EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF INSTITITUTIONAL SERVICE QUALITY AND ACADEMIC SATISFACTION OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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Abstract
The study explores the relationship between dimensions of institutional service quality and academic satisfaction in respect of students of Hospitality Management and Tourism, in institutions of higher learning South-South, Nigeria. A survey method was employed for the collection of data, while multiple regression was used for data analysis. The result revealed a positive and significant relationship between the five dimensions of institutional service quality and academic satisfaction of students of Hospitality Management and Tourism in institutions of higher learning in South-South, Nigeria. However, the outcome of the study further shows tangibility, reliability, and responsiveness are the most positive predictors of academic satisfaction in respect of students of Hospitality Management and Tourism in institutions of higher learning in South-South, Nigeria. Based on these findings, the researcher suggests that the management of the higher institution of learning that offers HMT courses in South-South Nigeria should collaborate with stakeholders such as the organised private sector and the government to provide facilities and structure that can help improve and deliver on academic service quality in our tertiary instructions hence, increases academic satisfaction of students.
Keywords: Academic satisfaction, Hospitality Management and Tourism, South-South, Nigeria; Service Quality; SERQUAL-SAS.

Introduction
Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM) is one of the technically oriented and management bias courses offered in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The primary aim of integrating the course HTM into Nigerian tertiary institutions' programme is to impact scientific and technological skills which imbue its graduates with the essence, attributes, self-reliance, and national consciousness (Auchi Polytechnic Prospectus, 2013). The mission of the HTM programme is to offer training, skills, and knowledge in manpower to manage the multi-faceted structure and diverse scope of the hospitality and tourism sector, thus contributing to sustainable national development (Okoli, 2001). The hospitality and tourism sector is a key sector for economic development and job creation throughout the world (Jennifer & Thea, 2013). In 2016, the sector directly contributed US$2.3 trillion and 109 million jobs worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017).

Taking its wider indirect and induced impacts into account, the sector contributed US$7.6 trillion to the global economy and supported 292 million jobs in 2016 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017) thus, equal to 10.2% of the world's GDP, and approximately 1 in 10 of all jobs. The direct contribution of the hospitality and tourism sector to employment grew by 1.8% in 2016 meaning almost 2 million net additional jobs were generated directly by the sector, and a total of 6 million new jobs were created as a result of the total direct, indirect and induced activity (United Nation World Tourism Organisation, 2016). This means that almost 1 in 5 of all new jobs created globally in 2016 were linked to the hospitality and tourism industry (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017).

In the context of Nigeria, the hospitality and tourism industry contributed N1.7 billion ($ 5.5 million) put at about 4.8percentt to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016 (Ekwujuru, 2016; Jumia Travel, 2017). The industry generated 651,000 jobs directly in 2015 putting at 1.6% of total employment in the country and another 1.6% in 2016 put at 661,000 (Jumia Travel, 2017). This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines, and other passenger transportation services among others excluding commuter services. The above information implies that the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria continues to thrive despite the challenges faced with its total investment put at over US$3 billion in the past five years (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2017).

Despite the favourable business outlook of the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria, it was observed that the required skilled human capital for sustainable hospitality and tourism businesses in Nigeria and by extension the South-South part of the country is limited. Higher institutions in the South-South Nigeria had consistently experienced limited student enrolment into the discipline of HMT yearly compared to other disciplines. Only 1 out of every 10 students currently on the HMT programme in institutions in the South-South Nigeria chooses HTM as the most preferred course in joint admission and matriculation board (JAMB). This is a negative trend that should be immediately nipped on the board for sustainable hospitality and tourism businesses in Nigeria and more so in South-South Nigeria.

Various factors may be responsible for this negative trend but a major among them is poor institutional service quality offered to students by higher institutions offering the HMT course in South-South Nigeria. Vatta and Bhatara (2013) opined that institutions' service quality factors lead to academic satisfaction that enables education institutions to attract, retain and also expect prospective students. This implies that satisfied students will probably talk to others about their academic experience hence, a positive word of mouth. It was reported that there is a strong correlation between institutional service quality and students' academic satisfaction (Asaduzzaman et al., 2013; Malik et al., 2010; Sultan & Wong, 2010). Institutional service quality in this context is said to be strongly associated with the quality of teaching by the academic staff, the conducive learning environment of the institution, the relevance of

courses offered at various levels of the programme and as well students' support services such as counselling among others (Abu Nabah, 2004; Majeed & Ziadat, 2008). This implies that the question of how students feel about their academic programme and their learning experience as a whole should be of importance to the stakeholders in the knowledge industry (Lai et al., 2011; Talmacean & Domnica, 2013). In view of this, an attempt to attract more students to study HTM courses in institutions of higher learning in South-South Nigeria may require understanding predictors of institutional service quality that promote students' academic satisfaction.

Previous studies had examined the relationship between service quality dimensions and customers' satisfaction in the context of service sectors such as hotels and restaurants (Alexandris, et al., 2002), the banking sector (Angur et al., 1999), health care (Shemwell & Yuvas, 1999), transportation (Shefali, 2010) and sports and Leisure Centres (Howat et al., 2002). Studies on institutional service quality and students' academic satisfaction had been extensively researched in respect of advanced western countries however, a limited study in this context had been conducted in respect of emerging economies like Nigeria and more so in the hospitality and tourism management discipline. These are the gaps and the main focus of this study, to determine the link between institutional service quality and academic satisfaction of hospitality and tourism management students in institutions of higher learning in South-South Nigeria.

Literature Review

Because no single theory has been reported as being able to explain the relationship between the two constructs in the present study (i.e. Institutional service quality, and Students' academic satisfaction), hence, the researcher reviewed related theories on each of the constructs as of the following.

SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL model was proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) as a scale that consists of multiple items developed to assess customers' perception of quality in the service and retail businesses. The scale breaks down the notion of service quality into five (5) constructs which comprise tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Peyton, et al., 2003). SERVQUAL model explains service quality as the difference between service offerings and the customer's perception of the service received (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The SERVQUAL instrument has demonstrated excellent validity and reliability in previous research (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). It applies to various industries, for example, the adaptation of the instruments in the professional service industries such as health care (Shemwell & Yuvas, 1999), tourism and hospitality (Alexandris, et al., 2002; Howat et al., 2002; Shefali, 2010). As it applied to the current study, the quality of services offered by the higher institutions of learning in the South-South Nigeria that offers HTM program could be measured by five dimensions of

service quality such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, including their 22 corresponding items.

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory

The expectancy disconfirmation theory is popularly used to explain how consumers form satisfaction judgments by evaluating actual products/services. The theory broadly classified the process of satisfaction under three groups: Dissatisfaction, Satisfaction, and Extreme Satisfaction. The theory argued that the satisfaction process is the comparison of what was expected with the product or service performance. This process has traditionally been described as the "confirmation/disconfirmation" process (Vavra, 1997). First, customers would form expectations before purchasing a product or service. Second, consumption of or experience with the product or service produces a level of perceived quality that is influenced by expectations (Oliver, 1980). The theory holds that if the perceived performance is less than the customer's expectation, then the customer is dissatisfied. Also, if the perceived performance is exactly equal to the expectation of the customer, customers are satisfied. Customers are said to be extremely satisfied if the perceived performance exceeded the customer expectations.

As it applied to the present study, the theory posits that students of Hospitality and Tourism Management in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria would form academic expectations about the institutions prior to their enrolment into the institution to study HTM. Thereafter, the experiences of the students with the product or services rendered by institutions produce a level of perceived quality that is influenced by expectations. If the perceived performance of the institution is less than the student's academic expectations, then the students are dissatisfied. Also, if the perceived performance of the institution is exactly equal to the expectations of the students, they are satisfied. Students of HTM in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria are said to be extremely satisfied when the perceived performance of the institution exceeded their expectations. Given the applicability of these theories to the present study, the researcher adopted these two-dimensional theories in the present study.

Empirical Review

Institutional service quality is commonly noted as a critical prerequisite for establishing and sustaining satisfying relationships with valued customers (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Spreng & Mckoy, 1996). This implies that perceived service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction. Relating service quality to students' academic satisfaction, Helgesen and Nesset (2007) indicates that the management of educational institutions should focus on service quality, information, and facilities to increase the satisfaction and loyalty of their students. Adopting the 5 dimensions of service quality (SQ) indicated in the SERVQUAL model, the present study reviewed the

relationship between each of the predictors of institutional service quality and academic satisfaction as of the following.

Tangibility and Academic Satisfaction

Tangibles are defined as a visible aspect of the service that is employed by businesses to improve customers' satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Several studies that assessed service quality provided in higher institutions include the influence of tangibles (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985). Tangibles in this context explain the physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel in which services are delivered, including commodities that facilitate the performance or communication of the services (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Parasuraman et al. (1988) describe tangibility as the "solid" dimension used to assess service quality. Santos (2003) refers to tangibles as those elements of a service such as the appearance of physical facilities, tools and equipment, personnel, and communication materials in the knowledge industry. The implication in the above information shows that tangibles in the context of educational institutions can be measured with elements such as the conducive nature of the classrooms, how well equipped is the library, the cleanliness of the classrooms, visual attractiveness of the departmental buildings, facilities in the classrooms, speed and availability of internet services among others. Ham and Hayduk (2003) examined the relationship between tangibility and academic satisfaction in the higher education setting.

The results of the study show that there is a significant and positive correlation between tangibility and students' academic satisfaction. Hishamuddin et al. (2008) examined the relationship between tangibility and academic satisfaction in the Malaysian higher institution of learning. The results indicate that there is significant and positive relationships between tangibility and students' academic satisfaction. Further establishing the relationship between tangibility and students' academic satisfaction, Cuthbert (1996) found that among the dimensions of institutional quality (SQ), the score for tangibility is the highest. The author however added that this represents tangibility as a major contributor towards the satisfaction of the students as he believes it is the service encounter that is the determinant factor. O'Neill and Palmer (2004) hold the same idea that, tangibility is ranked as the best in terms of the overall performance score. Based on this review, we propose that:

H_1 There is a significant relationship between tangibility and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria.

Reliability and Academic Satisfaction

Primarily, institutional service quality focuses on how to meet the customers' expectations (Ali & Ahmed, 2016). Because expectations are dynamic, evaluations may also shift over time, from person to person and from culture to culture. Service reliability is therefore a judgment of

customers/clients regarding the overall performance of the organization and its services (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Reliability, explains the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (Zeithaml et al., 1990). It is the ability to deliver the desired service dependably, accurately and consistently (Parasuraman et al., 1990; Zeithaml et al., 1990) hence, explains how well the service is being delivered as promised.

In the context of the knowledge industry, reliability means that the institution delivers on its promises concerning quality lecture delivery, service provision, problem resolution, and pricing (Gronroos, 1990). This implies that contemporary students want to maintain good relations with higher institutions that keep their promises, particularly promises about service outcomes and core service attributes. Reliability has been identified as the most important suggesting that students are most concerned with knowledge and courtesy. This suggests that student satisfaction is driven by the evaluation of the quality of coursework and other curriculum activities and other factors related to the university (Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2013). The above review implies that reliability in the context of higher education services is measured with items such as academic culture in the department of study, the attitude of the supporting staff in the department, how efficient and fast the results of students were managed, the quality of facilities in the classrooms and laboratories among others.

Ham and Hayduk (2003) in their study showed that the dimension of reliability has the strongest relationship with student satisfaction. Also, research by Hishamuddin et al. (2008) in the Malaysian higher learning institution indicates that there are significant and positive relationships between reliability and student satisfaction (SS). Drawing from the above review, we propose that:

H_2 There is a significant relationship between reliability and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria.

Responsiveness and Academic Satisfaction

Responsiveness can be said to be the ability of service providers to carry out services promptly according to the needs of the customers (Zeithaml et al., 1990). It is the willingness to provide prompt service and help customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The index in the above information shows that responsiveness involves how fast the response is given to customers. That is, the ability to respond to customers' requests on time. As it relates to the knowledge industry, responsiveness is defined as the immediate and efficient response of an institution's system to the need of the students. This implies how much the system is responsive towards the quality service provided by the institutions in South-South Nigeria to HTM students. Institutions offering HTM programme should be responsive to the evolving needs of their students in providing courses and training programmes that are relevant to the subject matter and as well teaching approaches.

The staff of the department should be willing and responds promptly to students' requests. Informative literature about the school and the department should be provided by the department. Lectures are expected to be prompt, effective, interactive and satisfying. However, with the advent and development in technology, course design and delivery are expected to be progressive with the innovative and spontaneous construction of knowledge which should be the product and process of learning. Ham and Hayduk (2003) in their study showed that there is a significant positive correlation between responsiveness and student satisfaction (SS). Hishamuddin et al. (2008) research in the Malaysian higher learning institution indicates that there are significant and positive relationships between responsiveness and students' academic satisfaction. Drawing from this review, we propose that:

H_3 There is a significant relationship between responsiveness and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria.

Assurance and Academic Satisfaction

The assurance dimension in SERVQUAL literature refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The inseparability of production and consumption and the co-production of services (Grönroos, 1990) implies that the people providing the service play a significant role and therefore the perceptions of the assurance dimension influences the overall perceived service quality. In the knowledge industry, education is a high-involvement service and all contact between lecturers and students is important and complex. As it applied to the current study, the assurance perceived by students of HTM in South-South Nigeria can enhance their interpersonal relationships with their teachers. The assurance dimension comprises of the following items: courteous and friendly lecturers; courteous and friendly support staff; the ability of the lecturers to inspire trust and confidence in students, and the ability of support staff to inspire trust and confidence in students.

HTM students should be able to trust and have confidence in the services (such as teaching methods, course content, and learning environment, among others) they are been offered to make a positive impact on their academic satisfaction and success. In a study by Ham and Hayduk (2003), it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between assurance and students' academic satisfaction. In another research by Hishamuddin et al. (2008), the result indicates that there are significant and positive relationships between assurance and student satisfaction, as assurance appeared to be the second strongly correlated dimension. Drawing from these reviews, we propose the hypothesis:

H_4 There is a significant relationship between assurance and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria.

Empathy and Academic Satisfaction

Empathy is defined as the ability to care for a customer's attention individually in providing service to customers (Hun et al., 2009). This suggests the need to have a better understanding of customer expectations than competitors in providing the required customer service at any time (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Anantha and Abdul Ghani (2012) suggest individualized attention, a better understanding of customers' specific needs, and enhanced communication between management and customers among others have a positive outcome on customer satisfaction. One of the functions of the knowledge industry is allowing students to freely describe particular emotions associated with sympathy and empathy for others and also help control the feelings that are not good enough (Firdaus, 2006). Hassan et.al. (2008) study showed that low levels of empathy are associated with poor academic satisfaction. Chow et al. (2007) found that students' levels of empathy have positive connections with their academic motivation, thus helping to increase their academic performance.

As it applied to the present study, empathy, therefore is the provision of caring, individualized attention to HTM students by their respective institutions in South-South Nigeria. It explains the ability to show personal caring and attention to students including how institutions give individualized attention to their students to make them feel extra valued and special. That is, treating and attending to each student differently according to their individual needs and emotions. Ham and Hayduk (2003) confirmed that there is a positive correlation between empathy and student satisfaction. Analyzing the relationship based on each of the dimensions of service quality, the authors reported that empathy had the second strong correlation with academic satisfaction. Hishamuddin et al. (2008) indicate that the dimension of empathy is strongly correlated with student satisfaction implying that if students feel they get individualized and quality attention from their institution, it tends to boost academic satisfaction. Drawing from the above literature review, we propose the hypothesis:

H_5 There is a significant relationship between empathy and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria.

Operational Framework

The framework of ISQ-SAS of HTM students in higher institutions of learning in the South-South, Nigeria is proposed for this study as shown in Figure 1. The ISQ -SAS model shows five dimensions of institutional service quality and academic satisfaction as independent and dependent variables respectively. The independent variables include; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The model is expected to explain the relationship between the dimensions of institutional service quality and the dependent variable (i.e. Academic satisfaction) in the context of HTM students in higher institutions of learning in South-South Nigeria.

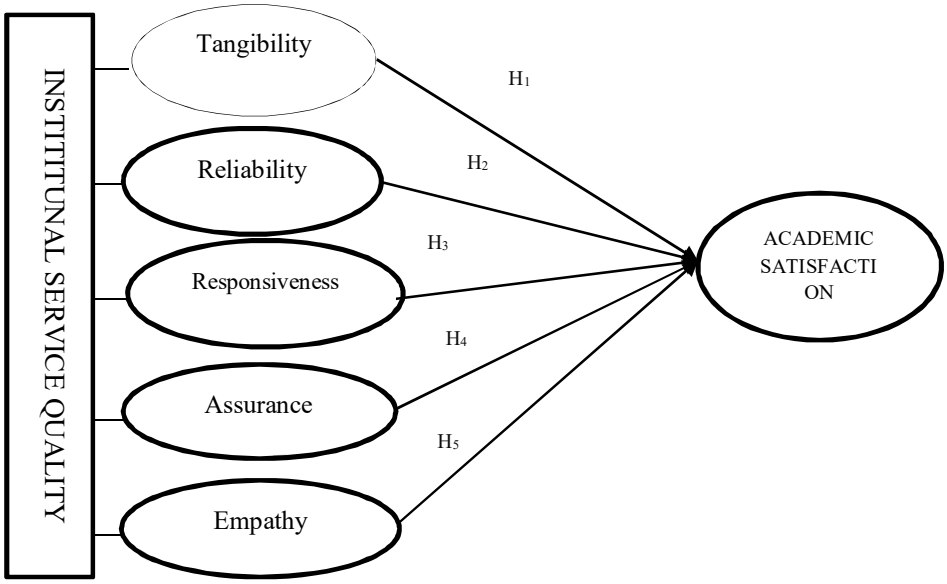


Figure 1: ISQ **-SAS Model of HTM Students in South-South Nigeria.**
Source: Authors Conceptualisation (2021).

Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design, hence the researchers used a structured questionnaire to measure the relationship between predictors of institutional service quality and academic satisfaction in respect of students of HTM at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, and Federal Polytechnic Auchi, Edo State. Both institutions being federal institutions of higher learning are located in South-South Nigeria. The two institutions were selected for this study because they are the only federal tertiary institutions offering HTM courses in South-South Nigeria. The research population for the study comprised of 100- 400 level degree students of the Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism, University of Port Harcourt who are currently enrolled in the 2020/21 academic session, totalling 594 students. This also includes the registered students of both the National Diploma 1 and 2, and Higher National Diploma 1 and 2 of the Department of Hospitality Management in Federal Polytechnic, Auchi in the 2020/21 academic session totalling 396 students. This implies that the total population of HTM used for this study from both institutions is 990 students.

However, since it is practically impossible for the researchers to sample the entire students of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management in both institutions, the researcher determines the proportion of the sample unit that will constitute the sample. To determine the sample size of the respondents in each level in the department of HMT, University of Port

Harcourt, and Federal Polytechnic Auchi, the researcher align with the method of proportional allocation as suggested in Kothari (1990). The concept of propositional allocation suggests that the sizes of samples from different strata are kept propositional to the sizes of the strata. Taro Yamane formula was applied to determine the sample size (n) as shown in Table 1 based on proportional allocation.

Table 1: Observation Unit of HMT Students in the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic Auchi, 2020/2021 Academic Session

Institution	Level of Programme	Number of Enrolled Students	Sample Size
	100	114	32
University of	200	154	44
Port Harcourt, Rivers State	300	150	43
	400	176	50
	ND1	108	31
Federal Polytechnic	ND2	60	17
Auch, Edo State	HND1	108	31
	HND2	120	35
Total		990	283

Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

Thus, the sample size for this research is 283 as shown in Table 1. The questionnaire used for this study was adopted from Juliet et al., (2003). The adopted Lodging Quality Index instrument comprises five (core themes) dimensions of service quality, with 26 corresponding items in part two of the instrument. The third part of the questionnaire highlights academic satisfaction hence, Bello and Majebi (2018) customer satisfaction scale were adopted hence, consisting of four measures of customers' satisfaction.

The researchers conducted a pilot test to determine the extent to which the items in the instrument measures each of the core service quality and academic satisfaction constructs. The instrument was pre-tested with 100 participants comprising of students of HMT in both institutions using SPSS version 23. The reliability test for each of the constructs in the instrument was examined for its Cronbach's Alpha. The outcome of the analysis shows that each of the constructs in the instrument has a Cronbach's Alpha reading > 0.7 as indicated in Table 2. The findings corroborate Hair et al. (2006) and a Nunnally (1967) findings which suggest that a Cronbach's Alpha reading of 0.7 and above is considered satisfactory.

Table 2: Reliability of Individual Variables

Dimensions of Institutional Service Quality	**Cronbach Alpha**
Tangibility	.932
Reliability	.909
Responsiveness	.954
Assurance	.886
Empathy	.824
Academic Satisfaction	.975

Source: Author's Computation (2021).

The validity of the scale was done using expert opinion. To determine the relationship between the dimensions of institutional service quality and students' academic satisfaction, multiple regression analysis was conducted on the data collected.

Findings

Results of the extent each dimension of the institutional service quality impacted HMT students' academic satisfaction in the context of the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic Auchi were analyzed and the results is as follows:

Table 3: Percentage Item Analysis of Tangibility

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
The classrooms are conducive to learning	-	16.4	15.5	31.8	36.4
The library atmosphere is serene and well-equipped with academic materials	10.2	10.8	27.0	26.0	26.0
The environment of the classrooms is always clean	-	6.8	19.1	10.0	64.1
The facilities in the classrooms are well maintained	-	12.7	21.8	52.3	13.2
The outdoor surroundings of the departmental building is visually attractive	-	10.5	30.5	44.5	14.5

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree= 2, Neutral= 3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree = 5.
Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

Table 3 depicted the extent the tangible factor of institutional services offered by the department of hospitality management and tourism impacts the academic satisfaction of HMT students at the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. The result shows that the item with the statement "The environment of the classrooms are always clean" has the highest

percentage of 64.1%, followed by the statement "The facilities in the classrooms are well maintained" with 52.3%, followed by the statement "The outdoor surroundings of the departmental building is visually attractive" has 44.5%, followed by the statement "The library atmosphere is serene and well equipped with academic materials, with 39.0%. The statement "The classrooms are conducive for learning" has 36.4%. All of the response to each of the statements falls under the Likert scale (Agree), except for the statement "The library atmosphere is serene and well equipped with academic materials" which falls under the Likert scale (Disagree). This implies that the majority of the respondents believe that the tangible component of the services offered by their department in both institutions impacted their academic satisfaction.

Table 4: Percentage Item Analysis of Reliability

Items	**SD (%)**	**D (%)**	**N (%)**	**A (%)**	**SA (%)**
My results are calculated and handled efficiently and promptly by lecturers.	12.7	5.9	30.9	21.8	28.6
Fans, lights, switches and other mechanical and electrical appliances in the classrooms and kitchen work properly	-	-	-	64.1	35.9
The supporting staffs in the department are helpful	-	47.3	6.8	8.2	37.7
Lecturers can are always available for lectures at every specified time	-	-	22.7	14.5	62.7
The lecturers accurately answer my questions	16.4	15.5	31.8	36.4	-

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree= 2, Neutral= 3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree = 5.
Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

Table 4 shows the extent to which the reliability factor of services offered by the department of hospitality management and tourism impacts on academic satisfaction of HMT students at the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. The result shows that the item with the statement "Fans, lights, switches and other mechanical and electrical appliances in the classrooms and laboratory works properly" has the highest percentage of 64.1%, followed by the statement "Lecturers are always available for lectures at every specified time" with 62.7%. An item with the statement "The supporting staffs in the department are helpful" has 37.7%. The statement "Lecturers can accurately answer my questions" has 36.4% and "My results are calculated and handled efficiently and promptly by lecturers" has 30.9%. All of the response to each of the statements falls under the Likert scale (Agree) except the item with the statement "Lecturers can accurately answer my questions" which falls on the Likert scale (Neutral). The results

show that the majority of the respondents believe that the reliability attribute of services offered by the department of HMT in both institutions impacted their academic satisfaction.

Table 5: Percentage Item Analysis of Responsiveness

Items	**SD (%)**	**D (%)**	**N (%)**	**A (%)**	**SA (%)**
The staff of the department are willing and responds promptly to my requests	-	-	5.5	50.9	43.6
Informative literature about the school and the department was provided by the department	-	-	5.0	51.8	43.2
Lectures are prompt, effective, interactive and satisfying	10	15	10.5	16.8	47.7
Staff in the department are willing to answer my questions	-	-	5.5	54.5	40.0
Staff in the department responded quickly to solve my problems	-	-	9.2	34.8	56

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree= 2, Neutral= 3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree = 5.
Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

Table 5 depicted the extent of responsiveness in the services offered by the department of hospitality management and tourism impacts on the academic satisfaction of HMT students at the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. The result shows that the item with the statement "Staff in the department responded quickly to solve my problems" has the highest percentage of 56.0%, followed by the statement "Staff in the department are willing to answer my questions" with 54.5%. An item with the statement "Informative literature about the school and the department was provided by the department" has 51.8%, an item with the statement "Staff of the department are willing and responds promptly to my requests" has 50.9% and an item with the statement "Lectures are prompt, effective, interactive and satisfying" has 47.7%. All of the response to each of the statements falls under the Likert scale (Agree). The results imply that the majority of the respondents believe that the extent of responsiveness in the services offered by the department in both institutions impacted their academic satisfaction.

Table 6: Percentage Item Analysis of Assurance

Items	**SD (%)**	**D (%)**	**N (%)**	**A (%)**	**SA (%)**
Lecturers treat students with respect	-	-	-	41	59
The department is safe and conducive enough for learning	41.8	21.4	6.4	11.8	18.6
Facilities in the department are conveniently located	3.2	50.9	16.4	29.5	-

Students are encouraged to know about local places of interest on and off campus	53.6	0.9	12.7	23.6	9.1
Lecturers are polite when answering my questions	21.8	35.5	15.5	6.4	20.9

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree= 2, Neutral= 3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree = 5.
Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

Table 6 depicted the extent to the assurance attributes in the services offered by the department of hospitality management and tourism impact the academic satisfaction of HMT students at the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. The result shows that the item with the statement "Lecturers treated me with respect." has the highest percentage of 59.0%, followed by the statement "Students are encouraged to know about local places of interest on and off campus" with 53.6%, the item with the statement "Facilities in the department are conveniently located" has 50.9%, item with the statement " The department is safe and conducive enough for learning" has 41.8%, and item with the statement "Lecturers are polite when answering my questions" has 35.5%. All of the response to each of the statements falls under the Likert scale (Strongly Disagree and Disagree), except for the statement "Lecturers treat students with respect" with 59.0%, which falls under the Likert scale (Strongly Agree). The results show that the majority of the respondents believe that the assurance factor in services provided by the department never impacted their academic satisfaction.

Table 7: Percentage Item Analysis of Empathy

Items	**SD (%)**	**D (%)**	**N (%)**	**A (%)**	**SA (%)**
The academic and non-academic staff are cordial	-	39.1	35.5	15.5	10.0
Management of the department considers students' needs while making decisions	-	-	35.5	15.5	49.1
My needs are been attended to with undivided attention and great concern	-	-	50.9	36.4	12.7
Management of the department has the students' best interest at heart	-	5.9	4.5	62.3	27.3
Lecturers try to find out my particular need	20.5	30.5	1.8	16.4	30.9

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree= 2, Neutral= 3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree = 5.
Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

Table 7 depicted the respondents' feelings on the extent empathy factor of services offered impact the academic satisfaction of HMT students at the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. The result

shows that the item with the statement "Management of the department has the students' best interest at heart" has the highest percentage of 62.3%, followed by the statement "My needs are been attended to with undivided attention and great concern" with 50.9%, the item with the statement "Management of the department takes students' need into consideration while making decisions" has 49.1%, and item with the statement "The academic and non-academic staff are cordial" has 35.5% and the statement "Lecturers try to find out my particular need" has 30.5%. All of the response to each of the statements falls under the Likert scale (Agree) except items "My needs are been attended to with undivided attention and great concern and the academic and non-academic staff are cordial" that fall on the Likert scale (Disagree). This shows that the majority of the students believe that the factor of empathy of service quality impacted their academic satisfaction.

Table 8: Correlations of Institutional Service Quality and Students' Academic Satisfaction

Variables	**R**	**P**	**Level**
Student Academic Satisfaction (SAS)	**--**	**--**	**--**
Tangibility (TAN)	0.700**	0 .030	High
Reliability (REL)	0.073**	0 .020	Low
Responsiveness (RESP)	0.317**	0 .010	Low
Assurance (ASR)	0.533**	0 .040	Medium
Empathy (EMP)	0.381**	0 .042	Low

** Correlation is significant at 0.01level (2 tailed).
Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson correlation to determine the relationship between each of the five predictors of institutional service quality and academic satisfaction of HMT students in both the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi. The results as shown in Table 8 depicted that the five dimensions of institutional service quality were found to be; tangibility (TAN) ($r = 0.700$; $p = 0.030$), reliability (REL) ($r = 0.073$; $p = 0.020$); responsiveness (REP) ($r = 0.317$; $p = 0.010$), Assurance (ASR) ($r = 0.533$; $p = 0.040$) and Empathy (EMP) ($r = 0.381$; $p = 0.042$). This suggests that all the tested dimensions of institutional service quality have a positive and significant relationship with student academic satisfaction (SAS). In terms of the strength of the relationship, the result shows that tangibility has a high and positive relationship ($r = 0.700$), reliability has a low and positive relationship ($r = 0.073$), responsiveness has a low and positive relationship ($r = 0.317$), empathy has a low and positive relationship ($r = 0.381$) and the assurance also has a positive and medium relationship ($r = 0.533$). Therefore, the alternate hypothesis was accepted which states that there is a significant and positive relationship between institutional service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) and student

academic satisfaction in respect of University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi. This suggests that when there is any change to any of these factors, academic satisfaction among Hospitality and Tourism Management students in both institutions tends to be affected.

Table 9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.982[a]	.964	.821	.06889

a. Predictors: (Constant), CMS, SRB, TSQ, RSQ

Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

From Table 9, it was depicted that the R-square for the model was .964 which implies that the dimensions of institutional service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) explained about 96.4% of the variance in academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students of the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi. Thus, the remaining 4.6% is due to other factors and residuals. Also, the multiple R = .982 revealed a significantly high relationship between independent variables (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) and the dependent variable (academic satisfaction) of the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi.

Table 10: ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.128	4	.032	6.435	.0230[a]
	Residual	.005	1	.005		
	Total	.133	5			
a. Predictors: (Constant), EMP, ASR, REL, REP, TAN						
b. Dependent Variable: ACS.						

Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

From Table 10, the result of the analysis shows that the "F" value was significant (F= 6.435, p=.0230). This shows that the model was valid. Thus, based on the findings it can be concluded that there was a linear relationship between the predictors (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students of the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi.

Table 4: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.054	.177	1.06	5.962	.000
	EMP	.057	.203	0.07	.279	.785
	REL	.012	.521	0.15	.023	.205
	TAN	.692	.321	2.15	1.453	.045
	ASR	.591	.241	0.63	-2.451	.032
	REP	.591	.241	0.63	-2.451	.032
a. Dependent Variable: SAS						

Source: Authors' Computation (2021).

In comparing the contribution of each independent variable, Beta values were used. As illustrated in the standardized coefficient column, Tangibility (TAN) makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining academic satisfaction with (β=2.15), followed by assurance (ASR) with (β=0.63) and responsiveness (REP) with (β=0.63). Reliability made the fourth relative contribution, (β= 0.15), while Empathy made the least relative contribution (β= 0.07). The outcome of the result indicates that an increase in tangibility; assurance; responsiveness; reliability, and empathy increases the academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students at the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between tangibility and academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students of the University of Port Harcourt and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi. This result is in conformity with previous literature in the domain of service quality. Ham and Hayduk (2003) examined the relationship between tangibility and academic satisfaction in the higher education setting. The authors reveal that the conducive nature of the classrooms, and how well equipped is the library impacts students' academic satisfaction. Hishamuddin et al. (2008) also examined the relationship between tangibility and academic satisfaction in the Malaysian higher institution of learning. The results indicate that the cleanliness of the classrooms, visual attractiveness of the departmental buildings, facilities in the classrooms, and availability of speed internet services among others impact students' academic satisfaction. The current study also reveals tangibility as the service quality element with the highest prediction of academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management students of the University of Port Harcourt and Federal Polytechnic Auchi. This finding conforms to Cuthbert (1996) who found that among the dimensions of service quality (SQ), the score for tangibility is the

highest. This implies that the management of institutions of higher learning in the South-South, Nigeria should focus on the provisions of tangible assets such as well equip is library, neat classrooms, visually attractive departmental buildings, equipped lecture rooms and availability of internet services among others to impact on academic satisfaction of her HMT students.

Furthermore, the current study found that a positive and significant correlation exists between reliability and student academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management Students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria. This finding conforms to previous literature hence, Ham and Hayduk (2003) in their study showed that the dimension of reliability has the strongest relationship with student satisfaction. Also, research by Hishamuddin et al. (2008) in the Malaysian higher learning institution indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between reliability and student satisfaction. Kogovsek and Kogovsek (2013) opined that reliability has been identified as the most important suggesting that students are most concerned with knowledge and courtesy. Reliability, explains the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (Zeithaml et al., 1990). The implication of this is that the management of institutions of higher learning in the South-South, Nigeria should make a consistent effort to delivering on her promises to prospective and returning students with respect to quality lectures delivery, service provision, problem resolution, and pricing. Other areas of focus should include reliant academic culture, unwavering attitude of both academic and the supporting staff, efficient and fast management of student results among others to impact on academic satisfaction of her HMT students.

In addition, the current study found a positive and significant correlation between responsiveness and student academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management Students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria. Responsiveness can be said to be the ability of service providers to carry out services promptly according to the needs of the customers (Zeithaml et al., 1990). The finding in this study conforms to previous literature hence, Ham and Hayduk (2003) in their study showed that there is a significant positive correlation between responsiveness and student satisfaction (SS). Hishamuddin et al. (2008) research in the Malaysian higher learning institution indicates that there are significant and positive relationships between responsiveness and student academic satisfaction. The implication of this is that institutions offering HTM course in South-South, Nigeria should be responsive to the evolving needs of their students in providing courses and training programmes that are relevant to the subject matter and as well teaching approaches. The staff of the department of HMT should be willing and responds promptly to students' requests. Informative literature about the school and the department should be provided by the department. Lectures are expected to be prompt, effective, interactive and satisfying to impact on academic satisfaction of her HMT students.

Once again, the current study found a positive and significant correlation between assurance and student academic satisfaction of Hospitality and Tourism Management Students in higher institutions in South-South Nigeria. The assurance dimension includes courteous and friendly lecturers; courteous and friendly support staff; the ability of the lecturers to inspire trust and confidence in students; the ability of support staff to inspire trust and confidence in students. HTM students should be able to trust and have confidence in the services (such as teaching methods, course content, learning environment, among others) they are been offered to make a positive impact on their academic satisfaction and success. In a study by Ham & Hayduk (2003), it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between assurance and students' academic satisfaction. In another research by Hishamuddin et al. (2008), the result indicates that there are significant and positive relationships between assurance and student satisfaction, as assurance appeared to be the second strongly correlated dimension. In addition, the current study found a positive and significant correlation between empathy and student academic satisfaction. Empathy is defined as the ability to care for a customer's attention individually in providing service to customers (Hun et al., 2009).

Empathy, is the provision of caring, individualized attention to HTM students by their respective institutions in South-South Nigeria. It explains the ability to show personal caring and attention to students including how institutions give individualized attention to their students to make them feel extra valued and special. That is, treating and attending to each student differently according to their individual needs and emotions. Ham and Hayduk (2003) confirmed that there is a positive correlation between empathy and student satisfaction. Analyzing the relationship based on each of the dimensions of service quality, the authors reported that empathy has the second strong correlation with academic satisfaction. Hishamuddin et al. (2008) indicate that the dimension of empathy is strongly correlated with student satisfaction implying that if students feel they get individualized and quality attention from their institution, it tends to boost academic satisfaction.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn based on the findings of this study is that the management of the higher institution of learning that offers HMT course in South-South Nigeria should collaborate with stakeholders such as the organised private sector and the government to provide facilities and structure that can help improve and deliver on service quality in our tertiary instructions hence, increase academic satisfaction of students. In addition, the study concludes that the management of institutions of higher learning in the South-South, Nigeria should make a consistent effort to train and retrain their staff to inculcate reliant academic culture, and unwavering attitude aimed at delivering on her promises to prospective students with respect to quality lectures delivery, service provision, problem resolution, and pricing.

Furthermore, the management of institutions offering HTM course in South-South, Nigeria and the National University Commission (NUC) should collaborate be responsive to the evolving needs of the students in providing relevant courses and reviewing of existing minimum academic standard for HMT programme as well as teaching approaches. The staff of the department of HMT should be willing and responds promptly to students' requests. Informative literature about the school and the department should be provided by the department. Lectures are expected to be prompt, effective, interactive and satisfying to impact on academic satisfaction of HMT students. This study contributes to the body of knowledge as it proposed and validates the ISQ-SAS model that explains the link between institutional service quality and students' academic satisfaction in respect of education institutions in an emerging country.

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