
FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN PORT HARCOURT QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS: THE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT ROLE

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ABSTRACT:

Customer satisfaction ought to be the main thrust of business; thereby placing a challenging role on the operations management thereof. This was highlighted in this study which sought to establish the the relationship between food service delivery and customer satisfaction of quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt. Food service delivery was dimensioned by service quality and affordable price; while customer satisfaction was measured with repeat visit and customer retention. It was hypothesized that the dimensions of food service delivery do not relate significantly with the measures of customer satisfaction. The study sample comprised 161 customers of 50 quick service restaurants in Port Harcourt. Mean and standard deviation techniques were used to analyze the responses which showed acceptable levels for each of the variables and their item scales. Four hypotheses were tested with the Pearson's product moment correlation technique at 95% confidence level. The result indicated strong and direct correlations between the dimensions of food service delivery and measures of customer service. Consequently, it was concluded that food service delivery significantly relates to customer satisfaction. This had implications for both theory and practice in the sense that it lent credence to the disconfirmation theory; and highlighted the need for operations managers to ensure that customer satisfaction is of utmost

importance to them. The study recommended that the management of operations in these firms should improve on the quality of service they render by training and motivating staff to render quality services tailored towards customer satisfaction. They should equally adopt affordable price structure that motivate customers and enhance better satisfaction in them.

KEYWORDS: Affordable Price, Customer Retention, Repeat Visit, Service Quality

INTRODUCTION:

The aim of every successful business is to sustain extraordinary level of customer satisfaction (CS) by providing their customers with value added transaction through positive customer interaction. This is because CS is regarded as the "bedrock" of success attainment for businesses in the service industry. Leon and Lestlie. (2000) noted that customer's anticipation is to feel central and aided during the exchanges that ultimately lead to satisfaction of their desire and positive end result. Employees in the service industry, are often trained to know the basic elements of offering quality customer service; underscoring the role of operations managers. They are taught to listen, to be patient, tolerant and above all helpful. Operations managers of organization, especially fast foods establishments popularly known as quick service restaurants (QSRs)

knowing that 'customers are kings' should often monitor their employees to ensure they abide by and apply all the rules of customer service practices. Human beings and animals rely on food for their physiological desires to live. The absence of needed food nutrients in the body would result to illnesses as well as untimely death. According to Vlisides (2000) food is imperative not only for its nourishing worth, but likewise for its social implication, like sacrifices, reputation as well as expression of companionship. Restaurant is a vital food providing unit that is located in the nooks and crannies of our society for the provision of already made food for the growing consuming public. They are remarkable for the preparation and serving of food, drinks as well as dessert to desired customers. Meals are usually served as well as eaten in the premises. Nevertheless, several restaurants equally offer take-away and home delivery services. Restaurants differ greatly in look and offerings, along with a comprehensive assortment of cuisines and service models. In a bid to satisfying their customers, restaurants had likewise gone beyond just food production, to value added services such as games, fun, music, as well as other forms of entertainments. Measures like spotlessness, decent approach to service, advertisement, strategic location and accessibility, resourcefulness by the use of indigenous materials are all done to attract consumers due to the competitive nature of the industry. People are gripped to restaurant services for numerous motives, some of these motives are, for quick services, variety of food provision, time saving, social outing, as well as to meet or make new friends. A number of such restaurants popularly known as fast food centers (FFCs) or quick service restaurants (QSRs) can be found in Port Harcourt metropolis, such as Kilimanjaro fast food, Genesis fast food, Port Harcourt Spar, etc. The above mentioned restaurants are the few main

leading restaurants in Rivers State from which people buy food and drinks (tripadvisors, 2018). Some of these FFCs are more popular and more expensive than some hotels in the state. It is rather worrisome that there is no existing research report that has evaluated the extent to which the service delivery at these FFCs have influenced CS since it came into existence in Rivers State. Several studies have established links between restaurants' attributes and CS. According to the finding of those studies, food quality, service, the atmosphere in addition to price are the factors that affect CS.

The problem is that inspite of these efforts and previous researches, customer satisfaction (CS) has continued to pose a daunting challenge to QSR operations managers; probably due to the growing sophistication of today's customers. The sector has witnessed several cases of customer dissatisfaction with the quality of service delivered. In extreme cases, this has led to massive loss of customers and closing down of QSR outlets or eventual liquidation of QSR brands. A typical example is the case of "Mr Biggs" that was all over the place (at major junctions, centers, corners and bus stops) in Port Harcourt in the recent past; but is scarcely seen anywhere today because most of her outlets have either been closed down or taken over by other competing brands. Though the reason for this development has not been made public, it is generally believed to be associated with unmet service delivery expectations, ineffectiveness and inefficiency in operations. Same can be said of other formerly popular QSRs but are nowhere to be reckoned with in today's Port Harcourt hospitality business. It should be noted that when customers' expectations are not met, service providers are likely to lose customers; and no QSR manager wants to lose even the list of her customers. This places the responsibility of ensuring that service delivery meets customer expectations on operations managers of QSRs.

Previous scholars who examined this subject matter approached it from the traditional perspective of using 'service quality' alone, with the associated dimensions (Parasuraman et al, 1988) to predict CS outcomes. This approach has not yielded the desired result. Other studies on food quality have arisen as the utmost key predictor of CS (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Peri, 2006; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). For instance, Namkung and Jang (2007) cited in Lim (2010) examined the virtual factors that constitute food service quality as follows: presentation, health option, taste, freshness, variety and temperature. This underscores the importance of including other dimensions to the traditional service quality model in the prediction of CS. Moreover, the few studies that attempted to link food service delivery to CS, did not capture eateries and restaurants in Rivers State as their scope. This has created a lacunal situation necessitating this study which aimed at establishing the link between food service delivery (FSD) and customer satisfaction (CS) as viewed from the role of operations management. Specifically, the study dimensioned FSD by 'service quality' and 'affordable price' while CS was measured with 'repeat visit' and 'customer retention'. This gave rise to four objectives and four research hypotheses as depicted in the conceptual model of figure 1.

Source: Researchers' conceptualization, based on dimensions of FSD adapted from Kim et al., (1998) and measures of CS adopted from Zeithaml et al. (1982).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Theoretical Foundation:

The disconfirmation theory was adopted as the foundational theory of this study. Its origin can be traced to the early works of Spreng et al (1996); Zeithml (1988); Zeithml & Berry (1988); McKinney et al (2002). The theory posits that customer satisfaction can be established through the observed difference between perceived performance and such cognitive standards as expectation and desires (Khalifa & Liu, 2003). Specifically, it states that the gap between expectations and perceived performance is what defines performance. This gap which is otherwise known as disconfirmation can be positive or negative; and depending on its intensity, is what determines a customer's level of satisfaction. Usually, three outcomes are possible which are confirmation, positive disconfirmation and negative disconfirmation. Confirmation is when perceived performance conforms to standard i.e. expectation is met; and customer's feeling is neutral. Positive disconfirmation occurs when perceived performance conforms to standard and actually exceeds expectation; leading to a feeling of satisfaction in the customer. However, negative disconfirmation is when performance is below standard and expectation is not met; leading to a feeling of dissatisfaction in the customer. This theory is apt for explaining the nexus between service delivery and customer satisfaction in that customers of QSRs have service expectations; and it is only natural for them to evaluate their service experience based on their performance expectations (McKinney et al., 2002, Spreng et al., 1996). The outcome of this comparison triggers the disconfirmation effect with any of the three options playing out.

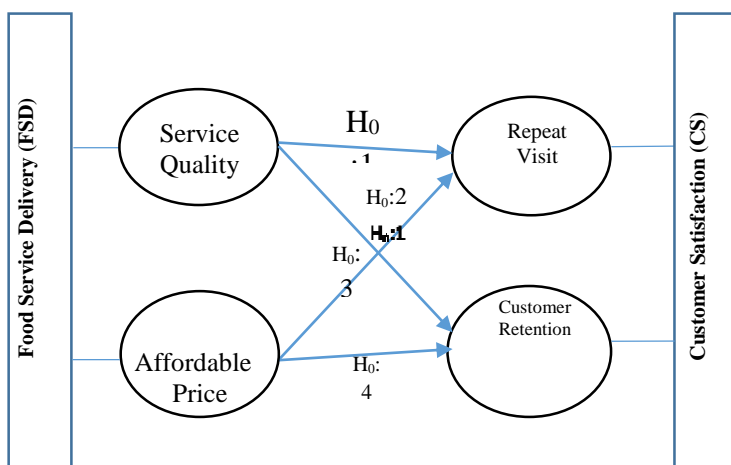


Figure 1: Perceived Relationship between Food Service Delivery and Customer Satisfaction

Usually, confirmation and positive disconfirmation outcomes will most likely lead engender customer satisfaction; especially, in terms of repeat visit and customer retention. While a negative disconfirmation will most likely lead to customer dissatisfaction.

Concept of Food Service Delivery:

Restaurant businesses are seen now as one of the fastest growing sectors within the food service industry in Nigeria. A chunk of unusual restaurants growing all over the place using strategic point of shop lots, housing domains, heritage bungalows, near popular nightspots and even abandoned buildings (Nadzri, 2005). The changes in consumers taste, eating out habits as well as multi-culture styles of ethnic cuisines set by a splendid blend of foods probably is the cause of this boom. From this, the choices of restaurants are becoming unlimited either for upscale, medium scale restaurants, café, coffee shop to hawker stalls and pushcarts. Restaurants in Nigeria are made up of many strata and they are well accepted as most of these restaurants incorporate local cuisines to meet the desires of their customers (Nadzri, 2005). A good number of these restaurants nowadays involve themselves in numerous things in a bid to keep up with changing trends as well as satisfy customers' wide-ranging tastes. Nigerian restaurants are broadening their horizons by combining flavors, traditional meals and tastes to suit different customer tastes. The mentioned scenario has left indigenous QSRs competing with each other in a bid to attract customers. Nevertheless, Kilimanjaro and Genesis are the leading QSRs in Rivers State and are seen to be fully packed with customers most of the time (breakfast, lunch and dinner) when compared to other local restaurants which only have large customers at one meal period (Euromonitor, 2004). Most of the restaurants with a few exceptions are reported to have attracted customers at the

commencement of their business activities, nevertheless were unable to maintain them after a few years due to bad service (Euromonitor, 2004). Based on the literature from other parts of the world, many migrant ethnic restaurants are criticized for providing inconsistent or poor service delivery to their customers in comparison to other types of restaurants (Josium & Monteiro, 2004; Verbeke & Lopex, 2005). Pang (2002) for illustration, stated that the encouraging recognition of Chinese restaurants in Belgium has been stained by poor service provision from the owners of the restaurants. Verbeke and Lopez (2005) argued that ethnic restaurants in that country are continuing to develop rapidly but are still having problems in terms of service, mostly in waiting times for food to be distributed to the customers. The same situation has happened in Germany where customers of Chinese restaurants desire not just good food but expect effective service in delivering the food (Leung, 2002). Nonetheless, there has been very narrow examination of the link between service delivery attributes given by the provider. In other words, the extent to which customers are impacted by the service delivery attributes, as well as how those insights sway their tendency to patronize such restaurants have not yet been extensively researched.

Dimensions of Food Service Delivery:

Service Quality:

It is important to understand that because there are several restaurant choices available, patrons will not vacillate to leave one for another if they fail to offer quality service (Lim, 2010). It was further asserted by Lim that perceived quality service is an issue of the restaurants knowing their customers, handling their employees to meet the desires of these customers, as well as conveying to customers what was promised. Parasuraman et al (1988)

described perceived quality service as the general excellence or preeminence of the service built on customers' judgment. They maintained that the description is frequently subjective, as it is built on a comparison of the person's anticipations as well as perceived performance. Against the background of subjectivity in evaluation, Parasuraman et al (1988) established the "SERQUAL" instrument. This instrument measures the gap between service expectation of customers and actual service perceived. The instrument consist of five service dimensions as follows: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy as well as tangibility. Measuring element of responsibility and reliability are speed, willingness to respond, accuracy and dependability. Assurance is seen as a worker's awareness as well as consciousness of other workers and their capacities to offer faith and confidence. Empathy implies caring as well as giving attention to individual customers; while tangibility includes the physical appearance of the amenities, apparatus, peoples and materials used to communicate with customers. Quality customer service delivery is the ideal front line greeter as well as hand shakers at the basic of all businesses. The customers are kept satisfied as well as happy since a business devoid of healthy customers cannot survive. A good experience of quality service from any restaurant implies a happy customer; and a happy customer is the best asset of every business. Use of quality by customers as one of the utmost important parameters to evaluate the quality of service provided to customers in QSRs in Rivers State is relatively common (Alex & Berry, 1988).

Therefore, it is one of the most important gateways that those in fast food establishments have adopted to achieve the satisfaction of their customers. This gives these food and beverage businesses a competitive satisfaction and the ability to continue and survive; thus making profits (Allen et al., 1998). On their part, Alex

and Berry (1998) posited that quality is a long term commitment by business institutions offering services to placate the desires as well as yearning of their customers continuously and that obligation falls on both the operations management of the businesses and their workers. To attain these desires and yearnings, it is imperative for the management to attain high level of quality service in the variety of economic benefits (Allen et al., 1998).

Affordable Price:

The price of a merchandise is extremely linked to its perceived worth (Lim, 2010). Chen et al (1994) expressed perceived price as the customer's acceptable, rational and fair judgment about service's average price in contrast to its competitors. Lim observed that customers are most likely to come back again and again if price is perceived to be rational. On the contrary, they will complain and finally defect to other restaurants if they perceive the price not to be fair. Abdullah and Rozario (2009) had likewise explicated in detail, the structure used to elucidate the determinants of customer satisfaction. Affordability is one of the crucial elements in getting the customer satisfied. Price tends to play an important role in the functioning of economic system. Giving discount and bonus on purchasing will attract customers towards the products. Customers can also be made loyal by satisfaction dependent pricing systems and money back guarantees in case of dissatisfaction. In this case, special contracts and standard customers pay different prices, which are graded according to purchase quantity. A potential customer, who is granted better conditions with the growing length of the business relationship or with increased purchase quantity, will carefully consider whether they will choose another supplier, and thereby pay with this benefit.

On the other hand, possibility consists of contracts that vary in the level of basic amounts

and in price per unit (Rowley, 2006). According to Shemwell (2001), affordability of service and product of these restaurants goes a long way in getting the customer satisfied because in most cases, customers pay more than the value they get and this has discouraged many people who intend to purchase their products. Price is an all important factor in customer satisfaction in restaurants in Rivers State because most of the customers deliberate on the price of the products before purchasing them. According to the different researches, price of any product can build up and put down the standard of the restaurant (Turel et al., 2006). Affordability plays a crucial role in the satisfaction of customers because the charges of the product directly affect the customer, so if it is affordable, customers will be satisfied and willing to purchase the product again in the future (Gustafsson et al, 2005).

Concept of Customer Satisfaction:

Customer satisfaction (CS) is seen to be one of the utmost important outcomes of all marketing activities in a market-oriented firm. The understandable desire for satisfying the business's customer is to enlarge the business, to achieve an upper market share, as well as to acquire referral business all of which lead to enhanced profitability (Barsky, 1992). The services-marketing literature suggests that satisfied customers purchase more each time they visit and purchase more often. The satisfied customers also refer their families and friends. The link between sales, service, satisfaction, and profits is direct. The more customers are satisfied, the more they spend (Gerson,1995). The more customers spend, the more is sold; and usually, when more is sold, profits are greater (Gerson, 1993). In addition, satisfied customers are less likely to seek the lowest prices the cost of selling to them is much less than the cost of capturing new customers from the competition. Happy customers are the

cheapest and most effective form of advertising. Conversely, a disappointed customer not only takes their business elsewhere, but most likely tells several others about the experience too. While it may take many positive encounters to create customer loyalty, it usually takes only two negative encounters to make an enemy for life (Hill & Alexander, 2000). Thus investment in customer satisfaction does bring improvements in profitability. Moreover, CS has been used to refer to the satisfaction with an individual consumption experience or service encounter (Bitner. Booms & Tetreault, 1990; Oliver & Swan, 1989). It has also been described as a summary evaluation of a customer's overall experience with an organization or its products (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Several studies have found empirical indication to back the concept that satisfaction or contentment is, if not, the foremost factor in deciding customer loyalty (Bolton, 1994; Rust & Zahorik, 1993). Other studies have associated customer satisfaction to repurchase purposes (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Oliver, 1980). However, as Anderson and Fornell (1994) point out, it is not well understood how predictive repurchase intentions are of actual purchase behavior, nevertheless, a satisfied customer is likely to repurchase the product/service simply because it minimizes risk associated with an unknown product offering. The customer's overall satisfaction is a function of all the encounters/experiences of the customer with that organization. Similar to service quality, CS can occur at multiple levels in an organization.

Measures of Customer Satisfaction:

Repeat visit:

Studies about customer's satisfaction have for a longtime been one of the thrust areas of service marketing research. Repeat visitation is the most commonly employed intentional behavioral measure, in addition to the willingness to recommend visit or its

component to others the satisfaction derived from initial or previous visit (Hepworth & Mateus, 1994). However, repeat visits as overt behavior may be influenced by economic and temporal factors. It may reveal little out of the intrinsic value such as ability of the QSR outlets to satisfy the guest and also contributing to the complex model of repurchase behavior. Different factors such as age, income occupation, time, cost, distance, risk, and not the least, the availability of complementary products and persuasive persuasion of the media are influencing the hospitality industry on the kind of service and product to offer; and these are becoming more and more significant in shaping customers' choice in choosing a type of restaurant for their meal more than ever before (Butz & Goodstein, 1996). Guests ability to revisit a hotel is not because of the sense that it is not an undistinguishable place but a place capable of satisfying a certain set of hospitality needs; functional or utilitarian, identity or emotive, contextual or situational (Fishwick & Vining, 1989). Repeat visit of a guest depends on the satisfaction he/she derives from the stay in a particular QSR.

Customer Retention:

Customer retention has been described in divers ways. Such definitions often explicate the length as well as breadth of the subject area, thus adding worth to the understanding of the nature of the field in totality. In Peelen's (2005) view, customer retention in marketing implies keeping on to customers. If a business is conscious on time of those customers who exhibit sign or probability of ending the relationship, then it can take action to avert it. Customer retention is a system of undertakings for improving the transaction process based on the positive positioning of the customer, and the consequential readiness for successive purchasing. Retention strategies work best when company retention level is high because

only a small 5 percent increase in retention can increase company success to over 85%. Retention approaches are lucrative not only because of augmented revenue from dependable customers but likewise, because of lessened costs of serving long – time customers. The possibility can be constrained (Bliemel, 1998). Loyalty of customers is voluntary commitment, that customer have the opportunities to change the company anytime. Customer's economic and emotional reasons should be taken into consideration. Customer satisfaction is more important and has to be given highest priority in emotional reasons, because customer will only remain loyal under a company's existing conditions, if they are so satisfied with the company that they do not want to change.

Relationship between Food Service Delivery and Customer Satisfaction:

A study on the influence of food quality on patronage of QSRs in Port Harcourt was carried out by Nwokah and Nne (2018). The study population comprised 10,000 customers of enumerated as well as functioning QSRs in Port Harcourt, Rivers State; sample size was 370 customers of the restaurants which was decided by the use of the Krejice and Morgan (1970) table. Furthermore, 372 copies of structured questionnaire were dispersed to customers at the separate waiting lounges and galleries of the restaurants; while 330 were recovered, prepared as well as used for the study. Data analysis method used were descriptive statistics and Spearman Rank Correlation Technique. Descriptive statistics was for the purpose of analyzing the respondent's bio-data whereas the Spearman Rank Correlation Technique was for the testing of postulated hypotheses. The analysis revealed that food quality significantly related to patronage of QSRs; and it was concluded that patronage of QSRs in Port Harcourt is significantly influenced

by food quality. The investigators thus recommended that the management of QSRs ought to frequently advance on their food quality in order to increase their level of customer patronage. Relatedly, the effect of the quality of service delivery on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian banks was investigated by Farayibi (2016). Ordinary Least Square (OLS) analysis technique was applied. It was established by the study that there is a correlation between better banks performance in service delivery and customer satisfaction via efficient customer relationship management (CRM). Results indicated that increase in the number of working days as well as number of bank outlets led to higher levels of CS. Empirical results indicated that rise in profit margin is a function of better-quality level of CS while number of bank outlets has an encouraging outlook yet inconsequential link with CS since the spread of branch networks or channels has better effects on CS than number of banks. It equally stressed the role played by of the number of working days in attaining improved bank services and profitable management of customer relationship. It was therefore recommended that the banking industry in Nigerian should improve on the quality of service they deliver since it is a precondition for attaining higher levels of CS.

On their part, Kukoyi and Iwuagwu (2015) carried out a study on the link between service delivery and CS at the Divine Fountain Hotels Limited in Lagos Nigeria. Questionnaire and crucial informant interview method were used to gather relevant data. Convenience sampling technique was applied in choosing 400 respondents comprising 50 females and 50 males from the respective four outlets of the hotel. Hence, 100 copies of the questionnaire were disseminated in the respective 4 branches of the hotel, summing up to 400 copies. Using the systematic sampling technique, the questionnaire was administered to all 3rd guest

that lodged at the respective branches of the hotel during their check-out time for two weeks. The data so generated were analyzed by the use percentages, frequency and charts. Results disclosed that the hotel provides assortment of customer centric services that are satisfactory to their customers; and this has assisted the hotel in retaining loyal customers over a long period of time. It was concluded that, the examined variables (service delivery and CS) relate significantly and are capable of predicting growth, improvement in quality of service provided as well as increased patronage and revenue generation in the studied hotel. Similarly, Kiin-Kabari, Oshinowo and Ebere (2015) investigated food service quality (FSQ) in selected hotels/restaurants in Port Harcourt municipality. The study focused on customers' perception and expectation of the FSQ in the selected QSRs and hotel restaurants using the 5 dimensions of service quality (responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangible as well as reliability). Copies of the study's instrument were distributed to the customers during lunch hour and dinner time for 2 weeks. The data generated were analyzed via the use of descriptive statistics. It was discovered that the customers of hotel restaurants were satisfied with the service while QSR customers desire busy environment and were not satisfied with the food quality, service delivery and atmosphere.

Service Quality and Repeat Visit:

Restaurant businesses have been challenged to increase their levels of quality and service, improve their product design, so as increase customer repeat visit. Dipeolu, Adewuyi, Ayinla and Bakere (2014) evaluated the elements upsetting quality of services and their effect on the satisfaction of customers at designated QSRs. The study used a sample of 147 customers drawn from 7 QSRs via the multistage random sampling techniques. The

instrument that measured the satisfaction level of the respondents was based on five point Likert scale while respective respondent's satisfaction level was then evaluated by customer satisfaction index (CSI). Data analyses were performed by a mixture of descriptive methods and OLS regression techniques. The findings indicated that CS of the QSRs in terms of repeat visit and repurchase intention increased significantly with increase in quality of service. This implies that when QSRs improve on the quality of services they render, there would be a significant improvement in the revisit intention of customers. In support of this, Oladosu (2014) used his study to note that service quality related significantly and positively with CS, repeat visit and customer retention of QSRs in Nigeria. On the contrary however, Oludare and Olufemi (2015) established that service quality has an insignificant effect on repeat visit of QSRs in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Based on these, hypothesis one was proposed thus:

H₀:1 Service quality does not relate significantly with repeat visit.

Service Quality and Customer Retention:

One of the factors customers reflect on before buying a product is quality. Hence, the role of service quality in customer retention is quite significant (Heizer & Render, 2009). Osaiga and Onowe (2014) carried out a comparative investigation of the perception of customers on the service quality of 200 restaurants and 200 interstate transport sub-sector customers. The study determined the perception of customers on service quality in the restaurant and transport industry with a view to ascertaining if there is significant difference between the two sub-sectors in terms of factors that cause customer dissatisfaction. The result indicated that customers of the two service sub-sectors are equitably satisfied with

a significant difference in the services they offer. The findings equally specified that service quality is one of the factors that is responsible for customer retention. In furtherance, Oladosu (2014) instituted that service quality has significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction, repeat visit and customer retention of fast food business in Nigeria. Contrariwise, Teresko (2004) stated that service quality relates insignificantly with customer retention in Egyptian QSR business. Due to these conflicting reports, this study hypothesized that:

H₀:2 Service quality does not relate significantly with customer retention.

Affordable Price and Repeat Visit:

In today's business environment, customers will probably come back again and again if price is seen to be fair. In the same vein, if they observe that the price is not fair, they will nit-pick and eventually defect to other restaurants. Giving discount and bonus on purchasing will attract customer towards the products and this will increase the possibility of repeat visit. According to Shemwell (2001), affordable price of service and product goes a long way in getting the customer satisfied and making a repeat purchase because in most cases, customers pay more than value they get and this has discouraged many customers' who might intend to purchase the products in the future. Tijani, Okunola and Orga (2014) evaluated the customer satisfaction and visit in chosen Hotels in Ikeja Area of Lagos. Random sampling method was used to choose 10 hotels from 27 hotels enumerated as well as documented by Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) in the zones. A well-structured questionnaire was used to obtain essential data for analysis. Results indicated that the hotels in the study area were not satisfying their customers because the perception of the hoteliers in terms of quality service differed

markedly from the guests' expectation. Furthermore, high prices for services offered frustrate customers' repeat visit. Muhammad, Fadi and Osman (2014) in the same vein stated that affordable price is good determinant of repeat visit and customer retention. Contrarily, Moses and John (2015) stated that affordable price might not necessarily lead to repeat visit as there are other factors such as quality of the product, worker-customer relationship, etc. that could influence repeat visit. In consideration of these differing reports, this study proposed the hypothesis that:

H₀:3 Affordable price does not relate significantly with repeat visit.

Affordable Price and Customer Retention:

Affordable price is one of the crucial elements in getting the customer satisfied and retained. Price tends to play an important role in the effective running of an organization and in the retention of customers. Customers can also be made loyal by satisfaction dependent pricing systems. Consequently, Considering the differing opinions, this study proposed the hypothesis that:

H₀:4 Affordable price does not relate significantly with customer retention.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive research under the quasi-experimental research design which is most appropriate for administrative and social sciences research. This research design was used because the researcher has no control over study variables, subjects and study setting. The target population consists of QSRs in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the population of this study comprised 50 registered QSRs in Port Harcourt as obtained from Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA). The targeted

population comprises customers of the 50 QSRs. Since this is an infinite population, the Cochran's (1977) formula for sample size determination in an unknown population was used to determine the number of customers to be sampled. The Cochran's formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2(pq)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size sought

z = standard deviation for the desired confidence value

p = probability of the sample possessing the desired attributes

q = probability of the sample not possessing the desired attributes (i.e. 1- p)

e = level of significance.

So, when

p = 0.881, q = 0.119, z = 1.96, e = 0.05

n = [(1.96² x 0.881 x 0.119) / 0.05²] = 161.

Hence, the sample size for the study was 161 customers of the 50 QSRs; with each of them getting at least 3 copies while 11 of the QSRs got 4 copies each. The convenience sampling technique was employed in sampling the customers of the selected QSRs. To generate data for the study, an instrument titled '**Food Service Delivery and Customer Satisfaction**' was designed by the researchers. It had two sections; with the first section focusing on the demographics of the respondents; while the second section focused of the main variables of the study which are 'Service Quality' and 'Affordable Price' for the independent variable – FSD as well as 'Repeat Visit' and 'Customer Retention' for the dependent variable – CS. The instrument's validity was ascertained through expert review while reliability was established through the Cronbach alpha test which reported scores that exceeded the 0.6 benchmark (Nunnally, 1979) for exploratory analysis

(Service Quality – 0.79, Affordable Price – 0.81, Repeat Visit – 0.78, Customer Retention. – 0.83). Frequency and percentages were used to analyze the demographic data; while mean and standard deviation were used for analyzing the responses of the respondents. To test the hypotheses, the Pearson’s product moment correlation technique was utilized at the 95% confidence level. In order to operationalize the study variables, each of them were measured with at least four items on a 5-point modified Likert scale ranging from 1- 5; measured as follows: Undecided – 1, Strongly Disagree – 2, Disagree – 3, Agree – 4 and Strongly Agree – 5. Some of the questions used to operationalize the variables have been shown in table1.

Table 1: Operational Measures of the Study Variables

S/N	Variable	Operational Questions
1.	Service Quality	This restaurant offers what they promise to offer. I receive prompt, timely and accurate services from this restaurant. This restaurant has a team of knowledgeable and courteous staff. The facilities at this restaurant are quite superb and their staff look quite smart. The staff of this restaurant give personal attention to customers that so desire.
2.	Affordable Price	The prices of goods and services at this restaurant are moderate and relatively cheap. Their prices accommodate low budgets. This restaurant has a price plan that suits everyone. I like the prices of goods and services at this restaurant.
3	Repeat Visit	I usually revisit this restaurant because of the quality service I get I like revisiting this restaurant because their price is affordable.

		When I think of visiting a restaurant, this restaurant comes to my mind. If I have my way, I will always revisit this restaurant.
4.	Customer Retention	I prefer this restaurant to others that I have visited. I like to be retained as a customer to this restaurant. This restaurant can count on me as regular customer. I will always choose this restaurant.

Source: Study Instrument, 2018

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

Out of the 161 copies of distributed questionnaire, 139 copies which amounted to about 86% were completely retrieved while 22 copies representing about 14% were not retrieved. Out of the 139 retrieved copies, 126 copies were accurately completed; representing an accurate response rate of about 78%, while the remaining 13 copies which amounted to 22% of the instrument were inaccurately completed and consequently not used in the analysis. These 126 copies contributed the data for this study and formed the basis for the analyses. Details of the demographic data analysis as well as the responses to questions and hypotheses testing have been set out below.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	54	42.9	42.9	42.9
Valid Female	72	57.1	57.1	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

The table 2 shows the gender distribution of the customers. Out of the 126 respondents, fifty-four which amounted to 42.9% are males while seventy-two which amounted to 57.1% are females.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	64	50.8	50.8	50.8
Valid Married	62	49.2	49.2	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 3 shows that 64 representing 50.8% of the respondents are singles, while 62 representing 49.2% are married. Thus, a slightly greater number of managers in selected QSRs in Port Harcourt are single.

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
H.N.D	55	43.7	43.7	43.7
Bachelor Degree	48	38.1	38.1	81.8
Valid Master Degree	23	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

The table 4 shows the academic qualification of the respondents. Out of the total number of 126 respondents, 55 of them representing 43.7% have Higher National Diploma, 48 of them representing 38.1% have Bachelor's degree while the remaining 23 representing 18.2% have Masters' degree.

Table 5: Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18 - 27 years	44	34.9	34.9	34.9
28 - 37 years	38	30.2	30.2	65.1
Valid 38 - 47 years	28	22.2	22.2	87.3
48 years and above	16	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 5 shows the age of the respondents. 44 (34.9%) of the respondents are within age group of 18-27 years, 38 (30.2%) of the respondents are within the age group of 28-37 years, 28 (22.2) of them are within the age group of 38-47 years while 16 (12.7%) of them are within the age group of 48 years and above.

Table 6: Descriptive Analysis of Service Quality

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Service quality	126	1.00	5.00	4.02	1.01
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 6 shows the descriptive analysis result for service quality. For the purposes of the univariate analyses in this study, the classification of mean returns by Asawo (2009) was adopted as follows: 1.0 - 2.0 - low, 2.1 - 2.8 - moderate, 2.9 - 3.5 - high, 3.5 and above - very high. From the table, it could be seen that the minimum value is 1.00 and the maximum value is 5.00. The composite mean value is 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.01; and was adjudged to be very highly applicable since it is more than 3.5. This implies that service quality was returned by the respondents as very highly applicable.

Table 7: Descriptive Analysis of Items on Service Quality

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Service quality 1	126	2.00	5.00	4.13	1.07
Service quality 2	126	1.00	5.00	3.89	.96
Service quality 3	126	2.00	5.00	4.12	1.09
Service quality 4	126	1.00	5.00	3.97	.93
Service quality 5	126	2.00	5.00	4.01	1.03
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Data on table 7 showed the descriptive statistics of the responses to the five items on service quality. The table indicated that the mean values of the service quality items are 4.13, 3.89, 4.12, 3.97 and 4.01. Hence, all the items were returned as very highly applicable since their individual mean values were above 3.5.

Table 8: Descriptive Analysis of Affordable Price

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Affordable Price	126	1.00	5.00	3.79	1.12
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 8 shows the descriptive analysis result of affordable price. From the table, it could be seen that the minimum value is 1.00 and the maximum value is 5.00. The composite mean value is 3.79 with a standard deviation of 1.12. Since this value is more than 3.5, affordable price was accepted as very highly applicable based on the respondents' judgment.

Table 9: Descriptive Analysis of Items on Affordable Price

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Affordable Price 1	126	1.00	5.00	3.78	1.03
Affordable Price 2	126	1.00	5.00	3.91	1.21
Affordable Price 3	126	1.00	5.00	3.81	1.09
Affordable Price 4	126	1.00	5.00	3.67	1.33
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of the responses to the four items on affordable price. It indicated that the mean values of the items are 3.78, 3.91, 3.81 and 3.67. Since the individual mean values were above 3.5, all the items were accepted as very highly applicable.

Table 10: Descriptive Analysis of Repeat Visit

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Repeat Visit	126	2.00	5.00	4.04	1.03
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 10 shows the descriptive analysis result of repeat visit. It could be seen from the table that the minimum value is 2.00 and the maximum value is 5.00. The composite mean value is 4.04 with a standard deviation of 1.03. Based on this, repeat visit was accepted as very highly applicable since its value is more than 3.5.

Table 11: Descriptive Analysis of Items on Repeat Visit

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Repeat Visit 1	126	2.00	5.00	3.89	.93
Repeat Visit 2	126	2.00	5.00	3.95	.96
Repeat Visit 3	126	2.00	5.00	4.21	1.19
Repeat Visit 4	126	2.00	5.00	4.09	1.03
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 11 shows the descriptive analysis of the responses to the four items of repeat visit. From the table, it could be seen that the mean values of the items are 3.89, 3.95, 4.21 and 4.09. Since their individual mean values were above 3.5, all the items were accepted as very highly applicable.

Table 12: Descriptive Analysis of Customer Retention

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Customer Retention	126	1.50	5.00	3.75	1.03
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 12 shows the descriptive analysis result of customer retention. It could be seen from the table that the minimum value is 1.50 and the maximum value is 5.00. The aggregated mean value is 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.03. Based on this, customer retention was accepted as very highly applicable since its value is more than 3.5.

Table 13: Descriptive Analysis of Items on Customer Retention

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Customer Retention 1	126	1.00	5.00	3.93	.93
Customer Retention 2	126	2.00	5.00	3.85	.96
Customer Retention 3	126	2.00	5.00	3.71	1.19
Customer Retention 4	126	1.00	4.00	3.51	1.03
Valid N (listwise)	126				

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 13 shows the descriptive analysis of the responses to the four items of customer retention. From the table, it could be seen that the mean values of the items are 3.93, 3.85, 3.71 and 3.51. Since the individual mean values were above 3.5, all the items were accepted as very highly applicable.

Test of Hypotheses:

H₀1 Service quality does not relate significantly with repeat visit of QSRs in Port Harcourt.

Table 14: Correlations of Service Quality and Repeat Visit

		Service Quality	Repeat Visit
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
Repeat Visit	Pearson Correlation	.783**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

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

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

From table 14, it could be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between service quality and repeat visit is .783 and the probability value (p-value) of .000. Since the p-value is less the .05 level of significance and the correlation coefficient relatively high, hypothesis one was not supported. It was therefore stated that there is a significant and

strong degree of direct relationship between the two variables. This finding is consistent with the work of Dipeolu et al (2014) and Oladosu (2014) on service quality and repeat visit, which indicated that service quality significantly correlates with customer satisfaction, repeat visit and customer retention of fast food businesses in Nigeria. However, this finding is in disagreement with the finding of Oludare and Olufemi (2015). Which stated that service quality has an insignificant effect on repeat visit of fast food in Ile-Ife in Osun State.

H₀2 Service quality does not relate significantly with customer retention of QSRs in Port Harcourt.

Table 15: Correlations of Service Quality and Repeat Visit

		Service Quality	Customer Retention
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.746**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	126	126
Customer Retention	Pearson Correlation	.746**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	126	126

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

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

Table 15 shows that the correlation coefficient (r) between service quality and customer retention is .746 while the probability value (p-value) is .001. Since the p-value is less the .05 level of significance and the correlation coefficient relatively high, hypothesis two was not supported. It was therefore stated that there is a significant and strong direct relationship between the two variables. This finding agrees with that of Osaiga and Onowe (2014) as well as Oladosu (2014), who used their studies on service quality and customer retention to find that service quality relates significantly with

customer satisfaction, repeat visit and customer retention of fast food businesses in Nigeria. On the contrary, the finding disagreed with the result of Teresko (2004) who found that there is no significant link between service quality and customer retention in Egyptian fast food business.

H₀:3 Affordable price does not relate significantly with repeat visit of QSRs in Port Harcourt.

Table 16: Correlation of Affordable Price and Repeat Visit

	Affordable Price	Repeat Visit
Affordable Price		
Pearson Correlation	1.000	.623**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
N	126	126
Repeat Visit		
Pearson Correlation	.623**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
N	126	126

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

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018

From table 16, it could be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between affordable price and repeat visit is .623; while the probability value (p-value) is .007. Based on these results, hypothesis three was not supported because the p-value is less the .05 level of significance adopted for the study. Since the correlation coefficient is relatively high, it was therefore stated that there is a significant and strong direct correlation between the two variables. Support for this finding was found in the work of Shemwell (2001) who found that affordable price of service and product goes a long way to getting the customer satisfied and making a repeat purchase. Other supportive works include those of Tijani, Okunola and Orga

(2014) as well as Muhammad, Fadi and Osman (2014) which stated that affordable price is a good determinant of repeat visit and customer retention. Nevertheless, this finding disagreed with that of Moses and John (2015) which stated that affordable price might not necessarily lead to repeat visit as there are other factors quality of the product, worker-customer relationship, etc. that could influence repeat visit.

Table 17: Correlation of Affordable Price and Customer Retention

	Affordable Price	Customer Retention
Affordable Price		
Pearson Correlation	1.000	.640**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
N	126	126
Customer Retention		
Pearson Correlation	.640**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
N	126	126

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

Source: Survey Analysis Report, 2018.

Table 17 shows the correlation coefficient between affordable price and customer retention. From the table, it could be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) is .640; while the probability value (p-value) is .004. Based on these results, hypothesis four was not supported because the p-value is less the .05 level of significance adopted for the study. Since the correlation coefficient is relatively high, it was therefore stated that there is a significant and strong direct correlation between the two variables. The finding agreed with the apriori expectation and was supported by the works of Muhammad, Fadi and Osman (2014) which stated that affordable price is a good determinant of repeat visit and customer retention. Other supportive works include Jayaraman, Shankar and Hor (2010) as well as

Oladosu (2014). On the contrary however, this finding disagreed with that of Fogli (2006) who established that affordable price does not significantly relate to customer retention.

CONCLUSIONS:

The aim of this study was to ascertain the relationship between food service delivery (FSD) and customer satisfaction (CS) of quick service restaurants (QSRs) in Port Harcourt. FSD was dimensioned by service quality (SQ) and affordable price (AP); while CS was measured with repeat visit (RV) and customer retention (CR). The sample comprised 161 customers drawn from 50 QSRs in Port Harcourt. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the responses on the items of the variables, which showed acceptable levels for each of the variables and their item scales. The four hypotheses of the study were tested with the Pearson's product moment correlation technique at 95% confidence level. The result of the analyses indicated strong and direct correlations between the dimensions of FSD and measures of CS. As a result of these outcomes of the study, it was concluded that FSD is significantly related to CS of QSRs in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the following four major conclusions were made:

1. Service quality relates significantly and directly with repeat visit of QSRs in Port Harcourt.
2. Service quality relates significantly and directly with customer retention of QSRs in Port Harcourt.
3. Affordable price relates significantly and directly with repeat visit of QSRs in Port Harcourt.
4. Affordable price relates significantly and directly with customer retention of QSRs in Port Harcourt.

Implications of the Study:

The finding of the study indicated that food service delivery correlates significantly with customer satisfaction. The notion of the general quality implies excellence, clear standard and high performance. The theoretical implication of this is that customers form a particular perception about a service they want and when these services fall short of standard, they tend to be left disappointed and unsatisfied. This affirms the disconfirmation theory thereby giving credence to its continued application in the discourse of business operations and customer satisfaction. Managerially, the study has implications that are noteworthy. First, it has shown that hospitality establishments should seek to satisfy their customers as customer satisfaction is the holy grail of all business. However, they should beware of the extent to which they can achieve this as showcased by the hypothesized relationships of this study. The coefficient of determination (r^2) for the first hypothesis (i.e. $.783^2 = .6131$) implies the QSR operations managers wishing to achieve increased customer repeat visit via quality service delivery can accomplish that to the extent of 61.31%; leaving the remaining 38.69% to other variables not accommodated in the model. In the same vein, they can achieve 55.65% ($.746^2 = .5565$) improvement on customer retention using service quality. While affordable price can help them achieve 38.81% ($.623^2 = .3881$) improvement on repeat visit as well as 40.96% ($.640^2 = .4096$) improvement on customer retention.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations were made to help enhance the customer satisfaction of the QSRs in Port Harcourt.

1. Operations managers and entire management of these QSRs should take conscientious steps to improve on the

quality of services they render to customers so as to encourage them to repeat their visits and be retained as customers. This can be achieved by organizing trainings/workshops for their staff so as to enhance their service skills and quality. They can also use good reward system to motivate them to provide quality service to their customer so as to reduce the amount of spent on getting new customers which is more expensive than maintaining old customers.

2. They should adopt affordable price structure. This will help motivate customers and lead to better customer satisfaction.

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