

THE IMPACT OF FOOD QUALITY, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT ON TOURIST EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF OLUMO ROCK, ABEOKUTA OGUN STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to help tourism enterprises identify the infinite needs of tourists which if are not met will most likely affect continued patronage by the customer. The study investigated the effect of food quality, customer service, and physical environment on tourist experience at Olumo rock in Ogun state. It also seeks to measure the extent to which tourism establishment implements standard operating procedures in the aspect of food service, and likewise determine the influence of customer service in the effort to improve tourist experience. The researcher uses the descriptive survey method of investigation in collecting data, a total of forty questionnaires was shared among 18 males and 22 female adult tourists. Result gathered from the study also shows that excellent food and service with a good atmosphere are important to visitors and also lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendation to prospective visitors. Based on the findings, this paper proposes that tourism establishments pay close attention to tourist needs in all aspect, as this would lead to increased customer satisfaction and a better visitor experience. It is suggested that a bigger sample of respondents be used in future research and that the idea of “pricing” be investigated alongside the other variables examined in this study as they affect tourist experience.

Keywords: Customer service; experience; food quality; physical environment; tourist.

INTRODUCTION

Tourist experiences is thus reasonably high and the phase of outstanding quality tourism experience is the theory that is increasingly being offered as crucial element to tourism providers' efforts to positioning themselves more efficiently in the marketplace. Tourists' food consumption is not simply a routine daily practice, but it can help contribute to holiday positive experience. (Okumus, & Mcker, 2007). However, the problem inherent in the implementation of such approach is associated to the elusiveness and abstractedness of the constructs 'quality

food, customer service, physical environment' and 'experience'.

Quality tourism experiences are often referred to in literature, although definitions are occasionally provided. However pervading acknowledgment of the importance of quality tourism experiences, it is important to note that there is no common agreed definition of the term (Jennings and N. Nickerso, 2006). Food has been considered among the important ways to have a good experience in a particular destination. (Getz, Robinson, Anderson, & Vujicic, 2014; Laing & Frost, 2013) A quality food and better service can attract

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tourist to a particular destination to taste delicious food and enjoy a quality service. (Sthapit, Coundounaris & Bjork, 2019). Likewise, quality food experience can generate both positive and negative emotional reactions, such as anger, pleasure, disappointment and recommendation of the destination to prospective tourist. (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012).

The importance of physical surroundings to create an image and to influence customer behavior is particularly pertinent in the tourism industry (Hui, Dube, and Chebat, 2017; Milliman, 2016; Raajpoot, 2012; Robson, 2013; Ryu and Jang, 2017). The service businesses are trying their best to improve the quality of their services in order to bring about customer satisfaction and improve their tourism experience, the tourism industry in particular is trying its best to make the physical environment look very attractive and also make visitors satisfied when they come around for tourism.

The restaurant is an important section in any tourism enterprise, so is the physical environment of the enterprise as a whole. The quality of the food, and services provided has a great impact on leisure experience, so does the physical environment i.e. the premises where the services are offered. Unfortunately, not enough priority is given to the quality of the food and service and even far less attention is paid to the physical environment, and not enough research work has been done on the combined effects of these variables on the satisfaction of tourist in the tourism industry in Nigeria. This research seeks to help tourism enterprise in the identification of the infinite needs of their visitors which if are not met will most likely affect negatively the level of tourist

satisfaction and continued patronage by the guests.

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of food quality, customer service, and physical environment on tourism experience of visitors at Olumo rock, Ogun State. To achieve the aim stated above, the following objectives have been designed:

To assess the importance of food quality to visiting tourists.

To evaluate the influence of customer service in the effort to satisfy tourists.

To ascertain the impact of physical environment in visitor's patronage and experience

METHODOLOGY

The researcher uses the descriptive survey method of investigation in collecting data, a total number of forty questionnaires were shared among both male and female adult tourists. Hence, case study design is applied in this situation owing to the nature of this research work. This method is used when a researcher is dealing with one case, Olumo rock is located in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Data was randomly collected from visitors of Olumo rock, the questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A is the demographic data while Section B contains information about tourists' perception on the impact of food quality, customer service and the physical environment on their experience. The survey used in the research consists of 10 questions, 1 is demographic and 9 are 5-point Likert scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section A: Demographic data

s/n	Gender	Statistics	
1	Male	N	18
		%	45.0
2	Female	N	22
		%	55.0

A total number of 22 female respondents attempted the questionnaire making 65% of the sample and a total of 18 male respondents were sampled.

Section B: Visitors' Perception and Satisfaction with Service Provision

The satisfaction of the visitors of Olumo Rock with the various services provided such as food quality, security, physical environment, and recreational facilities. In summary, the results show most of the participants' perceived services delivered at Olumo Rock in terms of quality and the comfort of the facilities provided are good and acceptable to their taste.

Visitors' Perception about Service Provision at Olumo Rock

s/n	Services	Statistics	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly agree	Disagreed	Total
1	The quality of the service is good	N	22	17	1	0	40
		%	55.0	42.5	2.5	0.0	100
2	The quality of the food is good	N	25	12	2	1	40
		%	62.5	30.0	5.0	2.5	100.0
3	The physical environment is good	N	25	15	0	0	40
		%	62.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
4	The staff are welcoming	N	9	27	4	0	20
		%	22.5	67.5	10.0	0.0	100.0
5	The facilities are good	N	12	10	13	5	20
		%	30.0	25.0	32.5	12.5	100.0

Table 2: The result shows 55% of the respondents strongly agreed and 42% agree the quality of the service render at Olumo Rock tourism establishment is good and 2.5% reported fairly agreed. The result also shows that 62.5% of the respondents strongly agreed

that the food available at the destination are good, 30% agreed while 5% fairly agreed. Furthermore, as regards to evaluation of the physical environment, 62.5% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed. The result shows 22.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 67.5% agreed and 10 fairly agreed that the staff are

hospitable. The result also shows 30% of the respondents strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 32.5 fairly agreed with the facilities available at the destination while 12.5% disagree

Table 3: Showing Visitors' Views about Effect Food, Service and Physical Environment on Tourism Experience

s/n	Effects	Statistics	Strongly Agree	Fairly agree	Disagreed	Total	
1	Excellent food service can lead to word-of-mouth recommendation to prospective visitors	N	12	17	11	0	40
		%	30.0	42.5	27.5	0.0	100
2	Quality food, service and physical environment can contribute to overall positive tourism experience	N	20	18	2	0	40
		%	50.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	100.0

Table 3: The result shows that 30% strongly agreed that excellent food service can lead to word of mouth recommendation to prospective visitors, 42.5% agreed, that quality food, service and physical

environment can contribute to positive experience, while 60% agreed on this, then 10% fairly agreed on this.

Table 4: Visitors' Satisfaction with Service Delivery

s/n	Services	Statistics	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
1	How satisfied are you with the Destination Physical environment	N	16	16	4	4	40
		%	40.0	40.0	10.0	10.0	100.0
2	How satisfied are you with the food in the Destination restaurant	N	20	16	4	0.0	40
		%	50.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	100.0

Table 4: The result shows 40% were very satisfied and 40% were satisfied with physical environment of Oluwo Rock

tourism destination 10% reported being fairly satisfied and 10% were not satisfied at all. The researcher examine the satisfaction of visitors as regards to food at the destination

restaurant, the result shows 50% were very satisfied and 40% were satisfied while 10% were fairly satisfied.

DISCUSSION

This study makes significant contributions towards understanding the relationship between food quality, service, physical environment and tourism experience at Olumo Rock destination. The findings of the study show that visitor derive satisfaction from all the components. In terms of quality, it was found that the taste and variety of meals is part of how food quality is perceived by visitors, and in terms of physical environment, all the participants agreed that the enterprise is situated in a good environment; hence it is a quality of the physical environment that influences the satisfaction of visitors thereby contributing to positive tourism experience.

The findings of the research are in line with that of Atkinsons (2012) which found out that cleanliness, service, ambience, opportunities for relaxation, courtesy of staff are factors that could lead to positive tourism experience. The study also shows that excellent food and service with a good atmosphere are important to visitors' satisfaction and also lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendation to prospective visitors.

CONCLUSION

This research has provided an affirmative answers that fulfil the objectives of the study i.e is food quality, service and physical environment important visitors? The answer to this according to this paper is that, they are highly important to visitors just like the historical site is a key important motivating them to travel to the destination so is food quality, service and physical environment

and that they all together influence visitors' satisfaction. The facilities at the tourism destination should be improved upon as some respondent were not satisfied with it. Also, it can be seen that there are areas in which the destination can still improve to bring satisfaction or greater satisfaction to visitors, as the case may be. It is high time enough priority is given to the quality of the food and service and even far less attention is paid to the quality of food, and not enough research work has been done on the combined effects of these variables on the satisfaction of tourist in Nigerian tourism enterprise for further patronage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above findings, summary and conclusion, it is recommended that the tourism enterprise should;

- Be fully sensitive to visitors' needs in every aspect, which will eventually lead to customer satisfaction thus contributing to tourism experience.
- Provide adequate training to all members of staff so that they will function professionally and efficiently.
- Implements standard operating procedure in the aspect of food service, and likewise determine the influence of visitor's service in the effort to improve tourism experience.
- Give enough priority to the quality of the food and service and more attention should be paid to the physical environment.

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