

FUSION FACILITY AND GUESTS' PATRONAGE OF LUXURY HOTELS IN THE NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The aim of this research, therefore, was to evaluate the effect of fusion facility activities on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study; the population of which comprised 246 guests drawn from 10 luxury hotels during the 2023 Christmas festive season in Port Harcourt. Primary data were collected from a well-structured questionnaire, administered on the guests and complimented by secondary data from academic journal papers. Statistical tools for data analyses include; simple percentage, mean scores and standard deviation as well as Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings of the descriptive analysis revealed effective fusion facility service delivery and high guests' patronage during the period of our investigation. Multiple regression analysis showed that all the 4 indicators of fusion facility attributes (poolside entertainment, rental services, auxiliary services and conferencing) positively and significantly in varied degree, influenced guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the finding, it was concluded that fusion facility dimensions had significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study, it was recommended that the current service standard should be maintained or improved upon in line with the changing customer preferences and that new guests should be informed of all the services available in the fusion facility.

Keywords: Poolside entertainment. Rental services, Auxiliary services and Conferencing. Patronage.

Introduction

The hospitality industry has been described as business amenities or facilities that offer accommodations, food and beverages as well as provide entertainment for travellers (Kotler, Bowen & Makens (2010). It is an integral part of the tourism industry, which has contributed immensely to national and global gross domestic product, thus serving as one of the major drivers of socio-economic development. This is clearly shown in its creation of avenues for jobs and income opportunities and results in a positive balance of payments,

boosts the tourism supply industry and promotes the overall growth of economic activity within a region (Cárdenas-García, Sánchez-Rivero, Pulido-Fernández, Mazghouni & Goaid (2015

Hotels in modern times are capable of transcending beyond traditional accommodation services to include an extensive range of offerings. This encompasses not only lodging but also dining, entertainment, wellness facilities, and more. By doing so, the establishment becomes a one-stop destination for guests, creating a unique value proposition. This concept aims to increase sales by capitalizing on the convenience factor, as guests find it more appealing when they can access various services without having to venture outside the hotel premises. This not only contributes to revenue generation but also establishes the hotel as a preferred choice, ensuring repeat business. By providing time and place utility, integrated hospitality services address the evolving expectations of modern travelers and fun seekers for patronage through customer satisfaction in optimizing guests' experience (Fornell, 2018).

Accordingly, guests' patronage through satisfaction has become one of the major marketing goals of all the hospitality operations and other businesses regardless of the industrial and geographical setting. This realization is premised on the fact that it is the sustained customer patronage that translate into increased revenue and profit for the organization, hence customer acquisition and retention has become the focal point of most hospitality marketing strategies (Etuk,2021).

Faajir and Nyagba (2022) indicate growing investment in hotel facility but fluctuating guest patronage of surviving hotel businesses after few years of operation. Thus, guests retention is a deep-rooted and far-reaching challenge for hotel managers, representing 38% decline rate in post COVID-19 business environment in Nigeria ,especially those in the economic or budget category (Bharwani and Mathew,2021). The enormity of this problem is evident in its impact on the hospitality industry and the broader economy. Persistently low patronage and retention rates can lead to financial instability for hotels, resulting in job losses and reduced investment in the sector. Additionally, it hampers tourism growth and the overall image of Nigeria as a travel destination, potentially deterring foreign and domestic visitors. Thus, addressing the challenges of hotel patronage and retention through the broadening of hotel service mix is crucial for the sustainability of the Nigerian hotel sector, economic growth, and the development of a thriving tourism industry.

In the context of hotel business operation in Rivers State, Nigeria, the prevailing economic conditions, marked by low patronage, escalating operating costs, inflation, and the removal of fuel subsidies, have created a pressing need for innovative strategies to sustain and enhance the guest experience. The rate at which businesses are falling in Nigeria has become of great concerns to stakeholders, researchers and scholars (Dieseman & Etiko, 2019).

In response to these challenges in the hotel sector of the competitive Nigerian hospitality industry, the concept of fusion facilities has been adopted as a strategic approach by the luxury hotel market category to not only weather the economic storms but also thrive in the face of adversity. Fusion facility describes the integration of different types of hospitality services such as catering, poolside entertainment, auxiliary services, rental services, etc in addition to the basic room and bed amenity under one hotel roof to provide a comprehensive and seamless guest experience (Contur, Gadi & Bagobiri, 2022). The practice of fusion facility is extensive with positive influence on sales volume and profit in the departmental stores retailing business in both developed and developing economies (Ewalem, 2021). However, the effect of fusion facility on guests' patronage in the Nigerian hotel sector has not been substantiated empirically. The present study, is, therefore, an attempt at evaluating the effect of fusion facility on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers, State.

1. Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

The Concept of Fusion Facility

The concept of fusion facility can be regarded as a set of complementary or supplementary services and facilities that are offered by a hotel or a hotel chain to its guests under one roof or within a close proximity (Juumps, 2019). It is viewed as an innovative strategy whereby various hospitality operations and facilities such as accommodation, restaurant, nightclub, cinema, gymnasium, spa/wellness centres, etc are brought together under one hotel roof (Huang, Chen & Gao, 2019). In the literature, other semantics and synonyms such as 'integrated services', 'full service hotel' and 'one-stop hotel', 'all-inclusive hotel' are used to denote fusion facility (Juump,2019).

The philosophy of fusion facility in the hospitality industry in general and hotel sector in particular is to create value for hotel guests by providing them with convenience, comfort, variety, and personalization. This fusion of hospitality services is designed to create a one-stop destination for guests, fostering convenience and satisfaction. The concept aims to address the evolving needs and expectations of modern travellers by offering a seamless and immersive experience. Fusion of hospitality services can also create value for hoteliers by increasing their revenue through upselling and cross-selling, reducing their costs through economies of scale and scope, and enhancing their reputation and loyalty through service differentiation and quality. Hoteminder(2020) asserts that the idea behind fusion facility is to offer a variety of products and services that cater to different needs and preferences of customers in one location, under one facility, thereby saving them time, money, and effort.

All the dimensions of fusion facility in the hotel sector were not covered in our previous studies. The sub-variables of fusion hospitality facility covered in the present study include the following:

Poolside Entertainment: The concept of poolside entertainment encompasses a spectrum of offerings designed to cater to the varied preferences of guests (Condé Nast, 2017). From ambient music and live performances to themed parties, poolside bars, and water-based activities, hotels are leveraging this dimension to curate a comprehensive and dynamic guest experience. The versatility of poolside entertainment allows establishments to adapt to the preferences of different guest segments, ensuring inclusivity and engagement (Luxgemteys, 2017).

Poolside entertainment is an important aspect of the hospitality industry, especially for luxury hotels that aim to provide a memorable and enjoyable experience for their guests. Poolside entertainment involves providing leisure and recreation facilities and services for the hotel guests and external customers. The hotel can offer a poolside area with a swimming pool, sun loungers, umbrellas, towels, showers, changing rooms, and lifeguards. The hotel can also offer poolside activities, such as games, music, drinks, snacks, and barbeque. Poolside entertainment can have several benefits for the hotel, such as increasing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention; generating additional revenue from food and beverage sales, cabana rentals, and entrance fees; enhancing the hotel's image and reputation; and creating a competitive advantage over other hotels. According to a report by Robb Report (2023), poolside cabanas have become the hottest and priciest amenity at luxury hotels, with some accommodations selling for up to \$2,500 a day.

Rental Services: Rental services, as a dimension of fusion hospitality facility, encapsulate a dynamic range of offerings designed to extend the convenience and comfort of guests beyond traditional amenities. From transportation and recreational equipment to workspace solutions, this dimension aligns with the contemporary traveller's desire for tailored and flexible experiences. The significance lies not only in the diversification of services but also in the strategic positioning of hotels as comprehensive service hubs (Jones, Hillier & Comfort, 2016).

Offering guests unparalleled convenience and flexibility, rental services seamlessly integrate into the guest experience, providing access to a diverse array of items and spaces that enhance the overall stay. Fusion facility services bring forth a diverse array of rental offerings, transcending the confines of traditional accommodation. Guests now have access to rental services ranging from bicycles, cars, and electric scooters for exploring the locale to meeting rooms, co-working spaces, and event venues for business or social gatherings. This dynamic spectrum of rentals caters to the varied needs and preferences of guests, enhancing the overall stay experience. Thus, a hotel can offer rental options for various items such as cars, bikes, scooters, cameras, laptops, and books, among other items. The

hotel can also offer rental options for various spaces such as storage rooms and offices. Rental services play a pivotal role in shaping the strategic positioning of hospitality establishments (Patrick et al (2019)).

Auxiliary Service Delivery: Aneke and Folalu (2021) opine that auxiliary services are designed to complement and enhance the primary elements of accommodation and amenities, contributing significantly to the versatility and guest-centric nature of modern hospitality establishments. Viewed from this perspective, auxiliary services, therefore, become as an essential dimension of fusion hospitality facility, which symbolize a commitment to offering guests a comprehensive and seamless experience.

Hotel auxiliary services include currency exchange, ATM, travel agency, tour guide, ticket booking, medical service, pharmacy, beauty salon, barber shop, and gift shop (Altinay & Taheri, 2019; Walker, 2021). Thus, auxiliary services play a crucial role in shaping the strategic positioning of hospitality establishments. Clearly, certain auxiliary services, such as wellness programs, spa services, and personal assistance, are geared toward enhancing guest well-being and convenience. From arranging in-room spa treatments to providing personal shoppers, these services contribute to a holistic and hassle-free experience for guests, fostering a positive and memorable stay. Beyond the core elements of lodging and amenities, these services are tailored to meet specific needs and desires, elevating the stay from transactional to experiential. The significance lies in the ability of auxiliary services to anticipate and fulfill diverse guest requirements, fostering satisfaction and loyalty.

Conferences and Banqueting: Conferences and banqueting represent not only physical spaces within a hospitality establishment but dynamic platforms that facilitate diverse interactions. Conferences serve as hubs for knowledge dissemination, professional networking, and industry showcases. On the other hand, banqueting spaces transform into realms for celebration, culinary experiences, and social connectivity. The synergy between these dimensions creates a unique environment that extends beyond traditional hospitality offerings (Bharwani & Mathews, 2021). From business conferences requiring state-of-the-art facilities to elaborate banquets demanding culinary excellence. Akpan & Green (2021) assert that beyond providing a venue for gatherings, these events serve as catalysts for business engagements, knowledge exchange, and celebratory moments. Viewed from this perspective, combining conferences and banqueting allows luxury hotels to diversify their revenue streams. Beyond accommodation, conferences and banqueting services offer lucrative opportunities for hosting business events and social gatherings, contributing to the hotel's overall financial stability.

Guest Patronage

Guest patronage represents the choice of guests to consistently choose a particular hotel or service provider for their accommodation and related needs. Guest patronage is influenced

by a range of factors, including the quality of services, overall guest experience, value for money, and the establishment's ability to meet evolving customer expectations (Ewanlen, 2021; Susskind, & Viccari, 2011; Singh & Nika, 2019). Guest satisfaction emerges as a significant catalyst for guest patronage. A satisfied guest is more likely to become a repeat customer, and their positive experiences contribute to the establishment's reputation, attracting new patrons. Fusion facility that consistently deliver high levels of guest satisfaction create a virtuous cycle, where happy patrons become brand ambassadors, advocating for the establishment and contributing to increased patronage (Simpeh, et al., 2011).

Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The Disconfirmation of Expectations Theory: The theoretical anchor of this study is the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm propounded by Oliver (1980). Drawing on the shortcomings of the early theories of consumer satisfaction, Oliver (1980) proposed the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) as the most promising theoretical framework for the assessment of customer satisfaction, a precursor to customer patronage in a competitive business environment. The model implies that consumers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about the anticipated performance. The expectation level then becomes a standard for judging the product. That is, once the product or service is used, outcomes are compared against expectations. If the outcome matches the expectation, confirmation occurs. Disconfirmation occurs where there is a difference between expectations and outcomes. A customer is either satisfied or dissatisfied as a result of positive or negative difference between expectations and perceptions. Thus, when service performance is better than what the customer had initially expected, there is a positive disconfirmation between expectations and performance resulting from satisfaction, while when service performance. (Altinay & Taheri, 2019). Therefore, it could be argued that in the tourism context, tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction requires experience with the destination attributes, influenced by the perceived quality and the value of the tourism services at the destination (Puh, 2014). It is the primary determinant of tourist behavior in the industry.

The relevance of this theory to the present study is its appropriateness for the review of the dependent variable measures of patronage (revisit intention) and the moderating variable (guests' experience) indicators (enjoyment and satisfaction). The disconfirmation of expectation theory helps hotel managers in serving their target markets and in making informed decisions. This theory is very useful to this study because previous research on customer satisfaction and patronage had also adopted it, as shown in Marinao (2017), Zehner (2016); Aliman et al (2016). What this suggests is that the results of continuous customer satisfaction monitoring can serve as an input for trend analysis and strategic discussions regarding the development of a inclusive hospitality facilities. The ultimate goals of monitoring satisfaction is through patronage by solicitation of customers'

feedback, service reviews, identifying strategic objectives at the organizational level, preparing tactical and operational plans and ultimately increasing the competitiveness of a given hotel.

Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

Many empirical studies have established the interaction between fusion facility and patronage across various industrial, organizational and geographical contexts. This subsection of the study presents a review of the influence or interaction between the dimensions of fusion facility service provision and guests patronage in previous empirical studies from which we derived our hypotheses formulation.

Poolside Entertainment provision and Guests' Patronage

In their studies of hotel facilities, tourist experience and revisit intentions of visitors at the Caribbean and Mediterranean islands hotels, Bagdan(2019) confirmed that pool entertainment such as a sunbathing and picnicking, swimming, poolside musical shows and pool tidal wave ball competition had a positive influence on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention.

A study conducted by Eddison (2016) on hotel facilities and guests satisfaction in Malaysian East Coast hotels. Conversely, the study reported that hotels with perceived inadequate poolside entertainment activities had a negative impact on guests satisfaction and revisit intention. The findings suggest that effective poolside management includes the planning and implementation of guests activities that create a pleasurable, memorable experience for visitors and guests because activities constitute a veritable source of competitive advantage for hotel guests.

In the same vein, Aneke and Folalu (2021) investigated the influence of hotel facilities on guests satisfaction in 20 hotels involving 412 guests established a positive effect of poolside activities and guests satisfaction and revisit intention. Given the findings from the above-stated previous studies, our first hypothesis is formulated thus:

HA₁: Poolside entertainment has a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Rental Services Provision and Guests' Patronage

Rama and Strikhovoya (2015) assessed the impact of rental services of organizational performance among 16 leasing companies involving 276 customers. The analyzed data revealed a strong correlation the types of products and services rented and satisfaction. Furthermore, the study by Okorie (2018) on car rental services and passengers satisfaction in Enugu indicated a a negative correlation between the two variables.

Finebone (2021) conducted a study on beach service strategies and visitors' experience in Lagos beaches among beach visitors to public and private beaches to compare their beach experiences with service provision in the two sectors. Drawing from a sample size of 280

visitors, the analyzed data revealed that beach water sport equipment rentals were more emphasized at the private beaches than in their government-owned counterparts. The study also indicated a strong correlation between customer-centric rental services and beach visitors' satisfaction and revisit intention. In the light of the above, our third hypothesis is stated thus:

HA2: Rental service delivery has a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria

Auxiliary Services Provision and Guests' Patronage

Shahid and Paul (2022) examined guests' experience in luxury hotels from an emerging market. Findings provided empirical support, showing a strong correlation between tourism auxiliary services and guests' satisfaction for repeat visits. Hotel auxiliary services in terms provision of facilities such as supermarkets, pharmaceutical stores, spas, salons, business centres, bureau de change, POS centres, etc create values for hotel guests who do not have to go outside to avail themselves of the services which enhance satisfaction thereby influencing patronage and revisit intention,

Dietami and Holdee (2019) examined the factors that impact on hotel guests satisfaction and revisit intention in Zanzibar region. The objective of the study among other things, was to determine whether revisit intention could be predicted using hotel auxiliary services in all-inclusive hotels. The study drew its sample from 462 guests across 5-star hotels. Data analysis suggested a positive correlation between the two variables as hotel guests considered auxiliary services an important factor in their satisfaction evaluation and possible return to the same hotels in the future.

Kukoyi and Iwuagwu (2015) examined hospitality auxiliary service delivery and customer satisfaction in hospitality establishments in Lagos State. The findings of the study revealed that the hotel offers a variety of auxiliary services which are satisfactory to their customers and the resultant effect is the customers' loyalty to the hotel which generated brand attachment to the facilitates. From the foregoing empirical review, our fourth hypothesis is formulated thus:

H3: Auxiliary service delivery has a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria

Conferencing/Banqueting of Guests Patronage

Tehoral and Jukelson (2021) investigated the influence of hotel facilities on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Abuja. The objective of the study was to determine which hotel facility had the most significant effect on hotel patronage and guests' revisit intention, The study involved 1,451 business travellers. Using hierarchical multivariate regression, a model for predicting overall travel experience, the finding indicated a positive effect of conferencing and banqueting facilities on guest satisfaction and revisit intention.

Research conducted by Zaakas (2021) examined factors influencing guests' patronage in the Ontario hotel sector in Canada involving 678 international guests on business trip. The result revealed satisfaction of guests with conferencing and banqueting services of the hotels and the revisit intention of the guests in the future. In the same vein, Nze-Dike and Eferibo (2017) investigated customers perception of hotel facilities and guests revisit intention of 5-star hotels in Abuja, Nigeria. The study drew participants from 265 business and leisure guests. Data analysis revealed a positive and significant correlation between the provision of adequate conference and banqueting facilities and guests patronage through satisfaction as well as future revisit intention. Drawn from the above review, our fifth hypothesis is stated thus:

H4: Conferencing/banqueting has a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

Research Design and Sampling

The survey research design was adopted for the study to aid the researcher to find answers to the research questions of the study and to test the hypotheses through the collection and analysis of primary data on the effect of fusion facility on guests' patronage across a large spectrum of luxury hotels in Rivers State. The general aim of selecting a proper research design is to conduct an empirical investigation in such a way that answers the research questions and for the test of hypotheses of the study (Onodugo, Ugwuonah & Ebinne,2010).

Population of the Study and Sampling:

The population of this study comprised of domestic and international guests that were available at luxury hotels during the Christmas festive period, December,, 2023 when the study was conducted. Diesamm (2012) has noted that in the context of the tourism and hospitality industry, the population of research involving customers is always large, unpredictable and mobile or transient. It is often not fixed. Consequently, it was not possible to predetermine the actual population size of this study, as it was infinite and unknown. The survey was conducted at the 10 luxury hotels in Port Harcourt during the 2023 festive period (Christmas season), There are 10 registered luxury hotels in Port Harcourt which include Hotel Presidential, Novotel, Golden Tulip Hotel. Osborn La Palm Hotel, Villa Tuscany Hotel, Juanita Hotel, Ogiye's place, Xteem Luxury Hotel and Portland Resortl and Suite (www.hotel.com,2022). These hotels were chosen because of their status as full-service characteristics and customer-drawing power as well as international dispositions. The study sample size was statistically determined after which the researcher adopted the purposive sampling method to select a sample of two hundred and forty six (246) hotel guests (repeat visitors) based on his judgment and on-the-spot accessibility, availability and willingness of the hotel guests to participate in the study during the

researcher's visits to the facilities. Our sample size is consistent with the extant suggestion of Roscoe (1975 cited in Aliman et al., 2016) that a sample of more than 30 and less than 500 is sufficient for most research in the Social Sciences of which hospitality is a subset.

Data Collection Methods/Instrumentation

Two types of data were involved in this study, namely: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained first hand from the luxury hotel guests had visited the same facility in the past. Primary data were complemented by secondary data obtained from relevant academic journals. The data of the study was largely quantitative as it involved quantifiable characteristics as expressed through measurement and statistical analysis. Our data did not involve interviews, videos, photography and other qualitative elements. The primary data collection method considered for this study was the questionnaire. The researcher recognizes the fact that the questionnaire accounts significantly for the success of any survey. This research instrument was adopted for the study because of its cost-effectiveness and time-saving considerations.

The questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument considered for this study. A questionnaire is a set of specific questions that are constructed and used by the researcher in obtaining information from the respondents (Makinde 2015). The questionnaire is one of the most used instrument of survey research (Ezejelue, Ogwo & Nkamnebe, 2008). The researcher and 5 (five) research assistants administered copies of questionnaires on business and leisure guests of the luxury hotel after approval by the relevant hotel manager or supervisor having been briefed by the researcher on the purpose of the study. However, questionnaire administration and retrieval through personal contact or third party was guided by ethical considerations and the hotels' policy on guests' privacy. The reason for focusing on hotel guests is because hospitality service delivery is largely people-oriented as they involve customers and service personnel. As such, the quality of hospitality service delivery should be evaluated from the lenses of their customers. This is because no service provider may admit that he/she is not effective in serving its target market relative to the competition.

The questionnaire of this study was structured into four (4) sections: Section A presents the guests' demographic profile. Section B of the instrument consists of structured items on the dimensions of fusion facility. Section C guests patronage.

The dependent and independent variables were measured on the 5-point Likert Scale, and the response scales for each statement in the survey questionnaire are 5-Strongly Agree, 4 – Agree, 3-Undecided, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire items of the variables are modified from previous studies based on their relevance and appropriateness to the present study.

Validity / Reliability of Instrument

In this study, face validity was adopted the research instrument used was ascertained through expert opinions(hospitality operation managers and hospitality marketing scholars)based on their experience in the industry and academia respectively. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method was used to analyze the responses from the study. The researcher subjected the responses obtained from the survey to testing the reliability via IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 21.0. The resultant values for all the constructs were greater 0.70 which is considered reliable since 0.50 is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test. Nunnally (1978) asserts that Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient with large values indicates a positive correlation and by extension, an acceptable degree of reliability.

Operational Measures of the Variables

The independent variable (fusion facility) consists of 4 dimensions which are crucial to the hotel sector besides accommodation. They are poolside entertainment, rental services, auxiliary service provision and conferencing/banqueting. The dependent variable (guests' patronage) in the context of this study, took a mono status but finds expression and manifestation in revisit intention and evaluated from the guests perspectives. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. It ranged from "Strongly Agree (SA=5)", "Agree (A=4)", "Undecided (U =3)", "Disagree (D=2)", "Strongly disagree (SD=1)" on statements regarding guests' evaluation of fusion facility services provided by the luxury hotels and their patronage.

Data Analysis Techniques

Both descriptive and statistical inferential methods were used for this study. The descriptive methods include tables, frequencies, percentages, mean score and standard deviation. The statistical inferential method, on the other hand, was used to test the hypotheses. The multiple linear regression analysis was deployed for the test of hypotheses. This analytical tool is often used to examine the existence of the linear relationship between a dependent variable and a set of (more than two) independent variables (Onodugo, Ugwuonah & Ebinne,2010). For this study, the multiple linear regression analysis was adopted to determine the predictive power of the independent variable dimensions of fusion facility in explaining guests patronage (dependent variable). The analysis involved the use of IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 21.0 to aid the statistical analyses.

4. Analysis, Results and Findings

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Section 1 shows the information on the category of visitors. The table revealed that (36) respondents (16%) were foreign while (192) respondents (84%) were domestic visitors.

Section 2 shows the information on the type of visitors. The table revealed that (33) respondents (15%) were companies staff, (21) respondents (9%) were Government officials, while (174) respondents (76%) were independent visitors. Section 3 of Table 4.2 above shows the information on the length of stay. The table revealed that (78) respondents (34%) stay for 1 day while (122) respondents (54%) stay for 2 – 5 days. 28 respondents (12%) stayed for more than 5 days..

Section 2 shows the information on age brackets of the respondents. 48 respondents (21%), were within 18-30 years, 76 respondents (26%) were within 31–40 years, 88 respondents (39%) were within 41–50 years while 16 respondents (7%) were greater than 51 years. This information shows that majority of the respondents were within the ages of 31 – 40 years. Section 3 shows the marital status of respondents. 132 respondents (58%) were single, 81 respondents (36%) were married, 9 respondents (4%) were divorced, while 6 respondents (2%) are separated. Section 4 shows the gender of respondents. 147 respondents (64%) were male, while 81 respondents (36%) were female.

Section 5 shows the educational background of respondents. 62 respondents (27%) were pre-degree holders. 103 respondents (45%) were first degree holders. 48 respondents (21%) were second degree holders while 15 respondents (7%) possessed Ph.D and other qualifications. Section 6 shows the purpose of the visit. 81 respondents (36%) came for business, 70 respondents (31%) were on leisure/recreation, while 77 respondents (33%) came for Group meeting.

Section 7 shows the frequency of visit. 56 respondents (25%) were first-time visitors, while 172 respondents (75%) were repeat-visitors. Section 8 shows the travel party. 47 respondents (21%) travelled alone, 82 respondents (36%) travelled with family/partner, and 72 respondents (32%) travelled with friends / relatives, while 26 respondents (11%) travelled with organized groups. From this information, it shows that majority of the respondents traveled with families/partners.

D Descriptive Analysis (Univariate Analysis)

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on Poolside Entertainment

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Staging of musical and comedy shows by poolside	4.2918	.49659	228
Sport bar entertainment and picnicking	4.0531	.48093	228
Poolside beverage service delivery	4.3469	.48093	228

Information on Table 1 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on poolside entertainment in the luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as perceived by guests through the application of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 output. The mean scores of the three items are greater than the criterion mean (threshold) of 3.9, meaning that most of the respondents agreed with all the three items of pool side entertainment considering the

fact that the grand mean of 3.9>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. The implication is that the luxury hotels also provide pool side entertainment or guests' relaxation and enjoyment.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Rental Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Availability of car rental service to quests in the hotel	4.5114	.92483	228
Rental of multi-media and musical equipment for use in the hotel	4.3446	.93104	228
Provision of information on available rental services to guests	4.0983	.90906	228

Information on Table 2 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on rental services in the luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as perceived by guests through the application of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 output. The mean scores of the three items are greater than the criterion mean (threshold) of 3.9, meaning that most of the respondents agreed with all the three items of rental services considering the fact that the grand mean of 3.9>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. The implication is that the luxury hotels provide rental services to interested customers.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Auxiliary Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SPA and body grooming service delivery	4.0114	.92483	228
Availability of foreign exchange and POS centres	4.3446	.93104	228
Availability of pharmaceutical store and supermarket	4.0983	.90906	228

Information on Table 3.above shows the result of descriptive statistics on auxiliary services in the luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as perceived by guests through the application of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 output. The mean scores of the three items are greater than the criterion mean (threshold) of 3.9, meaning that most of the respondents agreed with all the three items of auxiliary services considering the fact that the grand mean of 3.9>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. The implication is that the luxury hotels provide auxiliary services for the convenience of their guests.

Table 4 : Descriptive Statistics on Conferencing and Banqueting

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Large conference halls	228	4.2000	1.40381
Adequacy of facilities and materials	228	4.1436	1.43246
Good Banqueting service delivery	228	4.0171	1.48656
Valid N (listwise)	228		

Information on Table 5 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on conferencing and banqueting in the luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as perceived by guests through the application of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 output. The mean scores of the three items are greater than the criterion mean (threshold) of 3.9, meaning that most of the respondents agreed with all the three items of conferencing and banqueting considering the fact that the grand mean of 3.9 > 3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. The implication is that the luxury hotels actually provided good conference and banquet services to their customers.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on Luxury Hotel Guests' Patronage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Willingness to revisit the same hotel in the future	228	4.2169	1.30342
First Choice hotel to revisit always in Port Harcourt	228	4.1149	1.19057
Not likely to switch to other hotels in the meantime	228	4.3304	1.19601
Valid N (listwise)	228		

Information on Table 6 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as perceived by guests through the application of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 output. The mean scores of the three items are greater than the criterion mean (threshold) of 3.9, meaning that most of the respondents agreed with all the three items of guests patronage considering the fact that the grand mean of 3.9 > 3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. The implication is that the level of guests' patronage of the luxury hotels was considerable. Inferential Analysis (Hypotheses Test using Multiple Regression Analysis)

The Effect of Fusion Facility on Guests' Patronage

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of the independent variables in explaining guests' patronage. In other words, the test was

conducted to examine which dimensions of fusion hospitality facility has the most or the least significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt , Rivers State. The four (4) independent dimensions of fusion facility as used in the context of this study are poolside entertainment(PE), rental services (RS), auxiliary service provision, Conferencing/Banqueting and accommodation (A). Tables 6 to 7 outline the outcome of the multiple regression analysis between the integrated hospitality service dimensions and guests patronage in explaining our hypotheses results.

Table 7: Model Summary in Predicting Luxury Hotels Guests' Patronage

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.892 ^a	.796	.798		.44104

a. Predictors: (Constant), PE, RS, AS, .CB

Table 8. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	99.304	7	12.186	30.902	.000 ^b
Residual	132.962	299	.445		
Total	232.265	306			

a. Dependent variable: Guests' Patronage

b. B .Predictors: (Constant), PE, RS, AS,, A., CB

Table 7 shows that R is .892, which means that the independent variables are 89.2% correlated with the dependent variable. R square is .796;, this implies that the independent variable explain 79.6% of the dependent variable while the other factors outside the model will account for the rest. The adjusted R square is .798. Simply put, the model summary is an indication that 79.6% of the variance in guest patronage can be explained by the changes in independent variables of fusion facility. The R square statistic in the model is a measure used to measure the extent to which the total variation in the dependent variable is explained by the regression.

Table 8 shows that F-value is 30.902, which is greater than the mean square value (12.186), and the p-value is .000. As a general rule, this model is considered as a 'good fit' as it can explain above 60% (threshold) of variance in the dependent variable: (guests patronage) (Moosa & Hassan, 2015).What this means is that the regression model has made a significant fit with the data.

Table 9. Regression Analysis of Hypotheses test results for the Model Coefficients n =228

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.437	.517		2.782	.006
	Poolside Ent	.221	.064	.541	3.822	.000
	Rental Serv.	.382	.057	.402	6.675	.000
	Aux.Serv.	.095	.069	.399	1.382	.003
	Con/Banqt	.021	.038	.213	3.269	.002

- a. Dependent variable: Guests' Patronage
- b. b.Predictors: (Constant),), PE, RS,, AS, CB

Table 9 shows the result of the multiple regression analysis. All the 4 (four) indicators of fusion facility made significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable (guests' patronage).

The first and most significant contributory variable that predicts guests patronage in the luxury hotels market scale is poolside entertainment (PE) ($\beta = 0.541$, $p=.000$). The second significant predictive variable is rental service s (RS) ($\beta = .402$, $p\text{-value}=.000 < 0.05$). The third significant contributory factor that predicts luxury hotels guests' patronage is auxiliary services (AS) ($\beta = .399$, $p=.002 < 0.05$). The fourth contributory variable that predicts guests patronage is conferencing and banqueting (CB) with positive beta value ($\beta = .213$, $p=.002 < 0.05$).

Table 10: Summary of Explanatory Powers of Fusion Facility Variables on Luxury Hotels Guests' Patronage

Regression Coefficients

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	Predictive Power β (Beta value)	P-Value	Level of Sig.	Significance of Effect of FF on GP
Poolside Ent	GP	.541	.000	$p=.000 < 0.05$	1 st Significant
Rental .Serv	GP	.402	.000	$p=.000 < 0.05$	2 nd Significant
Aux. Services	GP	.399	.002	$p=.002 < 0.05$	3 rd Significant
Con./Banqt	GP	.213	.000	$p=.000 < 0.05$	4 th significant

Table 11: Summary of Hypotheses Test Results using Multiple Regression Analysis of the Effects of Fusion Facility on Guests' Patronage

HP	Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	Regression Co-efficient (Beta) Value	P-Value (sig.)	Level of Sig.	Decision
Ho 1	Poolside Ent	GP	.541	.000	p=.000 < 0.05	Supported
Ho 2	Rental .Serv	GP	.402	.001	p=.001 < 0.05	Supported
Ho 3	Aux. Services	GP	.399	.001	p=.001 < 0.05	Supported
Ho 4	Con./Banqt	GP	.213	.000	p=.000 < 0.05	Supported

Table 11 shows that all the four dimensions of fusion facility have a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt, thus, implying that all the hypotheses were supported.

5. Discussion

Effect of Poolside Entertainment on Guests' Patronage

The study findings also showed that poolside entertainment had a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage. Specifically, poolside entertainment had a positive and significant influence on guests' patronage luxury hotels in Rivers State as depicted the results: ($\beta = .541, p=000 < 0.05$).

This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies which established a strong, positive and significant effect of poolside entertainment on guests; patronage in the hotel market segment such as: Bagdan (2019); Eddison, (2016); Dike and Eferebo (2017);

The importance of poolside entertainment in driving guests patronage may due to the fact that the poolside has become a canvas for a diverse array of experiences, from tranquil relaxation to lively social gatherings. This dimension aligns with the modern traveller's desire for immersive and multifaceted experiences, positioning the hotel not merely as a place of stay but as a destination for leisure and entertainment (Robb, 2023). According to a report by Robb Report (2023), poolside cabanas has become the hottest and priciest amenity at luxury hotels.

The finding tends to suggest that poolside entertainment emerges as a powerful tool for enhancing guest satisfaction and fostering loyalty. Guests relish the opportunity to unwind by the pool, enjoying not only the physical space but the experiential offerings that accompany it. Perhaps, this explains why some events such as musical band shows and sport viewing are mounted around the poolside. Given this result, our claim that poolside entertainment has a significant effect on guests; patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State has been empirically established.

Effect of Rental Service Provision on Guests' Patronage

The study finding shows that provision of rental services to interested guests had a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as the result shows: ($\beta = .402; p=003 < 0.05$). This finding is corroborated by previous empirical studies (Rama & Strikovaya; Okorie (2018; Finebone (2021) . The relevance of rental service provision and delivery as a component of integrated hospitality services in the hotel environment is informed by the fact that it encapsulates a dynamic range of offerings designed to extend the convenience and comfort of guests beyond traditional amenities. From transportation and recreational equipment to workspace solutions, decoration items, multi-media equipment and offices, etc rented by interested hotel guest, this dimension aligns with the contemporary traveller's desire for tailored and flexible experiences. The significance lies not only in the diversification of services but also in the strategic positioning of hotels as comprehensive service hubs (Pullman & Rodgers, 2010). This finding tends to suggest that any luxury hotel that does not place premium on this important services may not be able to compete effectively. Guest-centric hotels will attract and retain more guests from services mix including rental services which the customers some costs and inconvenience of going outside the hotel to the items or service.

Effect of Auxiliary Service Provision on Guests' Patronage

The study finding shows that provision of auxiliary services to interested guests had a positive and significant effect on guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt as the result shows: ($\beta = .399; p=003 < 0.05$). This finding is supported by (Shahid & Paul, 2022; Dietman & Holdee, 2019; Kukoyi & Iwuagu, 2015) in which auxiliary services were found to be strong drivers of customer satisfaction and loyalty in other industrial and geographical contexts. This is because the availability of auxiliary services in a hotel contributes to guests convenience and serve as positioning and differentiation strategy. It can be argued that auxiliary services requires a commitment to excellence, with a focus on delivering prompt, personalized, and efficient solutions that align with guest expectations. Therefore, a luxury hotel that offers auxiliary services, such as currency exchange, ATM, travel agency, tour guide, ticket booking, medical service, pharmacy, beauty salon, barber shop, and gift shop in addition to other hospitality services under one roof will always guests patronage. In contrast, those that fail to incorporate this important component into their hotel service mix do at their own peril.

In concrete terms, the result implies that the level of investment in auxiliary services will determine the level of patronage a hotel enjoys.

Effect of Conferencing and Banqueting on Guests' Patronage

Regarding the fourth hypothesis, the finding from the multiple regression analysis indicates a positive and significant effect of conferencing and banqueting on guests' patronage in Rivers State as depicted by ($\beta = .231; p=002 < 0.05$).

The above result is consistent with previous studies (Tehoral & Jukelson, 2021; Zaakas , 2021; Nze-Dike & Eferebo, 2017) in which conferencing and banqueting was found to a vital component of deluxe hotel services which influenced customer satisfaction and patronage. Also, the finding is supported by Dike (2015) whose study established a strong influence of conferencing and banqueting facility on guests' satisfaction, loyalty and willingness to recommend.

The rising profile of conference facility and banqueting services in the hospitality service delivery is premised on the fact that many customers want host events (national and international) such as business conferences, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, receptions, end-of year parties, associations meetings, etc in luxury hotels. Consequently, continued patronage of this facility arising from guests' satisfaction has continued to contribute significantly to the revenue of the hotels through patronage

Implications and Conclusions

The main objective of the study was to determine the effect of fusion facility on guests' patronage within the context of luxury hotels in Rivers State of Nigeria. Thus, to achieve the objectives of this study, the fusion facility-guests' patronage (FF-GP) model was developed and empirically tested at the luxury hotels level in Rivers state.

Overall, this study has evaluated the effect of fusion facility on guests; patronage of luxury hotels in Rivers State from the guests' perspective. The results of the empirical analysis have revealed that all the dimensions of fusion facility (poolside entertainment, rental services, auxiliary service provision and conferencing/banqueting) were important factors in predicting guests' patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State . Accordingly, the study concludes that the level of guests patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt is a function of quality fusion facility services. Conversely, poor quality of service delivery by fusion facility will have a corresponding reduction in guests' patronage due to dissatisfaction. Consequently, revenue drops with many attendant unpalatable consequences. In contrast, Maintaining or improving on the quality and standard of hospitality service delivery induces guests' patronage for corporate sustainability in the competitive hospitality industry. The fusion of the various hospitality services in one facility (Fusion facility) in a guest-centric manner to optimize guests' experience in a cost effective way, therefore, becomes a competitive advantage.

However, in drawing our conclusion, we are very cautious and not unmindful about generalization of the research findings on the positive and significant contributions made by all the 4 indicators of fusion facility services in explaining or predicting guests' patronage, especially as the study was conducted during the 2023 Christmas festive season. Can the same study in an off-peak, non-festive period of the year produce the same result? This is the task for further researchers.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommendations were put forth:

- i. The quality of conference and banquet materials should be improved on for guests' retention
- ii. They should increase their rental mix to include decoration and multi-media materials
- iii. Guests should be taken on guided tour of all the amenities and informed of all the services available in the fusion facility. Information in a pamphlet or on the facility's website may not be very convincing. After all, seeing is believing.
- iv. Finally, loyalty programs should be introduced by the hotels whereby loyal guests are rewarded and appreciated for their patronage as a means of retaining them.

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