

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**  
**COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI**

**EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND QUALITY SERVICE  
DELIVERY: A CASE OF SELECTED FOUR STAR HOTELS IN GREATER  
ACCRA REGION**



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Studies, University of Education, Winneba in partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
the award of the Master of Philosophy (Catering and Hospitality) degree.

**AUGUST, 2021**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. GILBERT OWIAH SAMPSON

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my lovely family.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
ABSTRACT .....	x
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Main objective .....	5
1.4 Specific Objectives .....	5
1.5 Research Questions.....	5
1.6 Significance of the study.....	6
1.7 Scope of the Study .....	6
1.8 Organization of Study .....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study .....	8
2.2 Overview of Hotel Industry in Ghana.....	11
2.2.1 Hotel Rating System .....	13
2.3 Recruitment Criteria for Hotel Industry.....	20

2.4 Employee Physical Appearance.....	23
2.4.1 Gender of Employee .....	27
2.4.2 Physical Beauty of Employee .....	28
2.5 Contributing Factors of Employees Physical Appearance on Customers .....	30
2.6 Service Quality in the Hotel Industry .....	34
2.6.1 Service Quality Dimensions In The Hospitality Industry.....	38
2.7 Challenges Employees face in Service Delivery .....	41
2.8 Empirical Studies .....	44
2.8.1 Effects of Employee physical appearance on Service Delivery .....	44
2.8.2 Relationship between staff physical appearance and client loyalty.....	47
2.8.3 Relationship between staff physical appearance and Customer Retention.....	53
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>56</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>56</b>
3.1 Study Area .....	56
3.2 Research Design.....	57
3.3 Population .....	57
3.4 Sample Size and Sample Technique .....	58
3.5 Data collection instrument .....	59
3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument .....	60
3.7 Data collection procedure .....	61
3.8 Data analysis .....	62
3.9 Ethical Considerations .....	62



<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	64
<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	64
4.1 Response Rate.....	64
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Hotel Management Staff.....	64
4.3 Demographic Characteristics of customers .....	66
4.4 Physical appearance 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees .....	69
4.5 Customers perception of employee physical appearance .....	73
4.6 Customers perception of quality service delivery practices at 4-Star Hotel.....	78
4.6.1 Reliability of service provided.....	79
4.6.2 Assurance given by Employees .....	80
4.6.3 Tangibility (Physical facilities and equipment) .....	81
4.6.4 Empathy shown by employees.....	82
4.6.5 Responsiveness Practices.....	82
4.7 Relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery. .....	86
4.7.1 Correlation Analysis .....	86
4.7.2 Regression Analysis.....	88
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....	90
<b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> ..	90
5.1 Summary .....	90
5.2 Summary of Findings.....	90
5.2.1 Physical appearance 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees .....	91
5.2.2 Customers perception of employee physical appearance .....	91
5.2.3 Customers perception of quality service delivery practices at 4-Star Hotel.....	91



5.2.4 Relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery .....	92
5.3 Conclusion .....	92
5.4 Recommendation .....	93
5.5 Future Research .....	94
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>95</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b> .....	<b>115</b>
<b>APPENDIX B</b> .....	<b>116</b>
<b>APPENDIX C</b> .....	<b>118</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 4. 1: Demographic characteristics of hotel management staff.....	65
Table 4. 2: Demographic characteristics of hotel customers .....	67
Table 4. 3: Views on physical appearance considered by 4-Star hotels .....	69
Table 4. 4: Customers perception of employee physical appearance .....	73
Table 4. 5: Consumer perception on quality service practices of hotels .....	78
Table 4. 6: Rank of customers perception of quality service.....	83
Table 4. 7: Correlation Matrix of employee physical appearance and quality service	87
Table 4. 8: Test of Model for Service Quality and Customer satisfaction .....	88



## ABSTRACT

Employees' physical appearance is an important commercial advantage for the hotel industries in Ghana. In the face of competition, most hotels tend to look for beautiful ladies and handsome young men to be at their front desk to attract and retain customers. The desire of hotels to recruit employees based on their physical appearance sometimes backfires if the employee does not possess the requisite skills needed for the successful performance of the job. Based on this, the study aimed at evaluating employee physical appearance and its impact on service delivery in 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region. Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study sampled 324 respondents comprising; 44 managements, and 280 customers. Purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents. Questionnaires were developed to obtain the relevant information from the respondents. The study revealed that 86.8% of 4-Star hotels management consider the physical appearance of people when recruiting employees. The finding further discovered that 76.3% of customers pay attention to physical appearance of hotel employees. The study showed that customers perceived that 4-Star hotels have a good reliability of services, assurance, high tangibility and adopt proper employees' responsive techniques in addressing their challenges. The study revealed that employee physical appearance is significant in affecting the quality service delivery at the 4-Star hotel ( $F(d)=69.78, p=0.000<0.01$ ). it was concluded that 48.3% of the variations in quality service delivery at 4-Star hotels can be explained by employee physical appearance and 51.7% of variation in quality service delivery is explained by other factors that are not within the control of the research. It was recommended that managers of hotels should also put more emphasis on physical appearance during recruitment of employees and other factors which may lead to quality service delivery in order to create customer satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The hospitality industry is one of the largest and fastest growing industries around the world (Morrison & Mahoney, 2016). The industry comprises of various sub-sectors which include the hotel sector, restaurant and resort. The hospitality industry is a sector that most countries including Ghana try to develop. World Tourism Organization (WTO) statistics (2017) reported that Ghana is one of the top emerging destinations in Africa with an annual growth rate of 10% between 2015 and 2017. Hospitality business contributes a major proportion of earnings to the tourism industry in Ghana. The hotel industry provides accommodation and food services for people when they travel away from their homes. The hotel industry is also known as a “people business”. The people in this context refer to both employees who deliver the products and services, and to customers who consume them.

According to Gilbert & Wong (2016), offering quality service to customers is a prerequisite for hotels to survive and be successful as it competes with other firms in the industry. Delivering quality service is important whether the hotel is offering the product or service as businesses mobilizes its scarce resources to serve customers. Hotel efforts are geared toward satisfying the needs of the customer and ensuring customers stay with the business by giving good services to its customers and employing physically attractive employees to deliver these services (Gilbert & Wong, 2016). Hospitality employee’s physical appearance is very critical in ensuring service quality delivery as the employees constantly interact with different customers every day so they are the way that new customers are forming first impression every day (Agarwal, 2016). Employee physical appearance is the physical characteristics and

visible specific attributes of an employee, which relate both to its physical and bodily integrity (morphology, height, weight, facial features, phenotype, stigma) and to elements related to the expression of its personality (clothing, accessories, hair, beard, piercings, tattoos, make-up). Employee physical appearance has become one of the most frequent discrimination cases at work over the past twenty years (Froger-Michon & Piat, 2019).

Employee physical appearance positively or negatively affects advertising attitude, product attitude and purchase intention. Caballero and Pride (2018) drew the same conclusion as highly positive employee physical appearance leads to higher purchase intention. Employees who are seen as attractive being seen as sociable to customers than those who are not attractive (Watkins & Johnston, 2000). Watkins & Johnston (2000) revealed that employee physical appearance in terms of age, gender, physical appearance, and physical beauty persuades consumers.

Marketing applications of employee physical appearance can be found in the areas of advertising, personal selling, retailing, and market research (Argo, Dahl, & Morales, 2008). According to Caballero and Pride (2018), physically attractive employees are generally more persuasive than their less attractive counterparts. For instance, customers show higher purchase intentions toward the advertised product/service when the spokespersons are perceived to be highly attractive rather than unattractive (Kahle & Homer, 2015). Similarly, customers perceive attractive employee more favorably, respond to their sales pitches more readily, and exhibit higher purchase intentions than they do to unattractive employee (DeShields, Kara, & Kaynak, 2016). A study in the retail context finds that consumers consider employee physical appearance as social information, especially when the consumption and identity of consumers and referents are aligned (Dahl, Argo, & Morales, 2012).

As high-contact services tend to be more labor intensive, an ensuing implication is that the quality of the service is often tied to its provider (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Customers often use physical attractiveness to evaluate frontline employees as it helps to form an impression on which further judgments are made (Luoh & Tsaur, 2009; Sundaram & Webster, 2000). People tend to assume that a person who is attractive also has many other positive attributes, otherwise known as the “what is beautiful is good” phenomenon (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 2012; Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 2011; Feingold, 2012). Attractive people tend to be perceived as friendlier, warmer, and more poised than less attractive people (Chaiken, 2019). Attractiveness is associated with the perceived ability to perform certain tasks. These positive attributes serve as nonverbal communication and are closely tied with the tangibility aspect of service quality, which ultimately influences service evaluation (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000). Thus, it is expected that in a hotel industry, an employee characteristic will have a positive impact on quality service delivery. That is, customers who perceive the service employee to be attractive are more likely to assess the employee positively.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Employees’ physical appearance is an important commercial advantage for the hotel industries in Ghana. The opinion of the guests about the quality of service is, among other things, related to the employees’ physical appearance (Timming et al., 2017). There is a challenge that most hotels face in recruiting the right employees to serve customers. In the fears of competition, most hotels tend to look for beautiful ladies and handsome young men to be at their front desk to attract and retain customers. The desire by hotels to recruit employees based on their physical

appearance sometimes backfires if the employee does not possess the requisite skills needed for the successful performance of the job. Such lack of skill can cause the hotel a great deal through profit reduction, customers switching to other hotel and spreading bad word of mouth about bad services they received from a particular hotel.

Customers often use physical appearance to evaluate employees as it helps to form an impression on which further judgments are made (Luoh & Tsaur, 2009; Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Hotel nowadays employs physically attractive employees because they tend to assume that a person who is attractive also has many other positive attributes, otherwise known as the “what is beautiful is good” phenomenon but ignoring employees with negative behaviour affect the quality service of the hotel leading to more incidents of bad experience for the guests which results in reduced repeat business for the hotel besides creating a hostile working environment for other employees, and a negative impact on the hotel’s reputation.

Although, researches and projects on physical appearance of hotel employees and quality service delivery are common, but these projects and researches are rare in Ghana. Research, program reports, and other materials specifically related to physical appearance of hotel employees are not abundant either in Ghana. The researcher extensive review of the pertinent literature revealed numerous studies in Ghana was conducted in financial institutions. For instance, Kafui (2016) study in Ghana focused on the influence of employee physical appearance on customer service was conducted in the banking sector. Also, the study by Abbasi and Alvi (2013); Knežević, Tomka, Bizjak, Fabjan and Kukulj (2015); Ching-Sung, Yen-Cheng, Tung-Han and Pei-Ling (2012) on influence on quality service delivery in the hospitality industry was conducted in different countries. As a result, this development has thus necessitated

the researcher to evaluate employee physical appearance and its impact on service delivery in 4-Star hotels.

### **1.3 Main objective**

The main objective of the study is to evaluate employee physical appearance and its impact on service delivery in 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the physical appearance that 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees.
2. To ascertain customers perception of employee physical appearance on service quality delivery at 4-Star hotel in Greater Accra Region.
3. To examine the relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions were set in order to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. What physical appearance do 4-star hotels look for before recruiting employees?
2. What are customer's perceptions of employee's characteristics on service delivery at 4-Star hotel in Greater Accra Region?
3. Does employee physical appearance have influence on quality service delivery at 4-Star hotel in Greater Accra Region?



## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The outcome of the research will help management of 4-Star hotels and other organisations in repositioning their practices through building a strong employee base. Identifying the needs and wants of customers are necessary if the hotel want to compete in today's competitive business environment and this can be achieved through the delivery of effective customer service. The study will in this case be very useful in customer service and retention strategies through recruiting the right calibre of employees.

Also, this research will serve as a guide for future entrepreneurs and organizations that want to invest in the hotel industry to know the value of employee physical appearance and its effects on service delivery. Many hotels fail not because their products or service delivery are bad or inferior but rather their inability to effectively position the right calibre of employees at certain areas in order to retain and maintain customers. This study will therefore aid sinking hotels in their competitive efforts of getting the right employees.

Moreover, this research will be relevant for the purposes of academic work. The study will serve as a foundation for further research for students, researchers, lecturers and others who are interested in studying similar topic. It will also serve as an academic reference in marketing and human resource management disciplines.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study was conducted at 4-Star hotels in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study concentrated on employees and customers of the 4-Star hotels in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. In terms of content the study focused on the characteristics hotels as an employer looks for when recruiting staff, customers

perception of employee physical appearance on service delivery, customers perception of quality service delivery practices, and the effect of employee physical appearance on service delivery at 4-Star hotel in greater Accra Region.

## **1.8 Organization of Study**

The study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter contained the background to the study, statement of the problem, the main objective of the study, specific objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and scope of the study. The second chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical basis of the study. The literature reviewed was related to the topic under the following subheadings: concept of overview of hotels in Ghana, employee characteristics, customers perception of quality service delivery practices, and the effect of employee physical appearance on service delivery.

The third chapter highlighted the research methodology with the following subheadings research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, validity of the instruments, reliability of the instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. The fourth chapter contained the data analysis, interpretation and discussions. Chapter five comprised the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was anchored on expectancy- disconfirmation theory and is the most widely accepted theory to explain how quality service affect customer satisfaction. Discontinuation theory argues that ‘satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience that occurs as a result of comparing service performance against expectations. Mattila and O’Neill (2003) argues that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience that occurs as a result of comparing service performance against expectations. Basically, satisfaction is the result of direct experiences with products or services, and it occurs by comparing perceptions against a standard. Mattila and O’Neill mentioned that how the service was delivered is more important than the outcome of the service process, and dissatisfaction towards the service often simply occurs when guest’s perceptions do not meet their expectations.

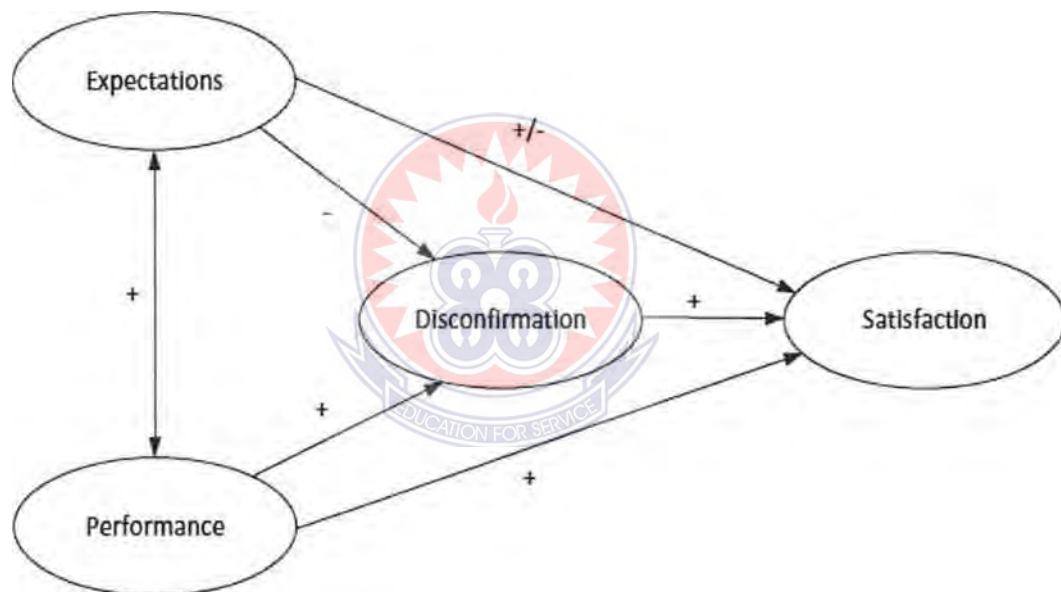
The expectancy disconfirmation model has emerged as the predominant model of explaining quality service delivery on customer satisfaction (James 2009; Morgeson 2012). The model posits that customer satisfaction is not only the result of the objective performance of a service, but also depends on the implicit prior performance expectation of that service. For instance, if the perceived performance of a service positively exceeds prior expectations this results in positive disconfirmation, which in turn will lead to more satisfied customers. Therefore, varying expectations of the performance of a service are said to play a critical role in explaining differences in customers' satisfaction (Roch & Poister 2006; Morgeson 2012).

Expectancy disconfirmation theory was developed as a way to explain customer decision-making (Oliver 1997, 1980) but the theory has been applied and confirmed in public management. The model is depicted in Figure 2.1. The expectancy disconfirmation model is premised upon three core relationships. The first focal relationship is the direct effect of perceptions of performance on customer satisfaction. This is a fairly intuitive effect and probably the least contested in the model. Prior studies have consistently confirmed this direct link, which is independent of expectations and disconfirmation (James 2009; Morgeson, 2012). This link is also supported by experimental evidence from Van Ryzin's experiment (2013).

The second link predicts a direct effect of customer's expectations of quality service on satisfaction. Quality service expectations could have a positive direct effect on satisfaction for the reason that people may use their expectations as baseline to form a judgment about a government service (Van Ryzin, 2013). These expectations could 'colour' the satisfaction judgment independently. However, evidence on the direct link between expectations and satisfaction is mixed. Poister and Thomas (2011) found a negative direct effect. Other studies find a positive direct effect of expectations (Morgeson & Petrescu, 2011).

The third relationship in the model is the very heart of the expectancy disconfirmation theory. The idea is that higher performance will increase chances of positive disconfirmation, whereas higher expectations decrease the chance of positive disconfirmation, but increase the chance of negative disconfirmation. Subsequently, positive disconfirmation leads to higher satisfaction and negative disconfirmation leads to lower satisfaction. In other words, if performance is high this is more likely to exceed expectations and lead to higher satisfaction. Higher expectations, on the other hand, are less likely to be exceeded even if performance is high. Therefore, higher

expectations can lead to negative disconfirmation and less satisfaction (Van Ryzin, 2006; Roch & Poister 2006; Morgeson 2012). Although the expectancy-disconfirmation theory is widely accepted, many scholars have argued that it is insufficient to evaluate customer satisfaction by considering only cognitive aspects. In these challenging circumstances, many researchers have gone beyond these cognitively toned model formulation. According to the performance-based approach, they have suggested assessing customer satisfaction by incorporating cognitive judgments and affective reaction during consumption (Mano & Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1992).



**Figure 2. 1: Expectancy-disconfirmation model**

Source: Van Ryzin (2013).

Based on this theory, customers have expectations about quality products and services before consumption. This theory is based on the cognitive process of confirmation of expectation in which customers evaluate their satisfaction level by comparing perceived performance with their pre-consumption expectation (Oliver, 1980). The quality service delivered by the hotel has a long term impact on the satisfaction of customers. Customer satisfaction and service quality are certainly interlinked and these create value for the customer or client and help the to make

decisions as to whether the service justifies the cost. The quality of product or service delivered by the hotels might be influenced by employee physical appearance in terms of physical appearance, attractiveness, age and gender.

## **2.2 Overview of Hotel Industry in Ghana**

The origin of the hotel industry can be found back to 3000 B.C (Jaishankar, Mark & Kristy, 2000). The conditions improved in 1700s when the new start sparked that is the desire of people to travel in England. Early travellers were found to be people who were soldiers or people who used to move out for trading purposes that is buying or selling or those who wanted to explore their knowledge. This was prior to the commencement of hotels. The word hotel is derived from the French hotel coming from hotel meaning host, which was referred to as a French version of a townhouse or any other building seeing frequent visitors, rather than a place offering accommodation. A hotel is an establishment that provides paid lodging on a short-term basis (Jaishankar et al. 2000).

According to Madanlal (2007) hotel is a place that offers accommodation, food, and beverages at a cost that enables it to make a profit. It was also defined as a house for accommodation of paying travellers. Kannan (2005) indicated that hotel has been described as a building or institution providing lodging, meals and service for the people is termed a hotel (Raghubalari & Smritee, 2010). It is an establishment that offers paid lodging on a short-term basis. It provides basic accommodation, in a room having a bed, a cupboard, a small table and a washstand has largely been replaced by rooms with modern facilities, such as viz., en-suite bathrooms and air conditioning or climate control. Singh and Mulla (2011) mentioned that other common features that have been added in hotel rooms includes viz., a telephone, an alarm clock, a television,

a safe, a mini-bar with snack foods and drinks, and facilities for making tea and coffee. Its luxury features includes viz., bathrobes and slippers, a pillow menu, twin-sink vanities, and Jacuzzi bathtubs. Larger hotels also offers additional guest facilities viz., a restaurant, swimming pool, fitness center, business center, childcare, conference facilities and social function services respectively (Carr, 2011).

As per Kannan (2005), the basic purpose of a hotel is to provide accommodation to those who are away from their residence and supply them according to their requirement and match up to the level of what they expect. To a greater extent the facilities of the hotel is also present to meet to the requirements of many, and also to provide service to the local population. It is this basic function of the hotel, which makes it quite distinct from other types of business and to which its other functions are supplementary (Kannan, 2005). The hotel compared to other establishment is having certain specific characteristic, which makes it distinguishable some of these are viz, a hotel is a fixed, immobile installation a building. It is a lodging open to public, accessible to all except to minors or unaccompanied children for reason of public morality. It is an enterprise which sells goods and services requiring payment of the price necessary to reimburse general costs and realize an adequate profit.

The Hotel Industry in Ghana includes hotels, lodges, resorts, inns, motels, guest houses and hostels. Grading of these accommodation units is done by the Ghana Tourist Board according to a classification system of hotels based on a rating system of budget. (Mensah, 2009). The highest star rating is 5 star and the lowest is 1-star. A hotel has ten (10) or more rooms whereas a Guest House has between four and nine rooms. A hotel is star rated (meets international standards) depending on the facilities and services offered. A budget or unrated hotel does not meet international standards.

Rating of hotels has nothing to do with the size of the hotel (in terms of number of rooms). Thus, we can have a star rated hotel or Guest House which may be big or small depending on the number of rooms (Mensah, 2009).

The hotel industry has a widely recognized association known as Ghana Hotels Association (GHA), which has over 1000 members in the country. Membership of the Ghana Hotels Association is made up of hotels, motels and guesthouses that have been certified and licensed by the Ghana Tourist Board to offer accommodation, catering and other tourism services in Ghana. Their membership categories are: Budget (acceptance level below One Star) and One Star to Five Star International standards. According to the GHA, hotels that qualify within their membership categories in total are 817 across the country. According to the Ministry of Tourism (2018) the total number of licensed hotels (1 to 5 star hotels, budget hotel, guest houses) in Ghana was 1751. According to the GTA report (2009) the number of hotels in Ghana increased from 1,345 with 18,752 rooms in 2005 to 1,775 with 26,047 rooms in 2009. The Ministry of Tourism's 2013 report stated the establishment of accommodation facilities in the country stood at 1800 in 2011 however it was expected to hit 2000 by the end of 2017.

### **2.2.1 Hotel Rating System**

Hotel rating can be described as a classification of hotels according to grade and rank. Callan (2009) affirmed that often, there is confusion regarding the terminology used in hotel rating. Callan (2009) attempted to identify the differences between classification and grading. Classification involved assessing the tangible elements of the service mix and qualitative grading was concerned with the intangible elements. There were two major systems for more than 100 hotel rating systems



worldwide including official and non-official systems (Qing & Liu, 1993). The official hotel-rating systems were established and conducted by a government agency and obliged to follow the compulsory and regulatory basis. On the contrary, private organizations (hotel or tourism associations, the national/regional automobile associations, or private companies) operated non-official hotel-rating systems normally on a voluntary basis. Some national tourism and hotel associations required their members evaluated by their rating system and graded with one of the five-levels. The purpose of the official system was mainly to control the lodging tariff and taxes, whereas no social obligation was found for the non-official system (WTO & IH & RA, 2004).

Callan (2014) specified some hotels tended to oppose the compulsory grading scheme because they were concerned for bureaucratic interference. In contrast, customers would expect the protection of guaranteed quality from the official system. A hotel rating system embraced two standards, including a basic registration standard and a grading standard. The basic registration standard was the basic requirement a hotel property had to meet; it was the minimum quality requirement. The grading standard was the quality grading that compared a hotel to others, and it was the higher quality standard a hotel can achieve. Callan (2013) compared UK quality grading systems. His comparisons of each rating system were conducted by analyzing classification and quality grades assessment, but other minor criteria could not be compared because they were varied in detail. However, to communicate the quality level a hotel achieved, a variety of grading symbols were used; for example stars, crowns, diamonds, suns, or letters.

The universally recognized symbol was the stars as the majority of countries with at least a hotel rating system used the stars to represent grades of their rating

systems (Callan, 2013; WTO & IH&RA, 2004). Callan (2014) presented the hotel grading classification in the U.K. applied two measures. First, hotels and other similar establishments were classified into types of accommodations. Second, the hotels were subdivided into levels of quality grading. Like other products, an effective hotel rating system needed to be consistently fine-tuned. Callan (2012) noted the major reasons for change in a Jersey's hotel grading scheme. They included: 1) offering a more understandable grading scheme to both customers and hoteliers; 2) improper shape of quality-hotel frequency distribution due to being outdated; 3) useful as marketing tool; and 4) too much reliance on subjective assessment. Callan (2009) also referred to the report of Horwath and Horwath, which stated customer needs should be the grading scheme's priorities and should be placed above the hotel operator's needs. Furthermore, cultural differences seemed to play a major role in developing an effective hotel classification scheme.

WTO and IH & RA's study (2004) pointed out a national or regional classification scheme recognized the importance of cultural differences between states that extensively affected services and facilities, marketing, and purpose of travel. Moreover, they strongly recommended the consolidation of diversity, not uniformity, to achieve sustainable tourism. Furthermore, Callan (2012) mentioned that individual priorities of consumers resulted in a grading scheme that was different from others in terms of assessment, but in which the fundamentals of the scheme remained the same. The American Automobile Association (AAA) used diamonds to rate each hotel property (WTO & IH & RA, 2004). The diamonds ratings includes; One Diamond, Two Diamond, Three Diamond, Four Diamond and Five Diamond. With the one diamond, the establishments typically appeal to the budget-minded traveler. They provide essential, no-frills accommodations. They meet the basic requirements

pertaining to comfort, cleanliness and hospitality. Also, with the Two Diamond, the establishments that appeal to the traveler seeking more than the basic accommodations. There are modest enhancements to the overall physical attributes, design elements and amenities of the facility typically at a moderate price. The Three Diamond establishments appeal to the traveler with comprehensive needs. Properties are multifaceted with a distinguished style, including marked upgrades in the quality of physical attributes, amenities and the level of comfort provided. Also, the Four Diamond establishments are upscale in all areas. Accommodations are progressively more refined and stylish. The physical attributes reflect an obvious enhanced level of quality throughout. The fundamental hallmarks at this level include an extensive array of amenities combined with a high degree of hospitality, service and attention to detail. With the Five Diamond, the establishments reflect the characteristics of the ultimate in luxury and sophistication. Accommodations are first class. The physical attributes are extraordinary in every manner. The fundamental hallmarks at this level are to meticulously serve and exceed all guest expectations while maintaining an impeccable standard of excellence. Many personalized services and amenities enhance an unmatched level of comfort.

The Mobil Travel Guide used star rating for recommending hotels to travelers (WTO & IH & RA, 2004). These includes: Mobil One-Star, Mobil Two-Star, Mobil Three-Star, Mobil Four-Star and Mobil Five-Star. Mobil One-Star is a limited service Hotel/Motel/Inn that is considered a clean, comfortable and reliable establishment. A Mobil Two-Star hotel/resort/inn is considered a clean, comfortable, and reliable establishment, but also has expanded amenities, such as a full-service restaurant on the property. A Mobil Three-Star hotel/resort is well-appointed, with a full-service restaurant and expanded amenities, such as, but not limited to: fitness center, golf

course, tennis courts, 24-hour room service, and optional turndown service. A Mobil Four-Star hotel/resort/inn which provides a luxury experience with expanded amenities in a distinctive environment. Services may include, but are not limited to: automatic turndown service, 24 hour room service, and valet parking. A Mobil Five-Star lodging Establishment provides consistently superlative service in an exceptionally distinctive luxury environment with expanded services. Attention to detail is evident throughout the Hotel/Resort/Inn from the bed linens to staff uniforms.

American Automobile Association (AAA) and Mobil Travel Guide had offered the gold standards of hotel ratings for many countries in the Americas including the United States, Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. In fact, both AAA and Mobile awarded 40,500 hotels and lodgings in these countries (Daily, 2004). The Official Hotel Guide rated the hotels into Luxury selection, Superior selection, Value selection, Style selection, Resort selection, Apartment selection, and Airport selection. The Luxury selection is the properties that provide the ultimate hotel experience. For guests who demand the very highest standards, selected from the finest choice available from around the world. Superior selection is the hotels which offer the traveler quality rooms and facilities making their stay, whether business or leisure, relaxing and comfortable (Daily, 2004). In addition, value selection is the hotels that take pride in creating a friendly and informal atmosphere, providing excellent value for money for both business and leisure stays. Style selection is an exclusive and individually designed hotels and historic properties that offer guests a unique hotel environment, each with a character all of its own. The Resort selection is an ideal for those who require leisure or recreation facilities in a hotel or adjacent, as a part of their hotel experience. The selected resorts offer accommodation for all tastes and budgets, whether for business or relaxation, or fun. Apartment selection deal for those

who require leisure or recreation facilities in a hotel or adjacent, as a part of their hotel experience. The selected resorts offer accommodation for all tastes and budgets, whether for business or relaxation, or fun. Airport selection is a range of hotels conveniently positioned near the major airports of the world. Each with the key attribute of being within a 10km zone of the airport, many offer shuttle services (Daily, 2004).

In Britain, there were a number of hotel classification schemes offered by private organizations and the regional tourist boards. For instance, the English Tourist Board (ETB) awarded crowns for rating hotels in England, whereas the Automobile Association (AA) and the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) rated tourist accommodation by a star system with different criteria and judgment (Conway, 2004). As a result, the same property could have three different levels of ratings from these rating systems. The variety of these schemes in the same destination confused the consumers. A joint promotional campaign among the AA, RAC and ETB had developed a new harmonized hotel-classification scheme (Conway, 2004; the British Hospitality Association (BHA) cited in WTO & IH&RA, 2004). However, Conway stated the three organizations would continue making their own accommodation guides but the results were less likely to differ from one another.

The description of star-based system of the new joint hotel rating schemes (WTO & IH&RA, 2004) include; One star, Two star, Three star, Four star and Five star. The One Star Hotels classification are likely to be small and independently owned with a family atmosphere. Services may be provided by the owner and family on an informal basis. There may be a limited range of facilities and meals may be fairly simple. Lunch, for example, may not be served. Some bedrooms may not have en-suite bath/shower rooms. Maintenance, cleanliness and comfort should, however,

always be of an acceptable standard.

However, the Two Star hotels classification hotels will typically be small to medium sized and offer more extensive facilities than at the One-star level. Some business hotels come into the Two-star classification and guests can expect comfortable, well equipped, overnight accommodation, usually with an en-suite bath/shower room. Reception and other staff will aim for a more professional presentation than at the One-star level, and offer a wider range of straightforward services, including food and drink. However, the Three Star Hotels are usually of a size to support higher staffing levels, and a significantly greater quality and range of facilities than at the lower star classifications. Reception and the other public rooms will be more spacious and the restaurant will normally also cater for non-residents. All bedrooms will have fully en-suite bath and shower rooms and offer a good standard of comfort and equipment, such as a hair dryer, direct dial telephone, and toiletries in the bathroom. Some room service can be expected, and some provision for business travelers.

With the Four-Star Hotels, the expectations at this level include a degree of luxury as well as quality in the furnishings, decor and equipment, in every area of the hotel. Bedrooms will also usually offer more space than at the lower star levels, and well-designed, coordinated furnishings and decor. The en-suite bathrooms will have both bath and fixed shower. There will be a high enough ratio of staff to guests to provide services like portage, 24-hour room service, laundry and dry cleaning. The restaurant will demonstrate a serious approach to its cuisine. The Five Star Hotels are spacious and luxurious accommodations throughout the hotel, matching the best international standards should be found. Interior design should impress with its quality and attention to detail, comfort and elegance. Furnishings should be

immaculate. Services should be formal, well supervised and flawless in attention to guests' needs, without being intrusive. The restaurant will demonstrate a high level of technical skill, producing dishes to the highest international standards. Staff will be knowledgeable, helpful, well versed in all aspects of customer care, combining efficiency with courtesy.

### **2.3 Recruitment Criteria for Hotel Industry**

Recruitment is said to be the best represented area of research in people management in organizations with more scholarly work conducted than other functional aspect of HRM (Cordon & Stevens, 2014). According to Asiedu-Appiah, Aduse-Poku, and Abeeku-Bamfo (2013), the recruitment and selection process forms the first stage of the psychological contract between applicants and organizations, where information is mutually exchanged and role expectations are clarified and negotiated. It is a core part of the central activities underlying human resource management: namely, the acquisition, development and reward of workers. Recruitment is a process used to attract a pool of job applicants where the most suitable person for the job requirements will be selected and shortlisted. The process usually starts with the production of the specifications based on the job description and end with the appointment of the successful applicant (Boella & Turner, 2015). The objective of selective hiring is to get the most suitable applicant to fill the vacant position (Mess, 2004). Internal recruitment is when an organization selects existing employees to fill vacant or newly created positions in the organization rather than employing someone from outside the company.

Recruitment may be conducted internally through the promotion and transfer of existing personnel or through referrals by current staff members, friends or family

members. Where internal recruitment is the chosen method of filling vacancies, job openings can be advertised by job posting, that is, a strategy of placing notices on manual and electronic bulletin boards, in company newsletters and through office memoranda (Fagbemi et al., 2016). External recruitment is the case where an organization recruit staffs from outside the organization. Normally an organization may use another recruiting organization for hiring new staff. External recruiting methods can be grouped into two classes thus informal and formal. Informal recruiting methods tap a smaller market than formal methods.

Favouritism as a common behaviour exerted by many owners and executives in the hotel industry, like other sectors, has been added as a contextual variable in the model of a study by Anatolia (2013). This phenomenon is expected to multiply in the work environments where organizational resources are limited such as the north Cyprus hospitality industry (Daskin & Tezer, 2012). That is why it takes place in the model of Anatolia's study as an antecedent on FLMS' politics perceptions and stress. Favour provides benefits solely to the acquaintances and friends rather than the organization as a whole (Arasli & Tumer, 2008; Daskin & Tezer, 2012). Mostly, acts of favour are demonstrated in hiring and awarding contracts to acquaintances and friends. Employees working in politically charged working environments where unfair practices and systems, as well as favour, are pervasive are prone to work-related strain such as STR). Research on favouritism has proved that these types of behaviours are among the most important sources of conflicts and stress within companies. There is evidence that favouritism is the second most important source of conflict in the workplace (Comerford, 2012), and managers still believe that favouritism is the most unethical behaviour within organizations (Greenberg & Baron, 2013).



Furthermore, recent studies have revealed that favouritism, unfair practices, and limited rewards and promotions are prevalent in hospitality-related job settings (Daskin & Tezer, 2012; Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010; Wan, 2010). With this realization, favouritism practices in the north Cyprus hotel industry may lead really skilled and high performing managers or employees to be demoralized and stressed and to neglect their responsibilities. Also, working in an environment dominant with favouritism practices may lead managers to exhibit manipulation and self-serving behaviours (politics) in the form of establishing close ties with hotel executives and their relatives or close friends in order to secure their positions rather than by showing real performance.

Hotel industry all over the world has several distinct characteristics, such as: heterogeneity (having large MNEs and small national hotels operating in the same region), sensitivity in changes (innovation, technological advances, economic, social and mobility issues), seasonality, human resource flexibility, high percentage of part time and non-professional employees, skill shortages, as well as low paid work, law status (for most jobs), weak power of trade unions and high level of employee turnover (Janes & Wisnom, 2010). These characteristics imply the necessity for empirical research on the implementation and effectiveness of distinctive and diverse HR practices for a hotel firm to remain successful and achieve its goals, particularly, when talent shortfall remains one of the tourism industry's most pressing human resource management issues (Altin, Koseoglu, Xiaojuan, & Riasi, 2018;; Hoque, 2013; Harris, & Ryan, 2016; Nieves & Quintana, 2016; Solnet, Kralj, & Baum, 2015).

Considering Human Resource Management (HRM) as a system (inputs-process-outputs) recruitment and selection are of the most important processes for obtaining and retaining qualified employees, at a reasonable cost, and achieve person-

job and organization fit (Chan & Kuok, 2011; Gonzalez & Rivres, 2017; Roth, Bobko, Van Iddekinge, & Thatcher 2016; Stone, Deadrick, Lucaszewski, & Johnson, 2015; Taylor, 2014). Recruitment is a set of practices/ methods taken up by the firm in order to identify and attract potential employees, while selection is also a set of practices/ methods for deciding according to pre-set criteria which applicants to be appointed to jobs (Armstrong, 2017; Torrington et al., 2017). These practices are considered to be rather significant in the HRM function, as they affect all organizational practices and decisions (Chanda, Bansal, & Chanda, 2010; Guest, 2011).

According to Kadir (2017), there is a significant difference between the terms ‘recruitment’ and ‘selection’, even though they are often regarded as indistinguishable from each other. ‘Recruitment’ refers to the process of collecting talented candidates who are likely to be hired by an organization (Chan & Kuok, 2011), while ‘selection’ addresses the final stage following the recruitment process, in which an ideal candidate who is eligible to fill a vacant position is chosen. Overall, there are three main phases of recruitment and selection that are mostly used by HR managers: defining requirements, attracting candidates and selecting candidates (Armstrong, 2017).

#### **2.4 Employee Physical Appearance**

Employee’s physical appearance is the extent to which the service personnel is perceived by the customer as possessing an appealing and pleasing physical characteristics (Ahearne et al., 2019). Employee physical appearance refers to all the physical characteristics and visible specific attributes of a person, which relate both to its physical and bodily integrity (morphology, height, weight, facial features,

phenotype, stigma) and to elements related to the expression of its personality (clothing, accessories, hair, beard, piercings, tattoos, make-up). Employee physical appearance has become one of the most frequent discrimination cases at work over the past twenty years (Froger-Michon & Piat, 2019).

Froger-Michon and Piat (2019) indicated that the decision reveals that when an employer has the choice between two candidates of equal quality and competence, its physical appearance is decisive in 53%. Moreover, 82% of the respondents believe that their look, the manner they dress and their style have a “significant influence” on their professional life. Even during the execution of their employment contract, 18% of the interviewed employees fear being discriminated against in the company because of their physical appearance. Numerous studies, including Akbaba (2006), Albacete-Sáez et al. (2007), and Papageorgiou (2008) have emphasized the importance of employee physical appearance in the hotel industry and in tourism in general. Leung and Law (2010) indicated that when a guest and the receptionist first meet, the first thing they both perceive is each other’s physical appearance. From the guests’ point of view, the physical appearance of the hotel staff is one of the factors that undoubtedly affects their satisfaction with the accommodation. Furthermore, as Briggs et al. (2007) state, hotel customers expect helpful, friendly and caring service. Such expectations include not only the knowledge of hotel workers, but also the very personal relationships the workers develop with tourists. The quality of these relationships can be seen in the efforts of professionals to adapt their appearance to the expectations of their guests.

In order to encourage these relationships, many companies in the field of tourism instill very clear standards of physical appearance that they expect their employees adhere to. As such, jobs in the hospitality and tourism industry, which

require direct contact with customers, can become very demanding in terms of the emotional load and requirements for aesthetic labour. The concept of aesthetic labour includes physical appearance and engaging in pleasant speech. Hotel and travel managers have become very aware of this and, therefore, educating staff on aesthetic labour has become a vital part of human resource management. Moreover, the employees' pleasant appearance and their ability to maintain and improve their appearance is an important commercial advantage for the hospitality and tourism industry (Nickson et al., 2003).

A research conducted by Heilman and Saruwatari (2009) and Heilman and Stopeck (2015) suggests that attractiveness can be detrimental. It was also found that “beauty is beastly” effect will however be felt when attractive women apply for masculine sex-typed jobs. However, the support for this finding has been inconsistent in past research. The features that workers show at the work place have significant impact on the quality of service that these employees deliver at the workplace. These features may include gender, age, physical beauty and educational background.

Physical appearance of a candidate becomes a necessary determinant for hiring. In jobs such as sales, which involve face-o-face contact with clients, more physically attractive applicant could conceivably perform far beer than those who are less attractive. Indeed, it has been found out that applicants who are attractive are particularly preferred for jobs for which appearance is of paramount interest. Motowidlo et al (1999) have also established that visual cues may have predictive validity for job performance. They have also found that visual cues also have a positive relationship with the performance ratings of an individual at interview and how such a person is during job supervisory performance.

Knežević et al. (2015) affirmed that employee physical appearance influence on quality service is not a new concept, as there are historically plenty of examples where physical appearance has been deemed an important aspect of communication. Probably one of the oldest examples of appearance and behaviour determining the social group one belonged to was the Jesuit Order in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In order to belong to the order, candidates had to speak in a pleasant way and have a good appearance (Nickson et al., 2003). It was clear, even then, that physical appearance on the part of the communicators was important for successful communication.

Warhurst et al. (2000), developed this concept into a theory, called aesthetic labour, and formally entered it into academic literature. By aesthetic labour, it is understood that a company requires that an employee is skilled and cares about maintaining an attractive physical appearance and engaging in pleasant speech (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007; Tsaur & Tang, 2013). Tsaur and Tang (2013), point out that employees in the hospitality industry in fact act as “walking billboards” for their companies and, therefore, the importance of an aesthetically pleasing physical appearance is essential to the industry. Studies in the field of aesthetic labour strongly suggest that employees in the hotel industry should receive training in personal aesthetic skills, as well as technical and social skills training (Nickson et al., 2003). To that end, to enhance the physical appearance of their staff, many organizations organize different forms of education for their personnel aimed at boosting the physical appearance of their employees. But the role that physical appearance plays in the hotel industry is not just a one-way stream to be analysed in terms of the guest-employee experience.

Hotel employee physical appearance also affects customers in certain ways and, by extension, the service the employees render to their guests. However, an

extensive literature research in the field of service quality conceptualization and operationalization in tourism, and especially in the hospitality industry, indicates that there have been no studies done on the influence of the physical appearance of guests on perceived service quality. This is surprising since hotel employees' perceptions of a guest's physical appearance may be considered a part of the service delivery process as a whole (Albacete-Sáez et al., 2007). Certainly, physical appearance should be taken into consideration as a valid sub-dimension.

#### **2.4.1 Gender of Employee**

The perception of the customer on quality of service delivery is mostly reliant on the values and beliefs of the customer which varies among cultures (Furer et al., 2002). It is found that gender has an effect on the perception of service quality of hotel clients and has also showed a varied approach in measuring quality service (Spathis, 2004). Similarly, customers exhibited different forms of satisfaction and behavioral outcomes that are observed among male and female hotel customers (Yavas et al., 1997). Findings have also shown that there is a difference as far as the selections of hotel staffs are concerned by both male and female hotel customers (Omar, 2008).

There are other demographic issues that affect how well employees deliver service and the desire of hotels to employ such applicant. Boyd et al. (1994) conducted their investigation on what constitute the selection criteria of a hotel based on demographic characteristics and has come to the conclusion that there are varied differences between high earning jobs and low earning jobs. It has been stated that the roles and responsibilities that gender play are dependent on the social, cultural and religious factors. For instance, in countries where Islam is the dominant religion, the

male are charged with the responsibility of taking care of the financial needs of the home while the female take charge of the domestic chores (Iheduru, 2002). Ayadi (1996) explains that female customers of the hotel have less engagement with hotel activities as a result of their low income as compared with their male counterparts who earn more.

There is also the problem where by employers prefer hiring beautiful individuals to deliver service in the organization as compared to the unattractive. If there is a miss match between the skills of an individual and what set of skills a role in an organization requires. If the organization goes on to employ such an individual, then, such an employee is bound to fail in his role in the organization. As the mismatch between an individual skills, his or her role increases, so does the probabilities of his failure also increases (Heilman, 2013). Therefore, it has been stressed that, there two major factors that influence the lack of fit; these are, the major features of the job and the features of the individual applying for the job.

#### **2.4.2 Physical Beauty of Employee**

At the societal level, the physical appearance of a person in terms of beauty gives an individual an advantage over others. Having a nice appearance or being beautiful gives an individual more confidence (Young, 2011). It has also been shown in research that, having good physical appearance can give an individual up to ten times chances of getting married as compared with people who are not physically beautiful (Young, 2011). Physically attractive individuals applying for a job with the same qualification as those who are not physically attractive are mostly likely to get the same type of job (Gilmore, et al., 2016). Further, the physically attractive and

beautiful are more likely to get promoted to higher positions and to be paid more at the workplace (Young, 2011).

Like any other organization in the service industry, service quality delivery is by far the most important concern. There is evidence that, when customers develop positive perception of service delivery of an organization, their behavioral intentions tends to be favorable, which strengthens their tie with the firm (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Beside when the quality of service of an organization is assessed to be negative, it presupposes that the behavioral intentions of the customer towards the organization are unfavorable (Kouthouris & Alexandris 2005). Physical attractiveness is a very difficult dichotomy which embodies many important factors. Research has come out with the fact that facial beauty is a major determinant as far as an individual attractiveness is concerned as it influence the job the employee is likely to get (Pansu & Dubois, 2002). The nature of the facial attribution is also very important. Employees may have pliant skin, clear, smooth shiny hairs which are all symbols of being healthy (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999).

People who are attractive are always favored in different manners which include evaluative and judgmental. The “what is beautiful is good” stereotype in this case can be given explanation to by the halo effect. This stereotype leads to systematic human perceptual biases and inaccurate judgmental and attribution errors. Hatfield and Sprecher (2006) established that research in psychology has time without number validated the fact that people it likely for people who are attractive more often than possess positive attributes such as intelligence and likeability. Attractive individuals mostly are given lenient sentences in mock trials as compared with unattractive people. Contrary to these findings, Eagly (1991) came out with the fact



that although it is difficult to find, negative characteristics are attributed to a person being attractive.

## **2.5 Contributing Factors of Employees Physical Appearance on Customers**

Physical appearance of hotel employees affects customers retention. Johnston (2010) panel data study shows that even the hair color of employee may be a significant issue in the level of earnings at work. Johnston (2010) found that blonde women received larger wage premiums at work. As attractiveness influences people's various responses it may be important to study the influence of attractiveness on service failure perceptions as well. An understanding of the responses of customers' responses toward service failures depending on the attractiveness of service personnel may guide decision makers when they make decisions regarding recruitment and service design.

Geronikolas (2012) reports that the five factors in the hotel industry that are most likely to drive customers away include untrained and perceived rude staff; lack of cleanliness around the premises, in hotel rooms or within its restaurants; the guests desire to experience new places (need for change); price, affordability, and value for money. Overall, hotel food and beverage standards appear as the most important in hotel tangibles and seem to be becoming increasingly significant in creating both a loyal base of satisfied customers and driving dissatisfied customers away. Other factors that appear frequently as elements driving business away are the actual hotel room (state, comfort, air condition or heating facilities, etc.), bad service, issues concerning the hotels reliability (delivering promised services, accurately and consistently), managerial behavior towards special needs and situations that may

occur, problems occurring with other guests (the general ambience the hotels other customers create) and noise within the hotel or surroundings.

It is known that service businesses providing higher levels of service quality are more likely to generate higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez, 2011; Sánchez-García, Pieters, Zeelenberg, & Bigné, 2012) and as a consequence achieve higher levels of profits (Neira, Casielles, & Iglesias, 2010). A service failure occurs, when a service fails to meet customers' expectations (Pranić & Roehl, 2013). Service failures are the fall points in the provision of services resulting in customer dissatisfaction. Eventually, service failures are believed to endanger the survival and growth of service businesses (Koc, 2010; Wang, Law, Hung, & Guillet, 2014). Service failures cause customers to produce negative emotions and behavioral intentions (Wen & Chi, 2013). The consequences of service failures include increased costs, customer dissatisfaction, increased negative word-of-mouth communication, customer defection (Pranić & Roehl, 2013) and lower employee performance and morale (Lee, Kim, & Jeon, 2013).

According to Lin (2016), due to the high level of interactivity between customers and the service personnel, failures and customer dissatisfactions are quite common in services. This is because service failures result in unmet customer needs. After a service failure experience, customers may quite often switch service providers (Roschk & Gelbrich, 2014) unless an efficient service recovery action is implemented. The responses of customers to service failures may be visible to the service providers and hence can be detected in some cases. However, in a variety of cases they may be invisible and hence undetectable by the service business management. For instance, the defection of loyal customers may be easily detected by the management of a service business, given that the service business has the established mechanisms and

systems. On the other hand, certain customer responses toward service failures may go unnoticed. For instance, negative word-of-mouth referrals of an unhappy customer may not be noticed before it is too late. It must be kept in mind that while a satisfied customer may express her/his content to only 4–5 people on average, a dissatisfied customer may express her/his discontent to as many as 9–10 people (Oliver, 2017). In order to be proactive and detect negative word-of-mouth communication, many hospitality service providers monitor customer feedback through various hospitality service review sites like TripAdvisor. Moreover, it must be remembered that a typical business hears from only 4% of customers who were dissatisfied with the service provided. This means that the remaining 96% of customers would just go away quietly.

A substantial proportion of those customers (91%) who switch to another service provider state that they would never do business again with the service provider which failed to provide a high-quality service (TARP, 2007). This means that many businesses may be unaware when their customers are unhappy as a significant proportion of their customers do not complain and they just switch to other service providers (Gursoy, McCleary, & Lepsito, 2017). The above explanations point out that service failure perceptions of customers may be extremely important as they may directly influence the future intentions of customers in terms of doing business again with the same service provider (Svensson, 2014).

Abeele (2017) is of the view that all customer loyalty research may be classified as behavioural (customers' loyalty is determined referring to purchase behaviour pursued by the customer, which is observed for a certain time period) and of attitudes (customers' loyalty is determined referring to named priority or intention to purchase). Most research about the loyalty of customers is performed following the

attitude of employees behaviour, therefore it is not clear which factors condition repeat purchases (Zikienė & Bakanauskas, 2017). When analysing customers' loyalty from the perspective of attitudes, many authors (Hallowell, 1996; Jones, Mothersbaugh, & Beatty, 2011) claim that satisfaction positively affects the intention of customers to purchase repeatedly. Gronholdt, Martensen, and Kristensen (2011) determined that there is a significant link between customers' satisfaction and loyalty. Hunter and Michl (2012) proved that a seemingly low gap of customers' satisfaction determines a significant gap in loyalty strength. Martensen, Gronholdt, and Kristensen (2011) noticed that in the business branches where a product is easily evaluated, the loyalty of customers is caused by the product itself, and in the branches where the product is hard to evaluate, loyalty depends on the image of the trademark that is employees attractiveness.

Research performed by Kuo, Chang, Cheng, and Lai (2013) in Chinese hotels emphasize the significance of service quality for the loyalty of customers. After the research of hotel customers performed in Spain it was determined that the evaluation of service quality is higher by the customers who are more loyal. Boon-Liat and Zabid (2013), having interviewed the guests of Malaysian hotels, ascertained that perceived service quality is highly related to customers' satisfaction, which ensures higher loyalty of customers. It is said that customers' satisfaction may be applied to measure customers' loyalty, however the approaches exist where customers' loyalty cannot be explained only by satisfaction. According Brandt (2015), although satisfaction is necessary to ensure customers' loyalty, it cannot, however, be identified as customers' loyalty. Reichheld (2016) on the other hand criticizes the use of customers' satisfaction research to determine customers' loyalty, claiming that research fails to determine what organisations should in fact know. Story (2016) claim

that though some satisfied customers remain loyal, others stop purchasing. Therefore, we may claim that in order to determine customer loyalty, it is not enough to determine only their satisfaction, the impact of other factors forming customers' retention should be measured. Reichheld (2016) suggested that to measure customer retention by questioning, customers should only be asked one simple thing: 'Would you recommend us to your friends?'

## **2.6 Service Quality in the Hotel Industry**

Service delivery in organizations all over the world has become so critical that organizations have resorted to the building capacity of their staff in order for them to carry out this function successfully. Hanson (2000) suggested that, in order for organizations to meet the wants and requirements of their customers, they must improve their services. Service quality is considered as a prerequisite for customer satisfaction (Spreng & Machoy, 1996). Service quality measures degree of inconsistency between customers' expectations for service and how they perceive service performance hence meeting the needs and expectations of the customer is key (Smith, 1998; Parasuraman et al., 1985). It was concluded that specific activities undertaken by the organisation like the rate at which information is processed for the consumption of the customer has resulted in a happy customer. Also, an improvement in how reliable the equipment used in the hotel are has gone a long way by reducing the dissatisfaction of the customers (Johnston, 1997).

The quality of service delivered in an organization has the capacity to give the organization competitive advantage over other competing industries. It also gives organizations lasting relationship with its customers (Zeithmal et al., 2000). Leeds (1992) stated that the quality of service delivered in the hotel industry mostly depends

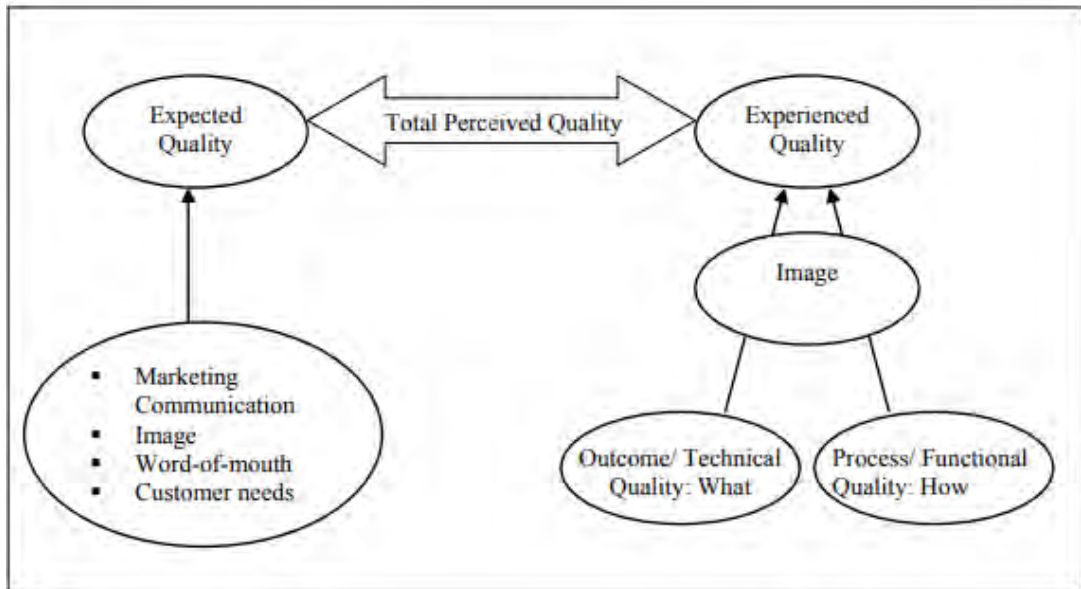
on the individual employee who is delivering the service. Hotels in their quest to deliver quality of service to the customers have resorted to the use of technology to deliver service to its customers. It is important that hotels develop a better understanding of the changing needs all category of customers they serve and adopt effective information technology system in order for them to compete effectively with organizations all over the world (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). It is also important to identify value in service encounter as vast numbers of studies were used to identify the importance of quality of service. Because the economy of the world has suffered a depression in recent years, it is important for hotels to establish robust and loyal customer base to survive in tough economic crisis and more intense competition.

Hotels that have control over service quality will achieve competitive edge in terms of superior revenue, customer remaining with the organization having positive impact on the company (Kumar et al., 2010). Identification and satisfaction of needs of customers and requirements are varied explanations of quality service firms deliver (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). It has been argued by Parasuraman et al. (1985) that service quality sought to bring variations between what customer's expectation and what customers perceived about service thus offerings that consumers think a service provider should offer. Expectations of customers evaluate consumer's perception of service delivery. The main aim of trying to satisfy customers therefore means measuring service quality to serves as a way to show whether the services can satisfy customers or not and whether the customers will see value in it or not.

On the quality service practices in the hotel industry, Badu (2008) is of the view that the upsurge of competition in the hotel industry calls for greater concern. A growing number of hotels have considered service quality their utmost priority in maintaining competitiveness. To maintain competitiveness, the hotel management

often needs to develop reliable service quality standards (Badu, 2008). Quality service delivery is therefore a critical element for the continued survival and growth of hotels. This is especially so as the business environment is becoming increasingly competitive. Customer satisfaction assessment is a subjective judgment and is influenced by the perception of the customer. Perception is in turn influenced by the expectation of the customer prior to his/her experience of the service (Badu, 2008).

Gronroos (1993) stated service quality had been developed based on the confirmation/ disconfirmation concept of service quality he introduced in the “perceived service quality” model in 1982. The notion of the model explained that the perceived service quality was the result of comparing the real experience with the expectation of a customer before consuming the service. The model is illustrated in Figure 2.2. The perceived service quality is positive when the experience goes beyond the expectation and vice versa when expectations are not met. Additionally, he asserted customers had subjective views for the quality of service, thus an individual’s meaning of good quality might be different from others. The empirical study of Callan (2009) similarly recognized that in general people had diverse perceptions of the service quality definition as a result of their experiences, thus the service quality was obviously impossible to measure.



**Figure 2.2: Perceived Service Quality Model**

Source: Gronroos (1993)

Based on the perceived service quality concept Parasuraman et al. (1985) applied premises from other previous studies to form their model of service quality. The ideas included a consumer had difficulty in evaluating service quality rather than goods quality, that a perception of service quality was developed from a comparison of consumer expectation with actual service performance, also quality evaluation involved the evaluation of both the process and outcome of service delivery (Gronroos, 1993; Lewis & Boom, 2003). Consequently, the conceptual model study of Parasuraman et al. (1985) presented 10 original determinants which included reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles. In their succeeding study, using the SERVQUAL measured some of these determinants were combined and only five dimensions remained (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The five dimensions consisted of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The definitions of these five dimensions are as follows (Parasuraman et al., 1988).



### **2.6.1 Service Quality Dimensions In The Hospitality Industry**

Service quality is a major determinant of competitiveness in the hotel industry more especially so in an increasingly hostile business environment where service firms public who would readily complain and transfer their allegiances to perceived providers of quality service. According to Quality Digest (2000) quality service delivery or products can be objectives or subjective. Objective quality refers to the degree to which a process or its outcome complies with a determined set criteria which are presumed essential to the ultimate value it provides. Subjective quality on the other hand refers to the level of perceived valued experienced by a customer who benefited from a process or its outcome. Quality service can therefore be said to be the perception of a customer of the value he/she has received for the price he has paid for the attributes of a product or service as they relate to its fit, function and form.

There are various studies that explained what service quality means to the organization and the customer. Identification and satisfaction of needs of customers and requirements are varied explanations of quality service firms deliver (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). It has been argued by Parasuraman et al. (1985) that service quality sought to bring variations between what customers expects and what customers perceived about service, thus offerings that consumers think a service provider should offer are expectations while evaluation of consumer's about a service is their perception. Originally, SERVQUAL framed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) highlighted ten factors which were later collapsed into five different dimensions in 1988, thus Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibility to test for service quality. SERVQUAL tool is revered as the most precise attempt to conceptualizing and measuring service quality.

### **2.6.1.1 Reliability of Services as a ServQual Dimension**

This dimension of service quality refers to how the provider of the service is able to provide service to a customer as stated, exercising a high sense of dependability in resolving service problems that customers face, performs service perfectly on the onset, and at the assured time and constantly inform customers when services should be performed (Parasuraman et al. 1985). A reliable service is the one that is dependably and accurately delivered base on the promise made. Dependability and reputation of hotels is seen as a major determinant for customers to select hotel. Customers are always promised maximum level of security when they visit the hotels. By providing appropriate service to each customer, hotel service can build confidence of customers and believe in the services employees render (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

### **2.6.1.2 Responsiveness of Service as a ServQual Dimension**

Responsive service refers of employee's willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. It was found that accurate match between the skills of staff and customers expectation of the service quality is what guarantees customer satisfaction (Gollway & Ho, 1996). Service recovery and the ability to promptly solve problems are recognized as important aspect of service quality (Dabholkar et al., 1996; Swanson & Kelley, 2001). Responsiveness of service quality represents the ability, readiness and readiness of service provider to undertake prompt services to clients within the shortest possible time. Customers in general expect prompt responds to their request immediately, as they do not want to be kept waiting.

### **2.6.1.3 Assurance of Services as a ServQual Dimension**

This aspect of service quality shows how knowledgeable employees are, to be able to render quality service requested by clients. Thus, employees' ability to instill in clients they serve thereby giving them a feeling of safety during transactions, showing courtesy continuously towards customers and answering questions posed by customers appropriately. On this, customers more often than not look out for assurance from employees and expect that employees will behave confidently and instill confidence in their clients (Parasuraman et al. 1985). Assurance refers to the ability of employees to inspire trust and confidence through knowledge and courtesy derived. Customers often spent money in purchasing service of the hotel, therefore their commitments is key. To make customers feel confident about services hotels provide, employees should make clear meaning about each offering available to customers.



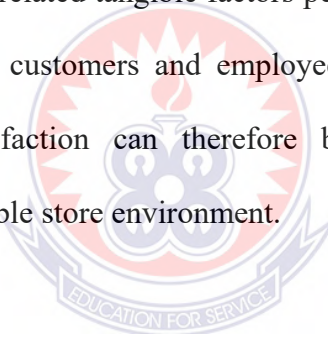
### **2.6.1.4 Empathy as a ServQual Dimension**

Empathy shows firm's ability to render customer individual attention, handled customers in a caring manner, have customers' best desire at heart and able to accurately know what the customer wants. Commenting on this, Parasuraman et al (1988) said that customers desire to be precious and important to the service providers' firm. Empathy refers to the attention employees provide customers which are mostly individualized in nature. Success factors for especially the service sector are staff committed to understanding customer's needs and are knowledgeable at solving customers' problems in the service industry are key success factors. When customers walk into a hotel, they are pleased by friendly customer service.

Purposefully, retaining customers for them to keep consuming the hotel service is the meaning of this dimension (Van Iwaarden et al., 2003).

#### **2.6.1.5 Tangibles as a ServQual Dimension**

This quality service model stands for the physical representative of service provided by a firm. It is the visible structures and equipment of a firm. These include facilities and equipment used, appearance of employees, related service materials (credit, debit sheets, cheque books etc), decorations and business hours (Parasuraman et al. 1985). This refers to the visible facilities, equipment and staff appearance. Comfortable store lay out, modern equipment available for customer use and enough staff to provide service is related tangible factors peculiar to hotels. Since one on one interaction exist between customers and employees, these aspects is key to hotel services. Customer satisfaction can therefore be increased by maintaining a professional and comfortable store environment.



#### **2.7 Challenges Employees face in Service Delivery**

Customers today are faced with the challenge of having to choose from a wide range of product and service of hotels. Understanding the hotel services or products poses a challenge to most customers. According to Angur et al. (1999), in developing economies, issues concerning service quality issues have been neglected compared to that of developed economies such as the USA and Europe in relation to the hotel industry. Consequently, in improving hotel competitiveness, understanding customers' needs and expectations is paramount (Lewis & Boom, 2003) by providing them with better products and service to satisfy their needs.

Quality service endures the customers' trust in services providers' render, since it helps in attracting more and new customers, increasing business with current customers, drastically reducing unhappy clients, maximizing the profits of a company's and increasing customer satisfaction. There is therefore a need for hotels to build relationship between service quality that is rendered and customer satisfaction strategies. Delivering quality service by hotels in Ghana is deemed important for success and existence in the current trend and competition in the hotel sector. In the quest to deliver good customer service, there are challenges that confront employees in their day to day activities having an effect on the service they deliver. Like other employees in other sectors of the economy, employees in the hospitality industry are also face by challenges in the day to day activities in the delivery of services to their customers.

According to Andrew and Kent (2007), the major problems faced by employees of many hotels are lack of recognition by management, inadequate logistics to work with, poor working conditions and environment, difficult targets to achieve and poor remuneration (Andrew & Kent, 2007). According to Harris (2002) work constraints are a major problem at the workplace that have negative effect on performance and also affect the service delivery by employees. It could be deduced that these factors militate against effective performance and productivity of an organizations employees hence affect service delivery.

Recognizing by rewarding employees in whatever way be it cash or kind have an effect on the kind of service delivery that customer's receive. Nelson (2003) is of the opinion that experience and recognized employees are able to have a better perception of their work, workplace and their employers. Andrew and Kent (2007) further believed that, employees commitment is mostly based on rewards and

recognition hence firms must practice this. Setting targets to employees also goes a long way to affect service delivery.

Gilley et al., (2002) states that performance standard is a target used to measure the quality of employee performance outputs and efficiency and that employee performance and quality can be improved by first identifying performance standards and communicating them to employees. Smith (2018) explains that attempts to raised performance over time rely on raising standards and extrinsic rewards for example additional salary and punishment. To ensure that the majority of employees meet minimum performance standards, managers must try to put measures in place to ensure that this happens. Lawler (2013) is of the view that, prosperity and survival of the organizations are determined through how they treat their human resource.

Employees and customers are very important in the survival of organizations and management must try to create value for them through the minimization of challenge that may hinder quality service delivery. In order to prove the importance of customers and employees in the value creation process, the authors consider some models of value creation that have been proposed for supporting value-based management. Value-based management focuses on defining and implementing management strategies, identifying value drivers and aligning management processes that support value creation (Ittner & Larcker, 2001). All considered value creation models involve value drivers in three fundamental categories: people, processes and relationships. People, processes and relationships are viewed as sources of a company's value capacity. People include employees and managers inside the company, and customers and other stakeholders outside the company (Ashton, 2007).

## **2.8 Empirical Studies**

### **2.8.1 Effects of Employee physical appearance on Service Delivery**

Empowering employees to deliver quality service in an organization is a necessary prerequisite for the satisfaction of the customers most especially in the service industry. Nevertheless, it has also been recognized that service encounters are a three-way interface between the firm, the contact personnel and the customer (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). The empowerments of employees have had a positive impact on service quality as regards service delivery because employees have significant impact on the perception of customers on the service that is being delivered. With the autonomy and necessary support needed to perform, employees can go a long way to help satisfy the wants of their customers resulting in loyalty and satisfaction (Gronroos, 2001).

Employees' ability to deliver and differentiate good customer service will have impact on how customers will perceive a particular hotels service. In hotel industry, the general offerings is averagely similar even though they engage in different approaches to achieving a differentiation from the others and to be able to gain more market share and customers in the industry. According to Gronroos (2001) Organizations that provide service always seek to differentiate themselves from other competitors by giving out quality service to their customers. This also gives them competitive advantage over other organization which provides similar services. Ioanna (2002) further proposed that it is difficult to differentiate products in a competitive business environment such as that of the hospitality sector. Hotels everywhere deliver similar or the same products to its customers. For instance, there is the range of products that are made available to the customers of the organization.

Fang, Zhang and Liu (2019) study focused on the role of physical attractiveness of service employees and customer engagement in tourism industry. The study adopted mixed-methods approach; using interviews and three scenario-based experiments, explore, hypothesize, and test the relationship between employees' physical attractiveness and customer engagement of tourists. The results show that (1) physical attractiveness of employees affects tourists' customer engagement, that (2) the main effect of physical attractiveness is mediated by the desire for social interaction, and that (3) the main effect is moderated by tourism service characteristics (i.e., tourism service expertise).

Knežević et al. (2015) experimental study was to establish whether there is any correlation between hotel employee physical appearance and the quality of service provided to the customers. The two experimental groups used in this study consisted of hotel receptionists in Portorož, which is the largest hotel industry sector in the Slovenian part of the Adriatic Sea, and a comparative group made up of social workers from Slovenia's social work centres. In the study, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for testing the normality of the distribution, t-test for independent samples, Pearson's correlation test and descriptive statistics were used. The research results suggest that there is a positive correlation between the physical appearance of hotel staff and quality service delivered to the customers. with the quality of service received.

Ching-Sung, et al. (2012) finds out the effect of physical attractiveness and customer perceived service quality in the cosmetology industry. This study uses questionnaires to test subjects with different demographic variables. Totally 470 effective samples are recovered. Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to analyze the data. Results showed that Employee physical appearance



physical attractiveness leads to higher perceived service quality whether a proper or improper service was provided. Meanwhile, genders and ages of customers receive different impacts on perceived service quality.

Dion et al. (2012) investigated the evaluation of male and female subjects on variant attractiveness based on personality dimension and future life dimension. The experiment revealed that high attractive employees are usually linked to positive personalities. Customers give high appraisals to high attractive employees. This halo effect is the stereotype of physical attractiveness. Also, physical attractiveness affects positive emotion of customers, and improves customer perception of creditability, friendliness, competence, customer concern and politeness (Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Baker and Churchill (2017) high attractive employees is advantageous in advertisement attitude, product attitude and purchasing intention. Caballero and Pride (2018) confirmed this result. Petorshins and Crocker (2019) also found that attractiveness of hotel staff has significant effect on quality service delivery. Ganesan-Lim et al. (2008) elucidated the effect of employee physical appearance variables to perceived service quality where the age, physical appearance and attractiveness of customers affect their perceived service quality. However, other research found no significant influence of Employee physical appearance on service quality delivery (Ndhlovu & Senguder, 2002; Al-Tamimi & Al-Amiri, 2003). Eagly and Ashmore (1991) studied the attractiveness of employee and discovered three important facts: (1) Beauty is very influential for us to judge personalities of people. People who look good are also thought to be good; (2) High attractive people are thought to be more sociable; (3) Male and female are similar on developing beauty stereotype. The study concluded that Employee physical appearance have direct effect on quality service delivery.

### **2.8.2 Relationship between staff physical appearance and client loyalty**

Various studies have examined the relationship between staff attractiveness and customer preference loyalty. For example, in focusing on re-visit intentions as a measure of loyalty, Cronin, and Taylor (2014) observed that staff attractiveness does not have a significant (positive) effect on re-visit intentions (in contrast to the significant positive impact of satisfaction on re-visit intention). However, Boulding, and Zeithaml (2013), focusing on the elements of repurchasing as well as the willingness to recommend as measures of customer loyalty, found positive relationships between staff attractiveness and repurchase intentions and willingness to recommend. Nevertheless, some customers may remain loyal due to high switching barriers or the lack of real substitutes, while others will continue to be loyal because they are satisfied with the services provided (Lam & Burton, 2016).

Service providers must avoid being complacent since retained customers may not always be the satisfied ones and similarly not all satisfied customers may always be retained. Research has pointed out that perceived service quality has a positive impact on customer loyalty (Wong, 2015). This is because service quality has been found to relate to behavioral outcomes, especially in the form of word-of-mouth, complaint, recommendation and switching (Al-Rousan & Mohamed, 2010). Customers are said to be satisfied because they have positive feelings which result from a process of evaluating what has been received against what was expected, including the purchase decision itself and the needs and wants associated with the purchase (Hesslink, 2012). Ehigie (2006) quoted Choi and Chou (2011) saying that there is a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This relationship is further strengthened as customers get “tremendously satisfied” or “delighted. Wong, (2015) as mentioning that customer satisfaction,

which has become nothing more than the price of entry to a category is therefore the starting point to build customer loyalty. However, customer satisfaction in itself does not guarantee loyalty because in some cases 65% to 85% percent of customers who defect to competitors brands say they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the product or service they left (Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2015). Therefore, in order to ensure that customers do not defect, Bowen and Brown (2013) are correct to say that customers must be extremely satisfied. Nevertheless, customers may change providers because of price, or because the competitor is offering new opportunities, or simply because they want some variation. That notwithstanding, for satisfaction to be effective, it must be able to create loyalty amongst customers because building customer loyalty is not a choice any longer with businesses, it is the only way of building sustainable competitive advantage. Yet not all loyal customers are necessarily satisfied customers, the level of service quality plays a role (Akbar and Parvez, 2013).

According to Nguyen (2017), loyalty represents one dimension of behavioral intentions. In contrast, attitudinal loyalty is often considered as comprising preferences, commitment, and purchase intentions of the customers, emphasizing the psychological factor of brand loyalty (Mellens, 2016). The third approach combines the first two dimensions to measure loyalty including customers' preferences, brand-switching propensity, frequency to buy and total amount of purchase. So, loyalty consists of not only two but three separate dimensions: behavioral, attitudinal, and composite. Based on the loyalty concepts, an approach composited to attitudinal and behavioral views is adopted for this research. With the aims of being the first choice and priority to the customers to use the service, a lot of efforts from hotels have been made to maintain customer loyalty in the period of competition these days. With this

interesting fact, the researches on the field of customer loyalty for hotel services nowadays are abundant; especially the identification of factors that affect customer loyalty when using hotel services is becoming very diverse between researchers based on their approach different perspectives, in different countries and regions. Both hotels and researchers are implicitly aware that understanding customer preferences in choosing hotel services determines customer loyalty (Permarrupan et al., 2013).

Bodet (2018), through his empirical research, has verified the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty based on four factors including specific satisfaction, overall satisfaction, attitudinal loyalty and repurchase behavior. Liang (2018) in the research about customer loyalty for hotels in the US also confirmed that “Satisfaction” was the most influence factor, followed by “Trust”. The measurement of attitudinal loyalty regarded “Membership Program” is third most valued while “Perceived Quality” results for the fourth most valued factor. The least valued factors for attitudinal and behavioral loyalty were “Perceived Value”. This research results for the difference found between the customer loyalty components in terms of attitude and behavior and both differ from the customer loyalty’s overall assessment. Through the use of the Servqual model, by empirical research, the customer loyalty study conducted by Koffie (2013) for some Ghana hotels’ services demonstrates that customer satisfaction depends not only on the rankings of hotels but also rely heavily on the quality of hotel services by staff, which providing positive value perception to customers, which in turn leads to customer loyalty. The results demonstrate the direct correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Koffie, 2013).

Orthodox (2016) in the research of relationship between Hotel Ratings, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty at Ethiopian Hotels concluded that there are significant relationships between these concepts; but there was no basic

to find out the direct relationship between hotel ratings and customer loyalty. Even though, the relationship between service quality and loyalty is not direct (Orthodox, 2016).

In hospitality organization, it is essential to set up customer's relationship also indicate that the importance of employees due to their remarkable role in establishing a good relationship with customers (Daskin, & Tezer, 2012). Providing high-quality service is linked with sustainable competitive benefit what lead to satisfied customers in return (Ryu & Han 2010). Siddiqi, (2011) specified that great customer gratification and customer faithfulness increment by the effect of great service excellence. Gronroos (2010) expound service as, a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems. To provide great generosity to the local and intercontinental customers it is essential to appoint and train service provider is the requirement in the service-based industry (Huda et al., 2014).

Many researchers have confirmed that in hospitality sector the important relationship between employee's behavioral motive and customer gratification (Ryu & Han 2010) and in customer satisfaction low stressed staffs afford better than high stressed staffs; it is a negative connection between delivery service and job stress (O'Neill, & Davis, 2011). It is widely accepted that workplace mistreatment, which causes and reproduces conflict and discord among workers, has a significantly negative effect on various types of organizational outcomes, such as employees' psychological well-being, organizational and work commitment, and job satisfaction (Hur, Kim, & Park, 2015). Besides this ambiance, the illusion of organizational

politics currently attracts significantly (Afful-Broni, & Tah, 2015) and mentioned that favorites conflict among planners, executives and investors affect the development of the hospitality industry. Therefore, it is a key test for international hotel development to attend the necessity to select and develop positive managerial person for regard organization. Because of, maximum hospitality employees face favors and corrupt drill in the workplace (Poulston, 2008; Sobaih, 2015). According to derivative equity theory, unfavored staffs may be engaged in demolishing conduct when they realize injustice and inequality (Daskin, & Tezer, 2012).

Physical attractiveness, sometimes termed as lookism, is a phenomenon which constitutes the reality of everyday life. It causes people to behave differently toward others depending on the appearance of those people (Patzer, 2013). This bias strongly favors higher physical attractiveness and disfavors lower physical attractiveness (Malkinson, et al, 2013). According to Aharon et al.'s (2011) study people pay more attention to attractive people rather than unattractive people. Attractiveness can be thought of as a heuristic device which may create a Pavlovian conditioning, a type of cognitive bias, or an attributional error when people make evaluations. The attractiveness bias is pervasive, and often unrecognized or denied (Patzer, 2013). Physical attractiveness influences every individual-regardless of sex and age-around the world, ranging from the smallest towns to the largest cities, and ranging from the least developed countries to the most developed (Patzer, 2013).

Toledano (2013) study discovered that even infants at the age of 12 months prefer to approach more attractive strangers compared with unattractive ones. In general, infants tend to have a more positive approach toward attractive people. Likewise, people pay more attention to attractive babies and adults than the ones who are less attractive. Human beings tend to consciously and subconsciously assess the

physical attractiveness dimension(s) of another person's appearance instantly upon their encounter (Toledano, 2013). There have been various studies investigating the role and influence of appearance and physical attractiveness on the perception of people. As mentioned above, this is because physical characteristics and appearance tend to play an important role in a variety of judgments and settings, and on the decisions people make (Roberts, 2012). Attractive people, in general, are perceived to be more friendly, trustworthy, intelligent, and self-confident (Frevort & Walker, 2014; Malkinson et al., 2013). Perhaps for this reason, an average woman in the USA spends about an average of 45000 dollars over her lifetime on her hair, face, body and hands/feet (Ammah-Tagoe, 2010). On the other hand, on average a British woman spends about an average of 175000 dollars on cosmetics over a lifetime (Sharkey, 2017). In many countries, these amounts of money may be sufficient to sustain several families over their lifetimes. Physical attractiveness which is primarily determined by a person's facial attractiveness (Olson & Marshuetz, 2015) has a significant influence on the person's ability to persuade others, even when the person is not deliberately trying to do so. Physically attractive people receive better grades in school are more likely to be hired as a result of job interviews (Toledano, 2013); tend to be paid more when they get the job (Toledano, 2013); and are much more likely to win political elections compared with their less attractive counterparts. Facially attractive presenters also have a persuasive advantage in advertising particularly, when they endorse beauty enhancement products (Praxmarer, 2016). Research studies also show that attractiveness has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Frevort and Walker (2014) argue that in addition to the above, physical appearance and attractiveness may influence perceptions and decisions of people about crime, performance evaluations, power, health and social status.

### **2.8.3 Relationship between staff physical appearance and Customer Retention**

According to Zana et al. (2013), service encounter can be understood as an interaction in the process of communication between two participants that is an employee and a guest, each acting out their specific role (Grandey & Brauburger, 2012). This is why the service encounter plays a crucial role in service marketing as well as in service differentiation, quality control, delivery systems and customer satisfaction (Wu, 2017). There are numerous researchers about the customer's perspective and their perception (Bansal & Taylor, 2012) that shew the importance of an employee's attitude toward the guest in the field of quality. In social cognition, as the prevalent topic of contemporary experimental social psychology, many researchers try to understand sense making of perceivers' social worlds (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2011).

Crisp and Turner (2010) argue that people can also be categorized much like objects, events, concepts, attitude and opinions. Categories can be applied to all aspects of our lives ranging from purchases of basic items through entertainment venues such as cafes or restaurants. This can also be valid with regards to the employee-guest relationship in which both are perceivers from their own point of view, Ule (2015) added that one role of categorization is to simplify a person's world perception. This makes it possible for a person to compose a fast impression of another person (Crisp and Turner, 2010; Sanderson, 2010) as impressions are based on only small pieces of information. According to social cognition theories, first impressions may be important in relation to the initiation and maintenance of social relations and have a great effect on a person's attitude and behavior toward others (Kuzmanovic et al. 2012). Additionally, first impressions are formed on the basis of



facial expressions, appearance or particular actions and their own expectations after forming their impressions. When people develop impressions of others, stereotypes are used as beliefs about personal traits (Biernat & Billings, 2011).

In the beginning give a look it may regard that performance is being connected with an unexplainable exorcism (Magnini, & Honeycutt, 2013). In hospitality industry employees' behavior and attitude are essential with skills to provide memorable service to guests (Sobaih, 2015). But job fulfillment, organizational promise and specific performance effects of the absence of self-assurance that seem to be in such situation harmfully (Büte, 2011), and customer service staffs noticed long-lasting stress show low work engagement (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Working with and under a person who is selected in the position with favorable create the unfair environment in the workplace. Araslı Bavik & Ekiz, (2016) addressed that, the environment of unjust struggle rising from favoritism and nepotism unfavorably affects job gratification of employees providing debilitate in organizational promise. Poon (2014) expresses it as "those actions not officially approved by an organization taken to influence others to meet one's personal goals". Forasmuch as when an employee gets an honor without worthy, he/she will not realize grateful to perform much and will not display great job (Karaköse, 2014).

Employee service in Hospitality is the main concern for customer's satisfaction. Service with a smile to customers is essential in hospitality and it is a complex issue to do the perfect way, which is the interrelated interaction of supervisor, co-workers and the culture of the organization (Burns, 2017). In the hospitality industry, one of the common realistic issues is favoritism and therefore the provided service in the hotels was lesser than customer's anticipation (Mazumder, & Hasan, 2014). Edvardsson (2016) mentioned that, the perception of service must

become up to customer's desire level; they may recognize the same service in various techniques; various parks of evaluating the service excellence (Mazumder, & Hasan, 2014) but particularly favoritism generate unskilled or semi-skilled workforce in service sector who is not talented enough to deliver world-class service for customer satisfaction. Besides this favoritism puts one-sided pressure on a co-worker and as a supervisor or manager to subordinates what is awful in the service industry to provide service to a customer with a smile, upset-minded or dissatisfied staffs cannot satisfy customers. Service organization's customers will remain loyal to service organization if their evaluation to what they obtained is relatively larger than they expect to get it from competitors, and since loyalty expresses customer's repeating to deal with service organization, this affects customers satisfaction with provided services by that organization where customers always prefer the service that is characterized by quality, specifications and characteristics that are matching with their needs and desires, which consequently lead to build loyalty to the organization (Al-Kurdi, 2011). Many organizations have realized that maintaining excellence depends on acquiring customer loyalty, since service quality represents a necessary ingredient in order to convince customers to choose an organization than others, since achieving high levels of service quality provided is a vital artery that supplies service organization with loyal customers. Providing service of high quality is deemed the most effective way to ensure service organization superiority of the over its competitors by retaining loyal customers.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Study Area

The study was concentrated in Greater Accra. The Greater Accra Region has the smallest area of Ghana's 16 administrative regions, occupying a total land surface of 3,245 square kilometres. This is 1.4 per cent of the total land area of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). It is the second most populated region, after the Ashanti Region, with a population of 4,010,054 in 2010, accounting for 16.3 per cent of Ghana's total population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The Greater Accra region is the most urbanized region in the country with 87.4% of its total population living in urban centres. The capital city of Greater Accra Region is Accra which is at the same time the capital city of Ghana.

In 1960, Greater Accra, then referred to as Accra Capital District, was geographically part of the Eastern Region. It was, however, administered separately by the Minister responsible for local government. With effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1982, Greater Accra was created by the Greater Accra Region Law (PNDCL 26) as a legally separate region. The Greater Accra Region is bordered on the north by the Eastern Region, on the east by the Volta Region, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the west by the Central Region. It is smallest region of Ghana in total area, and is made up of 16 administrative areas (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

Greater Accra Region hosts a number of manufacturing industries, oil companies, financial institutions, telecommunication, tourism, education, health institutions and other important establishments. These institutions provide employment opportunities to residents of the City (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2010). Their presence continues to attract people from all parts of the country and

beyond to transact various businesses. Majority of residents in the city are engaged basically in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. They are engaged in occupations or employments such as trading, construction, fishing, farming, services, manufacturing among others. The indigenous people until recently were mostly engaged in fishing and farming (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Greater Accra has licensed formal accommodation establishments categorized into star-rated, guest houses and budgets hotels.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted descriptive research design to evaluate employee physical appearance and its impact on service delivery in 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region. The descriptive survey method was adopted because of the following reasons: the design is useful in describing the characteristics of a large population, makes use of large samples, thus making the results statistically significant even when analyzing multiple variables, many questions can be asked about a given topic giving considerable flexibility to the analysis, the design allows the use of various methods of data collection like questionnaire and interview methods and it also makes use of standardized questions where reliability of the items is determined (Owen, 2002).

Adoption of descriptive survey in this study was supported by Neuman (2000) who holds the believe that a survey research uses a smaller group of selected people but generalizes the results to the whole group from which the small group was chosen.

### **3.3 Population**

Research population refers to the group of entities to which the findings of the study could be universally applied (Koul, 2001). This group often has a common

characteristic of interest to the researcher and about which the study seeks understanding. The target population for this research consist of consumers and management of all the seventeen (17) 4-Star hotels in the Greater Accra (National Hospitality Association, Ghana, 2020). The study estimates about 50 management staff and 1000 customers.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sample Technique**

In determining the sample size for the study, a table developed by the Research Advisors (2006) with a confidence level of 95% and margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 5.0% was used. Based on this Table a sample of 324 respondents comprising 44 managements, and 280 customers were selected for the study (Appendix A). Stratified sampling technique was used to select the six (6) 4-Star hotels operating in Greater Accra. The researcher first divided the hotel population into three (3) Strata's. The strata were named Strata "A", "B", and "C", according to their location (refer to Table 3.1). After dividing the population into 3 strata's, a simple random sampling method was conducted to select two (2) hotels from each sub population. In all, six (6) 4-Star hotels were selected. Fraenkel and Wallan (2006) defined stratified random samplings as the process in which certain subgroup or strata are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they exist in the population. Stratified random sampling technique was employed because it increases the likelihood of representativeness, especially if the sample is not very large (Fraenkel & Wallan, 2006). Stratified sampling method also ensures that the key characteristics of individuals in the population are included in the sample.

In selecting the management and customers from the various selected 4-Star hotels, purposive sampling and convenience sampling technique was employed.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select management of the 4-Star hotel. The purposive sampling technique for this study was based on its purpose, design, and practical implication. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find the management staff who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Purposive sampling refers to strategies in which the researcher exercises his or her judgment about who will provide the best perspective on the phenomenon of interest, and then intentionally invites those specific perspectives into the study.

Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting consumers of the selected six 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra. The convenience sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling technique was used to select 280 customers from these selected hotels. It helps the researcher to obtain relevant information in real terms from the relevant people who were willing and ready to take part in the study. Somekh and Lewis (2006) stated that, convenience sampling forms a group where the researcher has an established relationship, and access to participate and respond to the research. The researcher, also a customer established some relationship with other customers, thereby intend to use convenience sampling for selecting customers for the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to pick respondents to talk about the how Employee physical appearance influence service delivery.

### **3.5 Data collection instrument**

Questionnaire was developed to obtain the relevant information from the management and customers of the selected 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra. The questionnaire was developed containing both closed and open ended. Oppenheim (1996) indicated that questionnaire is essential to establish the information to gather

for relevant questions to be solicited. Contemplations of appeal to respondent ease of reading and supplying the required data guided the format of the questionnaires. This enhanced proper usage of time during the data collection.

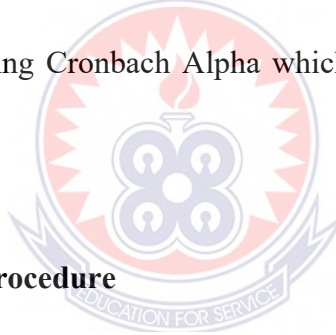
The questionnaire for the management were divided into two sections, i.e. A and B. The section A consisted of bio data of the respondents, while Section B reflected characteristics management looks for when recruiting staff. Also, the questionnaire for the consumers were grouped into three sections i.e. A, B, and C. Section A constitutes the demographic characteristics of the consumers, while Section B reflected the customers perception of Employee physical appearance on service delivery. Section B constituted customers perception of quality service delivery practices at the hotel. Section C reflected the how Employee physical appearance affect service delivery. Respondents were expected to tick (✓) the created boxes of columns where they strongly agree; agree; disagree and strongly disagree to the given statements. In this study, the Likert scale which had five (5) columns from number five (5) to one (1) in a requisite order attached to various columns. On the scale the rating was arranged in five (5) columns. The Likert scale provides the basis for neutral response, as well as ranking highest and lowest responses of respondents in the study.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

The validity of research instrument was therefore ensured by assessing the questionnaire items during their construction. In order to determine whether the instruments would do what they are intended to do; a pre-test study was conducted at Airport View Hotel located at Dr. Amilcar Cabral Road, Airport Residential Area, Accra, after which the questions on the questionnaire were restructured for the main

study. The results of the pre-test helped in restructuring the questionnaire and making the necessary corrections. Further, the questions were discussed with the supervisor for verification. This was to clear any lack of clarity and ambiguity.

The reliability of the study addressed the similarity of the results through repeated trials. Reliability is the degree to which a question consistently measures (Gay 1992). Mugenda (1999) defines reliability as the measure to which research instrument yields consisted results after repeated trials. The identified problems were supplied with the instruments and were scored manually by the researcher for the consistency of results. The responses were analyzed after which two weeks period was allowed to pass before the same treatment to be applied to the same respondents and analysis done. The results were recorded accordingly. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha which yield a reliability coefficient of 0.683.



### **3.7 Data collection procedure**

Permission to conduct the study at the various hotels were sought from the managers of the hotel. The management staff of the selected 4-Star hotel wishing to participate in the study were invited to attend the study on a pre-arranged date. All the management staff to be included in the study were given an identification number. After received consent from subject, data were collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered to the management and consumers at the various restaurants within one month. The management staff were given two weeks starting from the day of administering the questionnaire to answer the questionnaire.



The researcher established some relationship with the customers of the selected hotels. The researcher explained questionnaire items to the management and customers in the language they understood better and given some time to reflect on the responses before giving their options. However, most of the respondents completed and delivered their questionnaire on the spot with concern that it might be misplaced due to their busy schedules.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

Quantitative data were gathered for the study using questionnaires. The data obtained from the field were edited, coded for its consistency and then entered in a computer using the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) programmer version 23.0 to perform descriptive statistics. The following research methods were used in the study:

- *Frequencies, percentages, Mean and standard deviation:* This was used to summarize the data.
- *Correlation:* association between employee physical appearance variables and service delivery at 4-Star hotel in Greater Accra Region.
- *Regression analysis:* effect of employee physical appearance on service delivery at 4-Star hotel in Greater Accra Region.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

In recognition of the critical role played by adherence to research ethics, the study took various steps to ensure the protection and freewill of participants as much as possible. The researcher therefore sought ethical clearance from the university through the supervisor before going to the field for data collection. This included

ensuring that there was adequate provision in the data instrument and data collection procedures to allow for respondent protection from any form of harm due to their participation in the study.

Also, permission was sought from the managers of the various restaurants before waiters and chefs were administered the data instruments. Moreover, the objectives of the study were explained to participants in a language they understood before seeking their consent for participation in the survey which was indicated by filling a voluntary participation consent form. Participants were also assured of the protection of their personal and geographic data and that the study was purely for academic purposes. These pieces of information have been kept confidential throughout the study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Response Rate**

On the permission to distribute questionnaires to the management staff and customers of the 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region, a total of 324 questionnaires were distributed comprising 44 management staff, and 280 customers. Out of 324 questionnaires sent out, 231 questionnaires were received comprising; 36 management staff and 195 consumers. Therefore, the analysis of the study was based on 71.3% response rate. This response rate was acceptable to make conclusions for the study. Mulusa (1998) says that 50.0% response rate is adequate, 60.0% is good and 70.0% very good. Therefore, 71.3% response rate was hence considered very good to provide required information for the purpose of data analysis.

#### **4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Hotel Management Staff**

Demographic information of the hotel management staff taken for the purpose of this research includes gender, age group, educational level and number of years working with the selected hotels. Table 4.1 explains the details of the demographic data in tabular form.

*Table 4. 1: Demographic characteristics of hotel management staff*

Characteristics	Responses	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age group	18-25years	4	11.1
	26-35years	16	44.4
	36-45years	11	30.6
	46years and above	5	13.9
Gender	Male	25	69.4
	Female	11	30.6
Educational level	Diploma	8	22.2
	First degree	25	69.4
	Masters degree	3	8.3
Years working in the current hotel	1-5years	19	52.8
	6-10years	14	38.9
	11-15years	3	8.3

A descriptive summary of hotel management staff showed that majority of them were in the age bracket of 26-35 years whilst only few of the staff are 46 years and above. More specifically, 4(11.1%) of them were between 18-25 years, while 16(44.4%) were between the ages of 26-35 years. In addition, 11(30.6%) of the respondents were between the ages of 36-45 years, while the remaining 5(13.9%) of the respondents were between the ages of 46 years and above. The results indicate that the majority of the management staff of the 4-Star hotels are in their mid 30s and they are young.

Focusing on the gender of the respondents, it is observed that 25(69.4%) of the respondents were males, while 11(30.6%) of the respondents were females. This showed that male management staff were dominant in the 4-Star hotel industry than their female counterparts. This might also indicate that males held position in the hotel business than females. The finding agrees with Al-Ababneh's (2016) study who indicated that the studied sample constituted 82.3% males and 17.7% females managements working in four and five-star hotels in Jordan. Abbasi and Alvi (2013)

also showed that 77.8% of top level, middle level and supervisory level employees of four-star hotels in Pakistan were males.

The results as shown on Table 4.1 indicated that 8 respondents were Diploma holders representing 22.2%, whereas 25 respondents constituting 69.4% were first degree holders. The remaining 3 respondents forming 8.3% were Masters degree holders. This suggests that the hotel management staff have higher education and the possibility of being exposed to advanced courses. The finding is in line with Al-Ababneh's (2016) study that most (47.9%) of the hotel managements held bachelor's degrees, while 10.9% had master's degrees in four and five-star hotels in Jordan.

Concerning the number of years respondents have worked in their current hotel, 19 respondents constituting 52.8% have been working in their current hotel for 1-5years; 14 respondents representing 38.9% of the respondents had been in their current hotel for 6-10years. Moreover, 3 respondents representing 8.3% had 11-15years experience at their current hotel. This implies that average hotel staff does not stay in a particular hotel for long since the majority of them have been in a particular hotel for 1-5years. It was necessary to find out the working experience of the respondents so as to be able to obtain practical and convincing answers to the questions asked.

### **4.3 Demographic Characteristics of customers**

The study collected information on gender, age, and educational level for the customers that patronize the most 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region. Presented in Table 4.2 gives detailed description of the background information of the customer.

Table 4. 2: Demographic characteristics of hotel customers

Characteristics	Responses	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age group	Male	135	69.2
	Female	60	30.8
Gender	26-35years	20	10.3
	36-45years	111	56.9
	46-55years	59	30.3
	56years and above	5	2.6
Educational level	No formal education	5	2.6
	Primary	7	3.6
	Secondary	16	8.2
	Tertiary	167	85.6

From Table 4.2, the male hotel customers account for 69.2%; while 30.8% is the portion of the female customers. This ratio led to the conclusion that there are more men visiting hotels than women. The finding concurs with other studies (Molina 2010; Baker 2010, Malik *et al.* 2012) who found that men visit hotels more than women. A study by Ayuba (2014) shows that male (59.0%) visits hotels more than their female counterparts. The implication of these results is that most of the responses are coming from the male respondents' point of view and previous researches have shown that men derive satisfaction from functional service quality. Therefore, they are likely to report on being satisfied on the functional aspect. The relational aspect of the service quality will most likely not be properly rated (Molina 2010; Baker 2010, Malik *et al.* 2012). The views of female respondents who are reported to gain satisfaction more through relational aspect of service are more involved in pre-purchase and post purchase behaviours (Ayuba, 2014).

From Table 4.2, 10.3% of the respondents were between the age bracket of 26-35 years, 56.9% were in the age bracket of 36-45 years, while 30.3% were in the age group of 46-55 years and the remaining 2.6% of the respondents were between the

ages of 56 years and above years. From the illustration, most customers that visits the selected 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra are above 36-45years, followed by customers between 46-55years, followed those in the age bracket of 26-35years and lastly those who are 56 years and above. The findings revealed that the hotels are visited by youthful customers between the ages of 30-45 years. This could be attributed to the mobility, ability to spend and need to adventure a factor associated with the youths. These revelations agree with the views expressed by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which reported that the youths have a potential of engaging on leisure activities and visiting hotels due to their young age and the love of adventure (UNWTO, 2010).

The results obtained indicate that no formal education was 2.6%, Primary/JHS education were 3.6%, Technical/Vocational/SHS education were 8.2%, Tertiary education were 85.6%. The finding portrays a well educated population among the customers that visits 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region. An educated lot is likely to be informed and make informed decision rationally as compared to less educated persons. This observation is in agreement with the findings by Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo, and Reutskaja (2010) who asserted that educational level plays a major role in deciding which services will result in high customer satisfaction. The implication of this finding is that well educated customers get more engaged in searching and evaluating of products and services which make them more likely to be involved in switching from one service provider to another in order to get maximized satisfaction (Fernandes *et al.* 2013).

#### 4.4 Physical appearance 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees

The section was intended to answer the question on the physical appearance that 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees. Table 4.3 show the responses of employers on physical appearance they look for before recruiting employees. It should be noted that the quality service practices of the hotels used a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

*Table 4. 3: Views on physical appearance considered by 4-Star hotels*

S/N	Physical appearance considered	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	The hotel employs attractive people rather than unattractive people	3.92	1.025	Agreed
2.	Young and energetic people are employed in the hotel	3.81	1.215	Agreed
3.	Females are considered for employment than male counterparts	3.78	1.149	Agreed
4.	Dressing and personal presentation of a person is considered for an employment	3.69	1.142	Agreed
5	Facial expression of people are considered in employment in the hotel	3.50	1.320	Agreed
6.	Skin colour of people considered for employment	2.39	1.248	Disagreed
7.	The hotel considers height before considering someone employment opportunity	1.64	.867	Disagreed
8.	Curvy girls are considered for employment more than skinny one	1.42	.806	Disagreed

*Note:  $\bar{x} > 3.0 = Agreed$ ;  $\bar{x} < 3.0 = Disagreed$*

As depicted in Table 4.3, the respondents agreed that the hotel employs attractive people rather than unattractive people. This statement was had a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.256. This affirmed attractiveness of a candidate becomes a necessary determinant for hiring at 4-star hotel. In a service industry which involve face-o-face contact with clients, more physically attractive applicant could conceivably perform far beer than those who are less attractive. Indeed, it has been found out that applicants who are attractive are particularly



preferred for jobs for which appearance is of paramount interest. The finding agrees with Hatfield and Sprecher (2006) people who are attractive are always favored in different manners which include evaluative and judgmental. The finding also aligns with Gilmore, et al. (2016) study that physically attractive individuals applying for a job with the same qualification as those who are not physically attractive are mostly likely to get the same type of job. Further, the physically attractive and beautiful are more likely to get promoted to higher positions and to be paid more at the workplace (Young, 2011).

In addition, the respondents agreed that the hotel consider young and energetic people for employment. This statement attained a mean of 3.81 and standard deviation of 1.215. This implies that there is a preference for young men and women who are not more than thirty (30) years when it comes to the hiring of staff. The finding agrees with Froger-Michon and Piat's (2019) study that young people are recruited for employment in hotel industries. These young men and women have direct contact with the cherished population of customers of the hotel and as such play front staff roles in meeting clients and other departments needing services of young staff. Froger-Michon and Piat (2019) further asserted that employing young people has become one of the most frequent discrimination cases at work over the past twenty years.

From the study, considering female for employment than male counterparts had a mean score of 3.78 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.149. This result showed that females are considered for employment than male counterparts at 4-Star hotels. The hotels are careful in the selection of its employees when hiring. As a matter of fact, the hotel discriminates against gender when recruiting. Females who are deemed to possess the qualities necessary for the performance of the job are given

opportunity. The result agrees with the assertion study by Omar (2008). According to Omar (2008) there is a difference as far as the selections of hotel staffs are concerned by both male and female hotel customers. Hotels consider females more than males during recruitment (Omar, 2008).

Moreover, the respondents agreed that dressing and personal presentation of a person is considered for an employment by 4-Star hotels. This statement had a mean score of 3.69 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.142. This is considered an important physical appearance 4-Star hotels look for before recruiting employees. Froger-Michon and Piat (2019) indicated that when an employer has the choice between two candidates of equal quality and competence, its physical appearance is decisive in 53%. Moreover, 82% of the respondents believe that their look, the manner they dress and their style have a “significant influence” on their professional life.

Furthermore, facial expression of people are considered for employment by 4-Star hotels. It had a mean score of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 1.320. This indicated that people facial expression is an important commercial advantage for the hospitality and tourism industry (Nickson et al., 2003). According to Motowidlo et al (1999) have also established that facial expression of a person may have predictive validity for job performance. They have also found that facial expression also have a positive relationship with the performance ratings of an individual at interview and how such a person is during job supervisory performance.

The respondents disagreed to skin colour ( $\bar{x}=2.39$ ,  $SD=1.248$ ), height ( $\bar{x}=1.64$ ,  $SD=0.867$ ), and curvy girls ( $\bar{x}=1.42$ ,  $SD=0.806$ ) as physical appearance considered for employment opportunity at 4-Star hotels. All these statements failed to meet the predetermined cut-off points of 3.0. This indicated that the hotels are careful in the selection of its employees when hiring. As a matter of fact, the many of the 4-Star

hotels do not discriminate against colour, height and body shape of people looking for employment at the hotel.

The findings revealed that 4-Star hotels consider the physical appearance of people when recruiting employees. It was discovered that the hotel employs attractive people, young and energetic people, and females as compared to male counterparts. Also, the dressing and personal presentation of a person, and facial expression of people are considered in employment in the hotel. This indicates that employees physical appearance has become one of the most important factors considered by employers during recruitment. Akbaba (2006) affirmed that employees in the hospitality industry in fact act as “walking billboards” for their companies and, therefore, the importance of an aesthetically pleasing physical appearance is essential to the industry.

The finding of the study concurs with Young (2011) study that visible specific attributes of a person, which relate both to its physical and bodily integrity (height, weight, facial features) and to elements related to the expression of its personality (clothing, accessories, hair, beard, piercings, tattoos) has become important factors when recruiting staff. Young (2011) further asserted that physically attractive and beautiful are more likely to be employed and get promoted to higher positions and to be paid more at the workplace (Young, 2011). Albacete-Sáez et al.’s (2007) revealed that employee physical appearance in the hotel industry and in tourism is important during recruitment. Leung and Law (2010) indicated that when a guest and the receptionist first meet, the first thing they both perceive is each other’s physical appearance. From the guests’ point of view, the physical appearance of the hotel staff is one of the factors that undoubtedly affects their satisfaction with the accommodation. Furthermore, as Briggs et al. (2007) state, hotel customers expect

helpful, friendly and caring service. Such expectations include not only the knowledge of hotel workers, but also the very personal relationships the workers develop with tourists. The quality of these relationships can be seen in the efforts of professionals to adapt their appearance to the expectations of their guests.

#### 4.5 Customers perception of employee physical appearance

Physical appearance that employees have one way or the other affect the perception customers have when a service is delivered to them. Employee's physical appearance have consequences on the services they delivered to customers. Table 4.4 show the responses on customers perception of employee physical appearance on service quality delivery at 4-Star hotel. It should be noted that the quality service practices of the hotels used a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

*Table 4. 4: Customers perception of employee physical appearance*

<b>Perception on employee physical appearance</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
I do not mind if a male or female employee attend to me	3.63	1.246	Agreed
I want to be attended to by a physically attractive employee	3.56	1.131	Agreed
Dressing and personal presentation of employee makes me feel good during service delivery	3.51	1.141	Agreed
Young employees deliver quality service	3.47	1.309	Agreed
Employees smile makes me feel good during service delivery	3.46	1.257	Agreed
Curvy girls make me feel good during service delivery	3.09	1.161	Agreed
The smooth plain skin of the employee makes me feel good during service delivery	2.46	1.159	Disagreed
I prefer being served by a female to a male employee	2.38	1.202	Disagreed
The shiny hair style of the employee makes me feel good during service delivery	2.17	1.036	Disagreed

*Note:  $\bar{x} > 3.0 = Agreed$ ;  $\bar{x} < 3.0 = Disagreed$*

As depicted in Table 4.4, the respondents attest to the fact that they do not mind if a male or female employee attend to me. This statement had a mean score of 3.63 and a

standard deviation (SD) of 1.246. This affirmed that customers do not mind if they are attended by male or female employee. Customers can be attended to by any worker at any point in time if the need arise and what matters to them is if customers are satisfied with services rendered to them by both men and women. The result was in agreement with Wade et al.'s (2004) study that consumers preferred to be served by a male or female who is attractive and presentable. Boothroyd et al. (2008) researched revealed that consumers accept to be attended by a male or female. Masculinity and femininity do not matter when it comes to quality service delivery. The finding contradicts with Ayadi (1996) study that consumers prefer young men as compare to their female counterpart because, they exhibit high sense of humility despite the handsomeness.

Moreover, the results showed a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 1.131 of the respondents which constitute a high percentage rate which attest to the fact that they prefer to be attended to by a physically attractive employee. At the societal level, physical attractive is an advantage, as being beautiful gives a person much more confidence. Paramount among the reason given was that beautiful young ladies are elegant and smart when discharging duties at various levels. The finding agrees with Young (2011) that attractive employees are good at managing customer complain and since customers are at the heart of every business it therefore implies that customers at 4-Star hotels needs to be attended to by the attractive employees.

With regard to customer's perception that dressing and personal presentation of an employee makes them feel good during service delivery, a mean of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 1.141 was attained. This indicated that customers want to be serviced by dressed and presentable employee as it makes them feel good. The finding concurs with Tsaur and Tang (2013) that people believe presentable employee are

more likely to possess a wide variety of positive qualities, such as intelligence and likeability and even perform better. Further, Motowidlo et al (1999) have also demonstrated that visual cues may have predictive validity for job performance.

With reference to customers perception that young employees deliver quality service, a mean score of 3.47 and standard deviation of 1.309 was attained. Customers believed that young employees delivery quality service as compared to older employees. This view is supported by Wilson et al. (2016) that young employees possess a simple character and are duty conscious. Again, the respondents are of the view that the young employees attract full attention from the customers at hotels thereby increasing the customer base of the hotel. The result was also in line with Wan and Wyer's (2015) study that consumers prefer young employees as compare to their older ones because, they exhibit high sense of humility.

From the study, customers perception that employees smile makes them feel good during service delivery had a mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.257. The mean score attained showed that facial expression of employees is preferred by the customers. The result agrees with the assertion study by Little et al. (2007) and Todorov et al. (2005) who shown that consumers satisfaction is based on facial expression and attractiveness of hotel staff. According to Todorov et al. (2008), facial expression of employee influence consumers acceptance of hotel service delivery despite little evidence of accuracy. Furthermore, masculine and feminine smiling faces may influence preferences and positive perceptions about the service delivery at the hotel (Buckingham et al., 2006). Wade et al. (2004) explored how racial characteristics and individual differences in women's evaluations of men's facial attractiveness and personality affect customers behaviour. It became evident

that hotel employee facial expression have influence on customers perception on quality service delivery at the hotel.

In addition, the customers agreed that curvy girls make me feel good during service delivery at the hotels. It had a mean score of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 1.161. This indicates that curvy girls provide good customer care services to many customers of hotel with much needed attention. Weitz (2001), found that women are considered accountable to various appearance norms amid others, as per their body size and shape. The study discovered that the body size and shape of employee mattered during an interview. It is understandable why one's body shape size and shape, and dressing would be important as an employee, because an employee is a representative of a company, so the way a customer view an employee would be directly connected to the company's image.

The respondents disagreed to the statement that smooth plain skin of the employee makes them feel good during service delivery ( $x=2.46$ ,  $SD=1.159$ ), prefer being served by a female to a male employee ( $x=2.38$ ,  $SD=1.202$ ), and shiny hair style of the employee makes me feel good during service delivery ( $x=2.17$ ,  $SD=1.036$ ). These statements failed to meet the predetermined cut-off point of 3.0. This affirmed that the customers do not consider smooth plain skin, shiny hair style of employee and does not mind whether being served by a female to a male employee.

It was found that customers pay attention to physical appearance of employees. This showed that the physical appearance of hotel employees has effect on perception customers have when a service is delivered to them. It was discovered that customers wanted to be attended to by physically attractive employee, dressed and presentable employee, young and curvy girls which make them feel good during service delivery. Furthermore, the study showed that employees smile makes customers feel good

during service delivery, but they do not mind if a male or female employee attend to them. The finding agrees with Fang et al. (2019) who found that employees' physical attractiveness affects customer engagement. The study revealed that when customers were asked whether they would pay attention to the employees' physical attractiveness, 80.0% said, “Yes” they will be very happy about interacting with the [highly attractive] service employee and will enjoy the service experience” (Emotional dimension of customer engagement).

The finding is also in line with Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) study who stated that customers pay attention to restaurant staff physical appearance. According to the study, customer declared they will patronize the restaurant again or recommend it to friends if the restaurant employees are appealing and served high-quality food (Behavioral and cognitive dimensions of customer engagement). The study of Hollebeek et al. further revealed that customers mentioned they feel pleasant when seeing highly attractive service employees (Emotional dimension of customer engagement). Further, customers are more motivated to talk about highly attractive service employees with friends and would be more willing to review the employees online (Behavioral dimension of customer engagement) (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The observations of the customer engagement dimensions (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and emotional) indicate that employees' physical attractiveness has impacts on customer engagement

Tsai et al., 2012) customers preferred to be served by physical attractive employee. Physical attractiveness has a strong effect in social interactions, especially when dealing with customers (Tsai et al., 2012). Thus, Melissen et al. (2014) point out, by referring to the work of Albert Mehrabian (1971), the strong effects of voice and appearance compared to the words used in a human interaction. As front-line



employees represent the image of the hotel (Tsaur & Tang, 2013), and business attire, physically attractive young and grooming are identified as important factors related to professionalism (Ruetzler et al., 2012), the use of physically attractive employee in the hospitality industry becomes significant (Warhurst et al., 2000; Nickson et al., 2005). So, hotels have become aware of the opportunity to gain competitive advantage by using aesthetically appealing employee (Warhurst et al., 2000).

#### 4.6 Customers perception of quality service delivery practices at 4-Star Hotel

Customers perception about service delivery quality is very important as it will determine whether customers would want to continue doing business with its service provider or to switch to other service provider. Consumers perception of quality service practices regarding reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness were determined. Table 4.5 show the quality service practices of the hotels. It should be noted that the quality service practices of the hotels used a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

*Table 4. 5: Consumer perception on quality service practices of hotels*

S/N	Quality service practice	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
<b>Reliability of services provided</b>				
1	I trust the hotel to keep my records confidentially	3.75	1.252	Agreed
2	Employees provide accurate services to customers	3.73	1.219	Agreed
3	Employees take their time to explain issues to the customer	3.70	1.067	Agreed
4	Employees are dependable in handling customers complaints	2.88	1.378	Disagreed
<b>Assurance given by employees</b>				
1	Employees are courteous and friendly	3.82	1.115	Agreed
2	Customers are willing to continue patronising hotel service because of employee assurance of accurate service	3.81	1.162	Agreed

3	Employees create atmosphere for customers to feel safe and relaxed	3.53	1.181	Agreed
4	Employees inspire trust and confidence in customers	2.65	1.363	Disagreed
<b>Tangibles (Physical facilities and equipment)</b>				
1	The hotel has nice and comfortable chairs	3.99	0.914	Agreed
2	The employees are well dressed	3.89	1.146	Agreed
3	Employees look professional at all time	3.33	1.267	Agreed
4	The hotel structures are disability friendly	2.87	1.399	Disagreed
<b>Empathy shown by employee</b>				
1	Employees are patient when dealing with customers	3.90	1.008	Agreed
2	Employees take their time to listen to customers	3.74	1.217	Agreed
3	Employees are willing to respond to customer complaints	3.45	1.219	Agreed
4	Employees ensure that customers feel good emotionally and psychologically	1.72	1.311	Disagreed
<b>Employee responsiveness</b>				
1	Employees are ready to receive customers	3.92	1.042	Agreed
2	The employee of this hotel tell exactly when services will be performed	3.73	1.245	Agreed
3	The employee keeps to the time schedule given to customers	3.59	1.246	Agreed
4.	The employee assist customers at odd hours in case of emergency	2.66	1.335	Disagreed

*Note:  $\bar{x} > 3.0 = Agreed$ ;  $\bar{x} < 3.0 = Disagreed$*

#### 4.6.1 Reliability of service provided

The findings from the study reveal that most of the customers trust the hotel in keeping their records confidentially. This is supported by a mean of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 1.252. This indicates by providing appropriate service to each customer, hotel service can build confidence of customers and believe in the services employees render. In addition, the customers perceived that employee provide accurate services with a mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.219. This corresponds to the statement by Mei et al. (1999) that customers are always promised of accurate information and service, and a maximum level of security when they visit the hotels.

Furthermore, the customers of the hotels indicated that employees take their time to explain issues to the customer. This statement attained a mean score of 3.70

and a standard deviation of 1.067. This confirms that most of the customers agreed on timely provision of service by the hotels. With a mean score of 2.88 and a standard deviation 1.378 showed that the customers disagreed to the fact that employees are dependable in handling customers complaints. On average, majority of the customers perceived that the hotel employees service delivered is reliable. Mei et al. (1999) obtained similar results on reliability dimensions referring to keeping promises, accurate and timely service, safe and secure stay.

#### **4.6.2 Assurance given by Employees**

The findings from the study reveal that most of the customers perceived that the employees of the hotel are consistently courteous in all their dealings. This is supported by a mean of 3.82 and standard deviation of 1.115. In addition, the customers perceived that hotel employees assure them of accurate services. This statement reflected a mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.162. The finding revealed that customers are willing to continue patronising hotel service because of employee assurance of accurate services. Moreover, the customers perceived that employee's create atmosphere for them to feel safe and relaxed. This statement attained a mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.181. Again, with a mean score of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 1.363, majority of the customers disagreed that the hotel employees inspire trust and confidence in them.

This implies that on average most of the customers were in agreement that the hotels assured customers of accurate service(s). Knutson et al. (1990) also supported for this finding by pointing out consumers' consistently high expectations for assurance dimensions which refer to consistent and on time services, quickly corrected problems, trained employees, knowledgeable staff, and customers' comfortable feelings.

### 4.6.3 Tangibility (Physical facilities and equipment)

As displayed in Table 4.6, the customers agreed that the hotel has nice and comfortable chairs. This statement reflected a mean of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 0.914. On average, the customers also agreed that the hotel employees are well dressed. This is supported by a mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 1.146. Employees looking professional at all time had a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 1.236. This indicated that customers perceived the employees at the hotel to be qualified and professional at all time qualified. Juwaheer (2004) illustrated most 4-Star hotels have professional and qualified staff to provide customers with the necessary services at this hotel. Finally, the statement that the hotel structures are disability friendly had a mean of 2.87 and a standard deviation of 1.399. This is indication that building facilities and designs at the 4-Star hotels are disability unfriendly.

The results reflected the important influence from tangibility dimension which relates to nice and comfortable chairs, well dressed employees, and professionalism of employees at all time makes customers feel comfortable. However, many previous studies found tangible as one of significant factors affecting customer satisfaction such as Hossain (2012), Mei et al. (1999), and Juwaheer (2004). Especially, Juwaheer (2004) indicated that room attractiveness and décor, and sufficient and qualified staff to provide customers with the necessary services are the most significant factor affecting customer satisfaction. A similar study was conducted by Gunarathne (2014) in Sri Lankan Hotel Industry. According to the study, the tangibility dimension of the hotel influences customer satisfaction. It was found the hotels interior and exterior decoration in the hotel is quite appealing, the employees have neat appearance, the hotel facilities are up-to-date, and the hotel is clean.

#### **4.6.4 Empathy shown by employees**

From Table 4.6, the customers perceived that the employees are patients when dealing with them. This statement attained a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.008. This implies that most of the hotel employees understands and give individual attention to customers. The customers further perceived that employee's of the hotel take their time to listen to customers. This statement attained a mean of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.217. This confirms that the employees of the hotels take time to listen to the customers. Moreover, the customers perceived that employee's of the hotel are willing to respond to their complaints. This statement had a mean of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1.219 which confirms that most of the employees of the hotels are having customer's needs as first priority.

The statement that employees of the hotel ensure that customers feel good emotionally and psychologically had a mean of 2.58 and a standard deviation of 1.311. This implies that most of the customers perceived that the employees do not make them feel good emotionally and psychologically. The finding agrees with the study by Nguyen et al. (2015) who found that the hotels ensure empathy activities by providing customers individual attention, understanding customer specific needs, having positive attitude when receive feedback from customers, and providing healthful menu. That means the hotels can considerably increase their customer satisfaction level if they may better perform their empathy.

#### **4.6.5 Responsiveness Practices**

It can be observed from the study results in Table 4.6 that employees are ready to receive customers. This statement had a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 1.042. This implies that most of the customers perceived that the employees are ready and prepared to receive them. On average, the customers were

in agreement that the employees of the hotel tell exactly when services will be performed. This is supported by a mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.245. This indicates that most of the customers perceived employees respond to their needs.

In addition, the customers perceived that the employees keep to the time schedule given to customers. This statement had a mean of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.246 which confirms that most of the customers were in agreement on the prompt service offered by employees to customers. The statement that employee assist customers at odd hours in case of emergency had a mean score of 2.66 and a standard deviation of 1.335. This indicates that most of the customers disagreed that the help them at odd hours in case of emergency. Nguyen et al. (2015) obtained a similar result on responsiveness activities by hotels which includes: willingness to serve customers, availability to respond to customers' requests and flexibility to meet customers' demands has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction. Presented in Table 4.6 shows ranking of customers of quality service provided by 4-Star hotels.

*Table 4. 6: Rank of customers perception of quality service*

<b>Quality service provided</b>	<b>No. item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
Service Tangibility	4	3.52	1.182
Service Reliability	4	3.51	1.229
Service Responsiveness	4	3.47	1.217
Service Assurance	4	3.45	1.205
Service Empathy	4	3.20	1.189
<b>Average score</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>1.505</b>

The finding showed that service tangibility activities of 4-Star hotel had highest mean of 3.52 and a standard deviation of 1.182. The physical facilities are in the areas of how well the employees of 4-Star hotels are well dressed, employees looking professional at all time, and the hotel have visually attractive look and comfortable chairs. Reasons attributed to the customers interest in physical facilities and equipment at the 4-Star hotel is that it provides them with physical evidence which is a direct response to customer loyalty. Again, in today's competitive business environment, physical facilities especially the hotel facilities and structures, how employees dressed depict its culture and philosophy thereby assist the hotel to compete favorably with its competitors.

Moreover, service reliability activities of the 4-Star hotel had the second highest mean score of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 1.229. This affirmed that the 4-Star hotels have a good reliability of services provided. This are in the areas of how employees provide accurate services to customers within the shortest possible time, employees are dependable in handling customers complains, and employees take their time to explain issues to the customers. Hanson (2000) suggested that, in order for organizations to meet the wants and requirements of their customers, they must improve their services. This was realized as a result of prudent customer relationship management practices and effective quality service delivery by both employees and management at 4-Star hotels and educating them to meet today's competitive business environment. Again, systems were put in place to meet customers demand and expectations within the shortest possible time hence achieving a successful actual reliability of services provided at the 4-Star hotel. Service quality and reliability enables organizations to gain competitive advantage over other organizations and maintain long- term relationship with customers (Zeithmal et al., 2000).

In addition, service responsiveness activities of 4-Star hotels had the third highest mean score of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.217. This affirmed that the 4-Star hotels adopt proper employees' responsive techniques in addressing customer challenges. The employees responsive techniques approaches use is that employees are ready to receive customers at any point in time, and the hotel on the other hand keep to the time schedule given to customers. One prominent reason assigned to the adoption of employees responsiveness is that it will strengthen the relationship that exist between both management and employees at 4-Star hotel and its internal and external customers since every successful business ride on effective relationship between the business and its customers.

Furthermore, service assurance of the 4-Star hotel had fourth highest mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1.205. The customers believed in the service assurance given by both the management and employees at 4-Star hotels. These are in the areas of customers been given assurance by both management and employees to deliver a particular service on time. It is crucial for hotels to better understand changing customer needs and adopt the latest information technology system in order to compete more effectively with global organizations (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). Employees inspire trust and confidence in customers, employees also create atmosphere for customers to feel safe and relaxed and customers are willing to continue business with the hotel. This shows that, this percentage of the respondents value the significant of service assurance in taking critical steps which facilitate the managerial decision of hotels in order to increase customer base of the hotels thereby increasing the profitability, rate of growth and increase productivity.

Again, service empathy activities of the 4-Star hotel had the least mean score of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 1.189. The customers believed that the employees



at the 4-Star hotel employ empathy in managing and administering the functions of the hotel ranging from every single department. The empathy approach adopted by the employees at the hotel includes; employees are in most cases patient when dealing with customers, and employees are willing to respond to customers complain with urgent attention. Customers are the pivot on which every successful business or organization is built hence there is the need to practice empathy at hotels in order to keep both the existing and potential customers.

#### **4.7 Relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery**

The ultimate aim of every service provider is impact positively on the satisfaction of customers through delivery of quality service. The use of employees to deliver quality service to customers is important as the characteristics they pose affect service delivery in the long run. The physical appearance of employees are the independent variables used and service quality delivery is the dependent variable use. The result of the effect of employee physical appearance on service quality delivery is presented using correlation and regression analysis.

##### **4.7.1 Correlation Analysis**

Pearson' correlation (or Pearson's  $r$ ) was used in the study of the relationships between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery. This statistical tool is typically used to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two or more continuous variables (Allen & Bennett 2010). The Pearson correlation analyses were conducted in SPSS 20.0. The results of the Pearson correlation analyses are summarised in Table 4.7

Table 4. 7: Correlation Matrix of employee physical appearance and quality service

S/N	Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Employee Physical Appearance	1	.677**	.663**	.084	.945**	.021
2.	Service Reliability		1	.194**	-.043	.387*	.341**
3.	Service Assurance			1	-.054	.733**	-.258*
4.	Service Tangibility				1	.005	.205*
5.	Service Empathy					1	-.210*
6.	Service Responsiveness						1

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

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

As displayed in Table 4.7, a significant positive correlation between employee physical appearance and service reliability ( $r = 0.677$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found. In addition, employee physical appearance had a positive correlation with service assurance ( $r = 0.663$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, employees physical appearance was significantly related to service empathy activities of the hotel ( $r = 0.945 < 0.01$ ). An insignificant correlation was found between employee physical appearance and service tangibility ( $r = 0.084$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and service responsiveness ( $r = 0.021$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). These results suggest that employee physical appearance have a significant association with quality service practices (reliability, assurance and empathy) by 4-Star hotels. The result concurs with the study by Knežević et al. (2015) who proved that there is a positive and strong correlation between the physical appearance of hotel guests and tangibility ( $r = 0.815$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), reliability ( $r = 0.618$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and responsiveness ( $r = 0.874$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The finding is also in line with Abbasi & Alvi's (2013) study who found a significant relationship between expertise employee physical appearance and empathy ( $r = 0.694$ ). Physical appearance of employees and assurance significantly correlated with each other ( $r = 0.726$ ). Similarly, employee physical appearance and reliability are also positively associated with each other ( $r = 0.726$ ). The finding also conforms

with Homburg and Stock (2014) who found that employee physical appearance is strongly correlated with empathy ( $r=0.431^*$ ,  $< 0.05$ ), responsiveness ( $r=0.419^{**}$ ,  $<0.01$ ) and reliability ( $r=0.532^{**}$ ,  $<0.01$ ).

#### 4.7.2 Regression Analysis

The study made use of causal effect relationship to determine the impact of employee physical appearance on the five ServQual dimensions of service qualities as proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1998), namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance. Multiple correlation coefficients (R) indicate the correlation between dependent and independent variables jointly predicted by the model. The multiple coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) determines the changes in dependent variables as explained by independent variables jointly. These objectives were achieved by testing the model. The test of the overall model for employee physical appearance on consumers perception on the five SERVQUAL dimensions is presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8: Test of Model for employee physical appearance and quality service

Model	R	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.695 <sup>a</sup>	.483	.461	.276	.921	69.78	5	30	.000

a. Predictors: employee physical appearance

b. Dependent variable: quality service delivery

In Table 4.8 multiple coefficients of correlation (R) for model case was 0.695. This suggests that the degree of relationship between employee physical appearance to service reliability, service assurance, service tangibility, service empathy, and service responsiveness is strong. The ( $R^2$ ) was 48.3% which means that 48.3% of the variations in quality service delivery can be explained by changes in employee

physical appearance and 51.7% of variation in quality service delivery is explained by other factors that are not within the control of the research. The results indicate that employee physical appearance is significant in affecting the quality service delivery at the 4-Star hotel ( $F(d)=69.78$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ). This is because employees have significant impact on the perception of customers on the service that is being delivered. With the autonomy and necessary support needed to perform, employees can go a long way to help satisfy the wants of their customers resulting in quality service delivery and satisfaction (Gronroos, 2001).

The finding agrees with Ching-Sung (2012) who showed that attractive stylists lead to higher perceived service quality whether a proper or improper service was provided. Abbasi & Alvi's (2013) study also revealed a strong relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery. Knežević et al. (2015) study found a positive and statistically significant relationship ( $\beta=0.259$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ) between physical appearance of hotel employee and quality of service. This means that guests who perceived employee physical appearance as better or more attractive deliver better service than those who physical appearance was not rated as highly. In other words, a more attractive hotel employee delivers better service. Lim et al. (2008) on the other hand elucidated the effect of employee physical appearance variables to perceived service quality where the age, physical appearance and attractiveness of customers affect their perceived service quality. Eagly & Ashmore (1991) study concluded that Employee physical appearance have direct effect on quality service delivery. This affirmed that hotels having well physical appearance of employees can be assured of quality service delivery.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

The study evaluated employee physical appearance and its impact on service delivery in 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region. It was guided by the following specific objectives: to determine the physical appearance that 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees; to ascertain customers perception of employee physical appearance on service quality delivery at 4-Star hotel; and to examine the relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery.

The study adopted descriptive survey research design as it enabled collection of information from many respondents. The study focused on consumers and management of six (6) selected 4-Star hotels in the Greater Accra. A total of 324 questionnaires were distributed; 44 to management staff, and to 280 customers. Out of 324 questionnaires sent out, 231 questionnaires were returned and found to be acceptable as reliable responses to generate. The researcher conducted piloting to enhance reliability and validity of the research instruments. The contribution of each of the variables was examined and the ranking of the attributes in terms of their criticality as perceived by the respondents was done by the use of mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (SD). The data generated was presented in relation to the study findings.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

A number of findings were made after a discussion of the responses. They are summarized as below;

### **5.2.1 Physical appearance 4-star hotels consider when recruiting employees**

- The study revealed that 4-Star hotels consider the physical appearance of people when recruiting employees. It was discovered that the hotel employs attractive people, young and energetic people, and females as compared to male counterparts.
- It appeared from the study that the dressing and personal presentation, and facial expression of a person are considered in employment in the hotel.

### **5.2.2 Customers perception of employee physical appearance**

- The study discovered that customers pay attention to physical appearance of employees. This showed that the physical appearance of hotel employees has effect on perception customers have when a service is delivered to them.
- The finding revealed that customers wanted to be attended to by physically attractive employee, dressed and presentable employee, young and curvy girls which make them feel good during service delivery.
- Furthermore, the study showed that employees smile makes customers feel good during service delivery, but they do not mind if a male or female employee attend to them

### **5.2.3 Customers perception of quality service delivery practices at 4-Star Hotel**

- According to the study, customers perceived 4-Star hotel have a good reliability of services and service assurance given to them is encouraging.
- The study further showed that customers perceived that 4-Star hotels have high tangibility and adopt proper employees' responsive techniques in addressing their challenges.

- The customers believed that the employees at the 4-Star hotel employ empathy in managing and administering the functions of the hotel ranging from every single department.

#### **5.2.4 Relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery**

- From the correlation analysis, a significant positive correlation between employee physical appearance and service reliability ( $r = 0.677$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found. In addition, employee physical appearance had a positive correlation with service assurance ( $r = 0.663$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, employees physical appearance was significantly related to service empathy activities of the hotel ( $r = 0.945 < 0.01$ ).
- The regression analysis revealed that employee physical appearance is significant in affecting the quality service delivery at the 4-Star hotel ( $F(d) = 69.78$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ ).
- The study revealed that 48.3% of the variations in quality service delivery at 4-Star hotels can be explained by employee physical appearance and 51.7% of variation in quality service delivery is explained by other factors that are not within the control of the research.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Physical appearance generally plays a major role in how employees communicate with customers. One of the areas where attractiveness is very important is in the hotel industry. According to study 4-Star hotels consider the physical appearance of people when recruiting employees, and also the hotel employs

attractive people, young and energetic people, and females as compared to male counterparts. It was also discovered that the dressing and personal presentation, and facial expression of a person are considered in employment in 4-Star hotel.

The study concluded that customers pay attention to physical appearance of employees. The perception of customers with respect to the physical appearance of hotel employees plays important role in determining the quality of service that is being rendered by 4-Star hotels. The study showed that customers had high expectation for the 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra in terms of tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, empathy and assurance. There is also a strong desire of the hotel to adopt quality service delivery practices because it helps to improve their overall profitability.

In conclusion, employee physical appearance had a positive and significant influence on the quality service delivery by the hotels. The model was statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level in explaining the simple linear relationship between employee physical appearance and quality service delivery.

#### **5.4 Recommendation**

The study made the following recommendations to the 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region based on the findings.

- The managers of the hotels should pay attention to physical appearance of the employees and other factors which may lead to quality service delivery. They should also put more emphasis on physical appearance during recruitment of employees in order to create customer satisfaction.



- The management should therefore train and motivate employees to practice all the ServQual dimensions on all the determinants of customer satisfaction so as to increase company's customer base.
- The employees at 4-Star hotels should always be physically attractive employees with a sense of courteousness and friendliness.
- The owners of the hotels or the top level of managers should maintain the service attribute of tangibility at the acceptable level, because different type of customer usually has a variety of their preference. The facilities' physical appearance like facilities at excellent hotels should be visually appealing, materials in excellent hotels should be neat in appearance and the front office area and restaurants must be attractive and appealing.

## **5.5 Future Research**

Several research implications and limitations emerged from this study. First, the study limited to examine only 4-Star hotels in Greater Accra. It means that limited to geographical area and data analyzed only considering 231 completed questionnaires. The relevance of suggested consider other areas and analyzed data by using at least 500 completed questionnaires.

Finally, the results of this study may not have been representative of the whole population, due to the fact that a purposive and convenience sampling method were used to collect the data. To be able to generalize the findings for this specific hotel segment, a study that would include more hotels in a variety of regional settings.

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## APPENDIX A

## SAMPLE SIZE TABLE\*

### From The Research Advisors

Population Size	Confidence 95.00%				Confidence 99.00%			
	Degree of Accuracy/Margin of Error				Degree of Accuracy/Margin of Error			
	0.05	0.035	0.025	0.01	0.05	0.035	0.025	0.01
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	196	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
900	269	419	568	823	382	541	672	854
1,000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1,200	291	474	674	1067	427	636	827	1119
1,500	306	515	759	1297	460	712	959	1376
2,000	322	563	869	1655	498	808	1141	1785
2,500	333	597	952	1984	524	879	1288	2173
3,500	346	641	1068	2565	558	977	1510	2890
5,000	357	678	1176	3288	586	1066	1734	3842
7,500	365	710	1275	4211	610	1147	1960	5165
10,000	370	727	1332	4899	622	1193	2098	6239
25,000	378	760	1448	6939	646	1285	2399	9972
50,000	381	772	1491	8056	655	1318	2520	12455
75,000	382	776	1506	8514	658	1330	2563	13583
100,000	383	778	1513	8762	659	1336	2585	14227
250,000	384	782	1527	9248	662	1347	2626	15555
500,000	384	783	1532	9423	663	1350	2640	16055
1,000,000	384	783	1534	9512	663	1352	2647	16317
2,500,000	384	784	1536	9567	663	1353	2651	16478
10,000,000	384	784	1536	9594	663	1354	2653	16560
100,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16584
264,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16586

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## APPENDIX B

### UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

### COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOTEL MANAGEMENT

**Preamble:** The researcher is undertaking a study on “**effects of Employee physical appearance on quality service delivery in Four-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region**”. This questionnaire is designed to assist the researcher to make an objective study of the subject matter. The exercise is purely an academic one and your responses will not be used for any other exercise. You are kindly requested to provide responses to the questions to enable the researcher contribute knowledge in the field of study. All information given shall be treated as confidential. Thank you for your co-operation.

#### Section A: Socio-demographic information

Please tick [  ] in the box where applicable.

1. What is your age:  
a. 18-25 (  )    b. 26-35 (  )    c. 36-45 (  )    d. 46 and above (  )
  
2. What is your gender:  
a. Male (  )    b. Female (  )
  
3. What is your educational Level:  
a. Senior High School Certificate (  )    b. Diploma (  )    c. First Degree (  )  
d. Masters (  )    e. PhD (  )    f. Others (specify): .....
  
4. How long have you been working in this hotel?  
a. 1-5years (  )    b. 6-10years (  )    c. 11-15years (  )    d. 15years and above (  )

5. Please indicate your managerial level in the hotel?  
 a. Top Level ( )    b. Middle Level ( )    d. Supervisory level ( )  
 e. If Other specify:.....

**Section B: Employee physical appearance that Hotel considers**

6. For each of the following statements, please tick [√] the number that indicates the physical appearance the hotels as an employer looks for when recruiting staff. Using a scale from 1-5, 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=uncertain, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

S/No	Employee physical appearance	SCALE				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The hotel employs attractive people rather than unattractive people					
2.	The hotel considers height before considering someone employment opportunity					
3.	Curvy girls are considered for employment more than skinny one					
4.	Young and energetic people are employed in the hotel					
5.	Females are considered for employment than male counterparts					
6.	Skin colour of people considered for employment					
7.	Facial expression of people are considered in employment in the hotel					
8.	Dressing and personal presentation of a person is considered for an employment					



## APPENDIX C

### UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

### COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS

**Preamble:** The researcher is undertaking a study on “**effects of Employee physical appearance on quality service delivery in Four-Star hotels in Greater Accra Region**”. This questionnaire is designed to assist the researcher to make an objective study of the subject matter. The exercise is purely an academic one and your responses will not be used for any other exercise. You are kindly requested to provide responses to the questions to enable the researcher contribute knowledge in the field of study. All information given shall be treated as confidential. Thank you for your co-operation.

#### Section A: Socio-demographic information

Please tick [  ] in the box where applicable.

1. What is your age:  
a. 18-25 (  )    b. 26-35 (  )    c. 36-45 (  )    d. 46-55 (  )    e. Above 55 (  )
2. What is your gender:  
a. Male (  )    b. Female (  )
3. What is your educational Level:  
a. No formal education (  )    b. Primary (  )    c. Secondary (  )  
d. Tertiary (  )    e. Others (specify): .....
4. How long have you been visiting this hotel?  
a. Less than a month (  )    b. 1 – 5months (  )    c. 6-10months (  )  
d. 7-12months (  )    e. More than a year (  )

**Section B: Customers perception of employees physical appearance**

5. For each of the following statements, please tick [√] the number that indicates your perception on Employee physical appearance at the hotel. Using a scale from 1-5, 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=uncertain, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

S/No	Customer perception	SCALE				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Employees smile makes me feel good during service delivery					
2.	Physically attractive employees are more confident than those who are less attractive					
3.	Young employees deliver quality service					
4.	I do not mind if a male or female employee attend to me					
5.	I want to be attended to by a physically attractive employee					
6.	The smooth plain skin of the employee makes me feel good during service delivery					
7.	Curvy girls make me feel good during service delivery					
8.	I prefer being served by a female to a male employee					
9.	The shiny hair style of the employee makes me feel good during service delivery					
10.	Dressing and personal presentation of a person makes me feel good during service delivery					

**Section C: Customers perception of quality service delivery practices**

5. For each of the following statements, please tick [√] the number that indicates your perception on quality service delivery practices at the hotel. Using a scale from 1-5, 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=uncertain, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

S/No	Customer perception of quality service	SCALE				
		1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Reliability of services provided</b>					
1.	Employees provide accurate services to customers					
2.	Employees are dependable in handling customers complaints					
3.	Employees take their time to explain issues to the customer					
4.	I trust the hotel to keep my records confidentially					
	<b>Assurance given employees</b>					
1.	Employees are courteous and friendly					
2.	Employees inspire trust and confidence in customers					
3.	Employees create atmosphere for customers to feel safe and relaxed					
4.	Customers are willing to continue patronising hotel service because of employee assurance					
	<b>Tangibles (Physical facilities and equipment)</b>					
1.	The staff are well dressed					
2.	Employees look professional at all time					
3.	The hotel has nice and comfortable chairs					
4.	The hotel structures are disability friendly					
	<b>Empathy shown by employee</b>					
1.	Employees are patient when dealing with customers					
2.	Employees are willing to respond to customer complaints					
3.	Employees ensure that customers feel good emotionally and psychologically					

4.	Employees take their time to listen to customers					
	<b>Employees responsiveness</b>					
1.	Employees are ready to receive customers					
2.	The employee keeps to the time schedule given to customers					
3.	The employee assist customers at odd hours in case of emergency					
4.	The staffs of this hotel tell exactly when services will be performed					

