive gap identified by the study was the hotel staff's behaviour which instills confidence in customers.

4.5 Determinants of Service Quality at Modern City Hotel

This section of the presentation attempts to establish the priorities or the relevant dimensions which influence the service quality of the Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis. It considers correlations within expectation dimensions, perception dimensions and then between expectations and perceptions. The following information however defines the basis of the correlation.

- i. If the Sig. value (p value) $p \leq 0.05$, then there is a statistically significant correlation.
- ii. Pearson correlation co-efficient (r) values range from -1 to +1.
- iii. The + sign at the front indicates whether there is a positive correlation (As one variable increases, so does the other) or the - sign in the front indicates a negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other variable decreases). The size of the absolute value (ignoring the sign) provides an indication of the strength of the relationship.
- iv. Strength relationship:
 - r = .81 to 1.0 or -.81 to -1.0 very strong correlation
 - r = .61 to .80 or -.61 to -.80 strong correlation
 - r = .41 to .60 or -.41 to -.60 moderate correlation
 - r = .21 to .40 or -.21 to -.40 weak correlation
 - r = .00 to .20 or -.00 to -.20 very weak or no correlation

4.5.1 Intra-Correlations of Expectations of Service Quality Dimensions

It can be observed from the data below that, (See Table 4.12) Tangibles with Assurance and Empathy have a 'P' value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, and indicates that Tangibles with Assurance and Empathy have a statistically positive significant correlation. The Pearson product correlation coefficient 'r' value of 0.489 indicates a moderate correlation between Tangibles and Assurance, and 0.298 indicates a weak correlation between Tangibles and Empathy. It means further that, Tangibles and Assurance dimensions would only generate a moderate influence on the quality of service delivered by the Modern City Hotel to its customers or guests. However, combining Tangibles and Empathy dimensions would yield just a weak influence on the quality of service needed to be delivered. Thus, focusing on the factors making these dimensions would not make a very significant influence on the quality of service delivered by the hotel.

Also, Reliability with Assurance have a 'P' value of 0.304 which is far higher than 0.05, and 0.000 for Empathy and indicates that Reliability with Assurance have no statistically significant correlation. That is to say that a blend of Reliability factors and Assurance factors would not have any meaningful improvement on the quality of service delivered by the hotel. But for Reliability and Empathy, a 'P' value of 0.000 lesser than 0.05 means that Reliability and Empathy have a statistically positive significant correlation. The Pearson product correlation coefficient 'r' value 0.053 for Assurance indicates very weak correlation whilst 0.285 'r' coefficient for empathy indicate a weak

correlation between Reliability Empathy. Again, this combination does not make a major impact on the quality of service needed by customers.

The correlation between Responsiveness and Assurance and with Empathy resulted in a 'P' value of 0.000 which indicates that Responsiveness with Assurance and Empathy have a statistically positive significant correlation. See Table 4.12 for details on these correlations.

Table 4.12: Intra-Correlations within Expectation Dimension

Dimensions	Test	Assurance	Empathy
Tangibles	Pearson Correlation	.489**	.298**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	380	380
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.053	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.304	.000
	N	380	380
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.322**	.325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	380	380

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, March 2016.

The Pearson product correlation coefficient r value of 0.322 and 0.325 indicate weak correlations between Responsiveness and Assurance and with Empathy. This means that, focusing on the factors making up the Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy dimensions would but yield no strong improvement on the service delivery of the hotel. It therefore means that, for an effective service quality delivery, a service provider must have to ensure that all the five dimensions of quality have been dully tackled and leaving no gaps on any. This is what highlights the dynamic nature of

customers. It tells further that, the hotel's inability to efficiently manage each of these dimensions creates gaps in each service encounter. This is because some of these factors and dimensions are controlled by management while others need to be delivered by employees. Hence, the various gaps provided by each player whenever there is service failure.

4.5.2 Intra-Correlations of Perceptions of Service Quality Dimensions

The intra-correlations within perception showed that, Tangibles with Assurance and Empathy have a 'P' value of 0.000 meaning that Tangibles with Assurance and Empathy have a statistically positive significant correlation as shown in Table 4.13. The Pearson product correlation coefficient 'r' values are 0.254 and 0.399 indicate a weak correlation between Reliability, Assurance, and Empathy. This means that, a combination of Tangibles, Assurance and Empathy dimensions and their factors therein made a great blend for service delivery but did not yield a great result in terms of quality of service delivered by the hotel.

Reliability with Assurance and Empathy also have a 'P' value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, and indicates that Reliability with Assurance and Empathy have a statistically positive significant correlation. The Pearson product correlation coefficient 'r' values are 0.449 shows a moderate correlation between Reliability and Assurance whilst 'r' coefficient of 0.248 indicate a weak correlation between Tangibles and Empathy. It tells that, though these dimensions showed a cohesion among themselves, they did not produce as much result in quality of service delivered by the hotel.

Regarding Responsiveness with Assurance and Empathy, there are also ‘P’ values of 0.000 which are less than 0.05 and therefore significant, and shows that Responsiveness with Assurance and Empathy have a statistically positive significant correlation. The Pearson product correlation coefficient ‘r’ value of 0.510 and 0.500 indicates a medium correlation between Responsiveness and Assurance, and with Empathy. These are the only factors yielding a medium improvement on the quality of service provided by the hotel. It means that, even if Modern City Hotel cannot afford to ensure the effective delivery on all the five dimensions, concentration should be given to Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. This is where the hotel had its highest positive significance in terms of service delivery.

Table 4.13: Intra-Correlations with Perceptions

Dimensions		Assurance	Empathy
Tangibles	Pearson Correlation	.254**	.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	380	380
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.449**	.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	380	380
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.510**	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	380	380

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Field Survey, March 2016

4.5.3 Inter-Correlations between Expectation and Perception

The inter-correlations between expectations and perceptions with regards to tangibles (expectation) with the tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance resulted in ‘P’ values of 0.172, 0.014, 0.053, 0.088, and 0.453 respectively. All these ‘P’ values are

greater than 0.05, except that with Reliability. It indicates that the expectation of tangibles with the perceptions for the other four quality dimensions was not significantly correlated, though they are positive. That is to say they cannot yield any meaningful improvement on quality of service (i.e. if Tangibles are made the main factor to attract the customers. The other factors need to be effectively deployed to maintain the customers). The Pearson product correlation coefficient 'r' values are 0.070, 0.127, 0.099, 0.088, and 0.039 which indicate a very weak correlation between the expectation of tangibles and the perceptions for tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. It tells that, customer expectations from the Modern City Hotel were not met considering the Tangibles (physical appearance) of the hotel.

Also, expectations and perceptions with regards to reliability (expectation) and the tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance and empathy resulted in 'P' values greater than 0.05, which indicates that the expectation of reliability with all the five perceptions quality dimensions are not significantly correlated, though they are positive. This is supported by their Pearson product correlation coefficient 'r' values are 0.087, -0.039, -0.024, -0.035 and -0.040 which are indications of very weak correlation between the expectation of reliability and the perceptions for tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Simply, there is very weak correlation between reliability expectation and the five dimensions for perception of service quality.

The correlation of responsiveness expectation and the five perception dimensions also yielded 'P' values above 0.05 except for empathy which had 0.007. A positive significant correlation, though with a negative 'r' value of -0.138 suggests a very weak

correlation between expectation of responsiveness and perception of empathy. The other dimensions also yielded positive but very weak correlations between expectations and perceptions. It tells that, a hotel cannot be responsive to customers' need when there is no empathy for the customers' needs. Where there is high empathy for a customer's need, responsiveness is very likely to be high.

Correlations between Assurance expectations and perceptions for Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy proved more significant relative to the dimensions analyzed earlier. It means therefore that, when a hotel builds a strong assurance in its customers, it influences their perceptions of the quality of service delivered. That is to say, the stronger the assurance among customers about the service to be received, the higher the perception of the service quality received. This finding emphasizes Robledo (2001) definition of assurance as employees' knowledge and courtesy coupled with the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence in their customers. The correlations between expectations for Empathy and perceptions for Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy also proved more significant but not as compared to the results for Assurance expectations and perceptions dimensions of service quality.

On Table 4.14 below, the sign (*) implies that the correlation is significant at 0.01 level whilst (**) means it is significant at 0.05 level. It can be observed that, correlations between expectations for Assurance and the five dimensions for perceptions and also expectations for Empathy and the five quality dimensions for perception have passed the test of significance but the relationship of the former is more pronounced than the latter.

Table 4. 14: Inter-Correlations between Expectations and Perceptions

Perceptions	Expectations	Tangibles	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Tangibles	Pearson Correlation	.070	.127*	.099	.088	.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.172	.014	.053	.088	.453
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.087	-.039	-.024	-.035	-.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.449	.641	.498	.439
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.021	.047	.009	-.091	-.138**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.681	.362	.854	.076	.007
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.122*	.186**	.154**	.206**	.154**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.000	.003	.000	.003
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.109*	.139**	.145**	.149**	.101*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.007	.005	.004	.049

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. List wise N=380

These suggest that, the Modern City Hotel has its successful quality service influencing priorities/factors tied to Assurance and Empathy expectations from the customers and an effective delivery of these expectations blend with effective management of its tangibles, reliability and responsiveness, will see the hotel delivering quality hospitality services to its customers.

4.6 Quality Performance Measure of Modern City Hotel

This section of the presentation seeks to establish the areas of performance of the Modern City Hotel by way of determining the means gap between expectations and perceptions among the five service dimensions. These data are presented on Table 4.15.

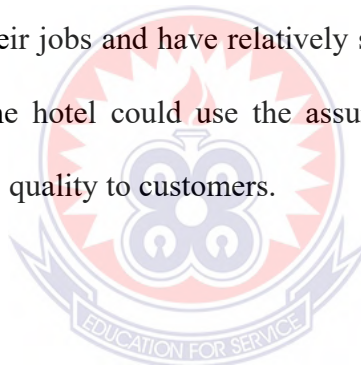
Table 4.15: Comparing the Quality Dimensions to obtain the best Performer

Dimension	Expectations Mean(SD)	Perceptions Mean(SD)	Gap PM-EM
Tangibles	20.68 (1.960)	12.63 (3.526)	-8.05
Reliability	21.80 (1.669)	12.84 (4.146)	-8.96
Responsiveness	21.98 (1.558)	14.04 (4.351)	-7.94
Assurance	19.17 (1.906)	15.06 (5.831)	-4.11
Empathy	21.70 (1.650)	12.74 (5.57)	-8.96

Source: Field survey, June 2014

It can be observed from Table 4.15 that, the highest gap scores of -8.96 is commonly shared by two dimensions namely, reliability and empathy. It implies that customers had very high expectations in the hotel's Reliability and Empathy but had lower perceptions of quality of service received. Reliability relates to the service provider's ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately whilst empathy relates to access, communication (i.e. employee-customer communication). The data further suggests that, the hotel poorly performed in these areas, despite the few individual variable/axiom performances, hence, respondents seek to see more efforts directed to these ends.

It could be held further that, tangibles in the hospitality industry relatively matters to many customers and its non-existence or malfunctioning may surely have implications on the quality of service received by the customer. For instance, the kind of technologies and facilities in all units of the hotel service and even in ensuring guest security could influence customers' perception of service quality. This was also noted to have been poorly performed per the data below. This effect is slightly pronounced on the variables making up the responsiveness dimension. The least gap score however is the assurance dimension. It suggests that, the hotel had thrived well in that direction and as such, it does not constitute a challenge to the customers. It implies that, employees have proven to have fair knowledge of their jobs and have relatively shown courtesy in the discharge of their duties. Therefore, the hotel could use the assurance dimension as its key factor towards improving service quality to customers.



4.7 Conclusion

In every service encounter is an opportunity for both the service provider and the service recipient. A gap in this encounter reflects a service failure which is a strong indicator of a chance of return visit on part of the customer. From the analysis above, a good gender mix was obtained to gather data from both sexes on the topic, data was gathered across varying age groups among highly educated group of people with different occupational skills. From nationals and non-nationals, the Modern City Hotel was expected to deliver highly qualified service to its guests across all the dimensions used to assess the hotel just as excellent hotels do. However, customers' perceptions of the quality of service received

from the hotel suggest gaps in the service delivery of the hotel. The only instance where customer perceptions of service delivery exceeded expectations was the Assurance dimension and specifically, the behaviour of the hotels personnel which instils confidence in customers. It thus suggest that the hotel attempts to deliver services as expected by customers, perhaps, the dynamic nature of customers have not permitted this quest yet, hence, the need to focus more on identifying and understanding individual customer needs.



CHAPTER FIVE

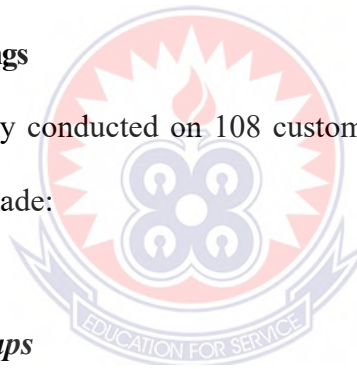
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study summarizes the findings from the data collected and the conclusions drawn thereof. It also presents suggestions towards addressing the identified service quality gaps of the Modern City Hotel in the Tamale Metropolis.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Per the field survey conducted on 108 customers of the Modern City Hotel, the following findings were made:



5.2.1 Service Quality Gaps

In order to identify the service gaps in the operations of the Modern City Hotel in Tamale, the selected variables of the hospitality service sector were grouped into five dimensions namely Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy and assessed by way of comparing their mean scores. This exercise revealed that, the customers have very high expectations from the hotel, yet, these expectations were not adequately met and this resulted in fissures in the service offer of the hotel.

Specifically, the Tangibles dimension saw all its axioms being poorly performed. Variables such as the neat appearance of materials associated with service, neat

appearance of hotel staff, and modern looking facilities, were most poorly performed in the view of some customers. Though the use of physical facilities of the hotel presents a gap in the service offer of the hotel, it seemed to have performed better than the other variables in this dimension.

Despite a general poor performance in the axioms of the Reliability dimension of service quality, the highest gap identified was the hotel's inability ensure error free records or encounters. This was followed by the difficulty getting things right at the first time and then untimeliness. With a gap anyway, the best performed variable in this dimension was the hotel's sincere interest to solve customers' problems.

In terms of Responsiveness, the hotel had a lower gap compared to the earlier dimensions mentioned. The poorest performed axiom for this dimension was poor communication of the exact time of services. This was followed by hotel staff's unwillingness to offer extra help to customers. The relatively best performed variable in this dimension was the provision of answers to customer requests by staff. This however is not the same effort as rendering a customer an extra help.

Whilst the Assurance dimension seemed to be the best performed dimension among all the five dimensions of service quality, it was observed that the hotel staff's behaviour does instill confidence in customers. However, customers of the Modern City Hotel harbour fears while dealing with the hotel's staff. This is because, staff of the hotel were not always courteous with customers, and they do not seem to have complete knowledge on the range of services offered by the hotel and respond to customer questions.

Finally, the Empathy dimension also attracted a general poor performance with the worst of its performance being the inconvenient operating hours of the hotel, followed by their inability to give individual attention. There were also reports of staff inability to offer personal attention to customers. Hotel staff also had difficulties understanding the specific needs of customers because they did not seem to have customers' interest at heart.

5.2.2 Determinants of Quality of Service at the Modern City Hotel

With correlation coefficients (P-values) not more than 0.05, and very significant at 0.01 level, the dimensions influencing the quality of service rendered by the Modern City Hotel are the Assurance and Expectation dimensions. That is to say that, customers expected the hotel to effectively blend their expectations of Assurance and Empathy with the Tangibles, Reliability and Responsiveness in order to deliver the best of its services.

5.2.3 The Performance Level of MMT Ltd. Kumasi

Despite a general poor performance in all dimensions of service rendered by the hotel, Modern City Hotel seemed to have performed best in terms of Assurance. All other dimensions were very poorly performed. The worst performed dimension however were Reliability and Empathy.

5.3 Conclusions

From the findings above, it can be held that the quality of service rendered to a hotel guests is key towards ensuring a successful service encounter. Meanwhile, the guest will only be satisfied when his/her perceptions of service received exceed his/her expectations. It implies that, a poor quality of service can hurt a service provider's performance in so many areas including its profits and good will/public image. In the face of these facts, the Modern City Hotel can be said to have performed poorly in terms of the quality of service delivered to its customers and this has the potentials of crushing down the dreams of the company. Typically, there exist quality gaps in the areas of reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy in the service delivery of the hotel. The actual determinants of quality service delivery at the modern city hotel is a blend of its assurance and empathy dimensions of service quality with the tangibles, reliability and responsiveness dimensions. A careful strategy therefore need to be taken to address the weaknesses in its operations in order to save its image and dreams. The hotel needs to effectively manage customer expectations of Assurance of service and Empathy of the organisation and its employees with its Tangibles, Reliability, and Responsiveness to arrive at its dreams and to serve the best interest of its customers.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made;

The current operating hours of the hotel is not convenient to most customers. Feedback should be taken from the customers as to the time that will be convenient to all. Based on the feedback, an informed decision could be taken by management that will reflect the expectations of the customers regarding the operating hours of the hotel.

The issue of reliability can be tackled in three ways. First there should be a conscious effort on the part of management to ensure that the hotel gates are opened to guest at almost any time per the feedback they would receive from customers. This would make customers regard the hotel as their second home even when they look almost stranded.

Secondly, management should ensure that the facility and its equipment are upgraded to look appealing to customers. This requires a drastic change in every department of the hotel, ranging from the security gate, through the reception, the restaurant, and the rooms.

Also, Modern City Hotel can adopt the use of new technologies such as wireless internet services to guests, top security doors that may need beyond the normal key system to access a room couple with surveillance cameras to avoid issues of theft in guest rooms. This would ensure security to guests while in their rooms and even while they are out of their rooms. Modern security cameras can also be used to monitor the corridors to guest rooms and restaurants and even the reception to ensure transparency in hotel staff-

customer transactions. This would help instill confidence and trust in customers for repeated visits.

Furthermore, management of Modern City Hotel must find ways to interact with customers, try to have a better understanding of their needs and expectations through customer surveys, evaluation of customer complaints and other related issues. Compliments and complaints must be disseminated among the staff to make them fully aware of the merits and problems concerning their encounters with customers. This form of information exchange would provide the platform for customers to share their experience and would also bridge the information gap between customers and service providers that make it difficult to provide customers with their specific needs.

Management should ensure that they develop an online reservation system. The electronic medium is less expensive as compared to the traditional way of bookings. This could serve as a form of yield management that will help the company to maximize their benefits and minimize cost. Reservation points could also be created at Inter-City Bus Terminals and airports to help customers book for their lodging ahead of time while management makes necessary provisions to ensure successful service delivery.

Another area of concern is the use of professionals. The hotel must select and recruit competent and skilled staff that will be capable of handling the numerous challenges that confront customers on daily basis. A special orientation should be given to the staff to equip them with the relevant issues concerning service quality. The staff should also be encouraged to share their problem solving skills with regards to service

encounters they have had with customers among themselves. This would help avoid repeated service failures.

So as to ensure individual customer based service delivery, the hotel should do away with standardizations in its operations and focus on each customer's needs in a particular encounter. This would allow management and staff to better understand specific customer needs and to tailor their efforts towards delivering just the desire of the customer. Also, the culture of the hotel should also be geared towards ensuring effectiveness in their operations. Furthermore, there should be a performance appraisal system in place that will see to it that performance data is collected on a regular basis and monitored for efficient change implementation.

Lastly, management of the hotel ought to ensure that there is significant investment in infrastructure and service delivery systems. Again information sharing should be encouraged among the players in the industry concerning their customers and harmonious service schedules. This move will enhance productivity and also help the players in the industry to be adaptable to environmental changes or threats and be strengthened towards effective customer management.

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APPENDIX A

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GUESTS OF MODERN CITY HOTEL, TAMALE

This Questionnaire seeks to solicit views on the topic Quality Customer Service Delivery in the Hospitality Industry of Ghana: The Case of Modern City Hotel in Tamale, from guests of Modern City Hotel at Tamale. This is purely for academic work in partial fulfillment of the award of the Master Technology Education (M-Tech) Degree. You are kindly request to provide responses to the questions to enable the researcher contribute to knowledge in the field of study. All information given will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your response would be highly appreciated for the success of the research. Thank you for your co-operation. Please tick the appropriate answer.

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

1. Gender: i). Male [] ii). Female []
2. Age in years: i). Under 20 [] ii) 21-30 [] iii). 31-40 [] iv). 41-50 [] v) 51+ []
3. Level of education: i) Basic [] ii). Sec/Tech/Voc [] iii) Post Sec []
iv). Tertiary [] v). Postgraduate []
4. Occupation i). Civil/Public Servant [] ii). Self-employed []
iii) Retired [] iv). Unemployed [] v). Student []
5. Nationality i) Ghanaian [] ii). Non Ghanaian []
6. Purpose of Travel i). Business [] ii) Tourism []
iii) Visiting friends/Relatives [] iv). Others (Specify) _____

SECTION B: Customer Expectations of Service Quality

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement, as they apply to your **Expectations** of Modern City Hotel.

Note that 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strongly Agree

EXPECTATIONS					
	Tangibles	1	2	3	4
1.	Excellent hotels will have modern looking equipment				
2.	The physical facilities at excellent hotels will be visually appealing				
3.	Personnel at excellent hotels will be neat in appearance				
4.	Materials associated with service in excellent hotels will be neat in appearance				
Reliability					
5.	When excellent hotels promise to do something at a certain time they do it				
6.	When a client has a problem excellent hotels will show a sincere interest to solve it				
7.	Excellent hotels will get things right the first time				
8.	Excellent hotels will provide their services at the time they promise to				
9.	Excellent hotels will insist on error free records				
Responsiveness					
10.	Personnel in excellent hotels will tell customers exactly when services will be performed				
11.	Personnel at excellent hotels will provide prompt services to customers				
12.	Personnel in excellent hotels will always be willing to help customers				
13.	Personnel in excellent hotels will never be too busy to respond to customers' requests				
Assurance					
14.	The behaviour of personnel in excellent hotels will instil confidence in customers				
15.	Customers of excellent hotels will feel safe in their dealings with the hotel				
16.	Personnel in excellent hotels will be consistently courteous with customers				
17.	Personnel in excellent hotels will have the knowledge to answer customers questions				
Empathy					
18.	Excellent hotels will give customers individual attention				
19.	Excellent hotels will have operating hours convenient to all customers				
20.	Excellent hotels will have staff who give customers personal attention				
21.	Excellent hotels will have customers interest at heart				
22.	Excellent hotels will understand the specific needs of their customers				

SECTION C: Level of Perceptions of Service Quality

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement, as they apply to your **Perceptions** of the Modern City Hotel

Note that 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strongly Agree

No	PERCEPTIONS	1	2	3	4
	Tangibles				
23.	This hotel has modern looking equipment				
24.	This hotel has physical facilities that are visually appealing				
25.	Personnel at this hotel are neat in appearance				
26.	Materials associated with service in this hotel are neat in appearance				
	Reliability				
27.	When this hotel promises to do something at a certain time they do it				
28.	When a client has a problem this hotel shows a sincere interest to solve it				
29.	This hotel gets things right the first time				
30.	This hotel provides their services at the time it promises to				
31.	This hotel insists on error free records				
	Responsiveness				
32.	Personnel in this hotel tell customers exactly when services will be performed				
33.	Personnel at this hotel provide prompt services to customers				
34.	Personnel in this hotel are always be willing to help customers				
35.	Personnel in this hotel are never be too busy to respond to customers' requests				
	Assurance				
36.	The behaviour of personnel in this hotel instils confidence in customers				
37.	Customers in this hotel feel safe in their dealings with the hotel				
38.	Personnel in this hotel are consistently courteous with customers				
39.	Personnel in this hotel have the knowledge to answer customers questions				
	Empathy				
40.	This hotel gives customers individual attention				
41.	This hotel has operating hours that are convenient to all customers				
42.	This hotel has staff who give customers personal attention				
43.	This hotel has customers interest at heart				
44.	This hotel understands the specific needs of the customers				

Thank you for your time and May God Richly Bless you