

SERVICE TANGIBLES AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF CAR RENTAL COMPANIES

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Abstract

This study examined service tangibles and customer (passengers) satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. Its main purpose was to determine the relationship between service tangible dimensions of car rental companies (appearance of personnel, cleanliness of vehicle and air-conditioning system) and customer (passengers) satisfaction in Calabar Metropolis. The cross sectional survey research design was adopted; and primary data was obtained from 228 customers (passengers) of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis with the aid of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics while hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation in the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS 23). The findings of the study revealed that appearance of personnel, cleanliness of vehicle and air-conditioning system had significant positive relationships with customer (passengers') satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. It was concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between service tangibles and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. And, the following recommendations were proffered that: car rental companies should pay close attention to the physical appearance of their personnel and ensure that they are always neat and presentable. Also, it is essential that they provide passengers with cars whose interiors and exteriors are clean; and well-functioning air-conditioning systems should be installed in their cars to provide

comfort in order to enhance overall customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Service tangibles, personnel appearance, vehicle cleanliness, air-conditioning and customer satisfaction.

Introduction

The marketing and success of the service industry depends largely on service providers, firms and organisations offering and delivering high-quality services to customers (Amponsah & Adams, 2016). In view of the intangible nature and difficulties in marketing services, today's service providers are employing service quality as a unique selling proposition to attract customer patronage and retention (Azman-Ismail, 2016). Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) developed a model, known as SERVQUAL to facilitate the measurement of service quality through five (5) dimensions namely: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles. Since its introduction, service companies around the world, including car rental companies, have been adopting SERVQUAL dimensions in order to enhance the quality of services delivered to customers. Even though the five dimensions are used by service companies to improve service delivery, this study adapted the SERVQUAL model on the tangibles dimension of SERVQUAL to enhance service delivery of car rental companies.

According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), service tangibles include the physical

appearance of service facilities, equipment, personnel who provide the service, the communication materials and all tangible elements in the service environment. For car rental companies, service tangibles could include the physical appearance of personnel (frontline personnel and drivers); interior car facilities (such as air-conditioning systems, music/sound systems, and texture of car seats); and exterior car facilities such as tyres, car design, car body texture and cleanliness (Hashem, 2015). Basically, service tangibles deal with the physical facilities of the car rental companies including the physical state of the car and other physical accessories of the car in the transportation sector.

Generally, both public and private transportation companies especially car rental companies have leveraged on the tangible dimension of their offerings to improve overall service quality. A lot of public transportation companies around the world are improving the quality of their vehicles; updating, training their staff and improving their physical appearance in a bid to strengthen the tangible aspect of service quality (Pathirana, 2019; Hashem, 2015). Also, state-of-the-art interior car technologies such as air-cooling systems, music/sound systems and seats are installed by transportation companies to enhance their ability to deliver high-quality services to customers. Similarly, modern vehicles such as automatic cars, with larger passenger capacities are acquired and deployed by transportation companies to improve the comfort of their passengers. (Nwachukwu, 2014; Oyeobu, Oyebisí, Olateju & Sesede, 2014).

The resultant impact of these service quality improvement measures on customer satisfaction in transportation companies has been impressive. In a study by Mudenda and Guga (2017), it was revealed that service quality improvements resulted in a significant improvement of customer satisfaction with public transportation companies in Zambia. On this basis, scholars have posited that just like other dimensions of service quality, service tangibles have a significant capacity to improve overall customer satisfaction (Ogiemwonyi, Harun, Rahman, Alam & Hamawandy, 2020; Pakurár, Haddad, Nagy, József & Judit, 2019; Adeniran & Adekunle, 2016). This study was therefore conducted to verify the veracity of the foregoing position by investigating the statistical relationship between service tangibles (appearance of personnel,

cleanliness of vehicle and air-conditioning system) and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

In an age of heightened consumer sophistication and selectiveness, coupled with intense competition, consistently delivering high-quality service becomes a difficult task because consumers tend to be more difficult to please. The availability of large numbers of alternative service providers increases the selectiveness and sophistication of consumers as they could easily switch to other providers if they are unsatisfied by their current providers (Walia, Sharma & Mathur, 2021). This is an important factor which makes the service industry very competitive and dynamic (Pakurár, Haddad, Nagy, József & Judit, 2019). Operating in a competitive and dynamic industry, service providers such as car rental companies may find it increasingly difficult to deliver services that meet and/or surpass the dynamic and sophisticated needs of consumers. Moreover, delivering high quality car rental services go beyond the behavioural capabilities of the service providers (such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy); it also importantly requires tangible facilities which may be costly to acquire and maintain (Pathirana, 2019).

Due to economic challenges and the high costs of acquiring and maintaining tangible facilities such as air-conditioning systems, modernized transport vehicles, in-car music/sound systems, well-dressed personnel, and other technical accessories), some car rental companies in Nigeria find it difficult to deliver high-quality services to customers. As a result, customer satisfaction, patronage and retention may be adversely affected by their inability to provide high-quality services, thereby undermining their marketing performance. In some cases, not only was the marketing performance of car rental companies affected; but their very survival was impeded by their inability to effectively compete through the delivery of high-quality services. This appears to have led to the exit of various car rental companies such as Venus Car Hire Services and Nexxus Rides from the Nigerian market (Solanke, Raji & Alli, 2021). To a large extent, the tangibles dimension of service quality may be significantly related to customer satisfaction of companies. The problem of this study is therefore summarized in the question thus: to what extent are service tangibles significantly related to

customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between appearance of personnel and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.
2. To determine the relationship between cleanliness of vehicle and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.
3. To assess the relationship between air-conditioning system and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁:** Appearance of personnel has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.
- Ho₂:** Cleanliness of vehicle has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.
- Ho₃:** Air-conditioning system has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this study is the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory propounded by Oliver (1980). The basic assumption of the theory is that expectations, coupled with performance, leads to post-purchase satisfaction. This effect is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation between expectations and performance. On the other hand, if a

product/service outperforms expectation, post-purchase satisfaction will result (positive disconfirmation). If a product/service falls short of expectations, the customer is likely to be dissatisfied (negative disconfirmation).

Disconfirmation theory declares that satisfaction is mainly defined by the gap between perceived performance and expectations. The theory has customer satisfaction as the main dependent factor and expectation and perceived performance as main independent factors. Customer satisfaction is the collective outcome of customers’ perception, evaluation and psychological reaction to the consumption experience with a product or service (Khalifa & Liu, 2003). It leads to repeat purchase, loyalty, retention, positive word of mouth and increases long term profitability for the organization and customer (Wirtz, 2003). Expectation disconfirmation occurs in three (3) forms, namely: positive disconfirmation occurs when perceived performance exceeds expectations; while confirmation occurs when perceived performance meets expectations; whereas negative disconfirmation occurs when perceived performance does not meet and/or is less than expectations. As such, it is more probable for customers to be satisfied if the service performance meets (confirmation) or exceeds (positive confirmation) their expectation. On the contrary, customers are more likely to be dissatisfied, if service performance is less than what they expected (negative disconfirmation) as represented in the figure below:

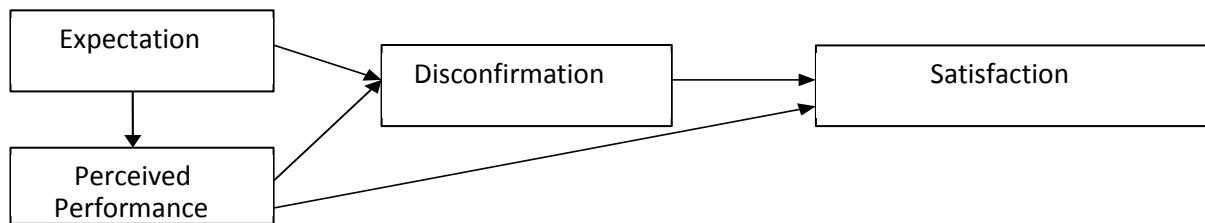


Figure 1: Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

Source: Oliver, R. L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction in retail setting. *Journal of Retailing*, 57, 25-48.

The relevance of the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory to this study is that customers of car rental companies generally hold certain expectations prior to patronizing these companies. These expectations may be built from past experience,

companies’ advertisement or word-of-mouth communication; and they typically include: clean appearance of personnel, good interior car facilities, spectacular exterior car design, and clean vehicles in general. The theory holds that

customer satisfaction with car rental companies occurs when they compare their expectations with actual service performance and the latter exceeds the former. Therefore, this implies that positive disconfirmation (which is customer satisfaction) occurs if customers' expectations are met or exceeded by the service delivered by car rental companies.

Conceptual Review

This study investigated service tangibles and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in

Calabar Metropolis. Its main purpose was to statistically determine the relationship between the independent variable service tangibles (appearance of personnel, cleanliness of vehicle and air-conditioning system) and the dependent variable customer satisfaction (customer patronage, loyalty and referral) in the context of car rental companies in Calabar Municipality. The conceptual model depicts the hypothesized relationship between service tangibles and customer satisfaction.

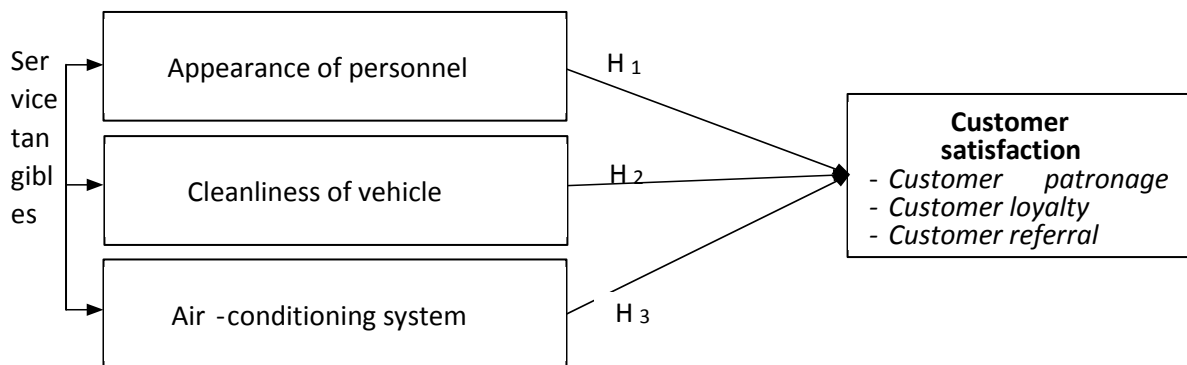


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of the Study

Source: Hashem, T. N. (2015). The impact of quality of services in the car rental companies on customer satisfaction. *Journal of International Scientific Publications*, 9(1), 494-502

Service Tangibles

Since services are intangible, customers derive their perception of service quality by comparing the tangibles associated with services provided. Tangibles are the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials (Raza, Siddiqi & Nasim, 2015). Tangibles are used to physically and visibly represent service quality because services are generally intangible and can only be known to have quality or not after purchase and usage (Hashem & Ali, 2019). According to Aremu, Aremu and Ademola (2018), tangibles entail the physical evidence of the service. They depict the physical facilities of the service provider, the appearance of personnel, materials associated to the service (credit and debit sheets, cheque books etc.), decorations and business hours the tools and equipment used to provide the service including other customers in the service facility. Tangibles are used by firms to convey image and signal quality (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 2006). Service tangibles in this study include appearance of personnel, both

internal and external cleanliness as well as air-conditioning systems of the vehicle.

Sakhaei, Afshari and Esmali (2014) maintain that service tangibles involve the firms' representatives, physical facilities, materials, and equipment as well as communication materials. It is the physical image of the service that customers will use to assess quality. Tangibles are associated with the physical facilities, tools, and machines used in order to provide the service, as well as representations of the services, such as statements, cards (debit and credit), speed, and efficiency of transactions. Several privileges are included in tangibles such as; external appearance, counters in the bank, overdraft facilities, opening hours, and speed and efficiency of transactions. Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985) argued that tangibles are just as important as empathy. Like other dimensions of service quality, service tangibles are an indispensable requirement for service providers to effectively deliver high-quality services that meet or exceed customers' expectations and make them loyal. Because services are intangible in nature, tangible

facilities or equipment are necessary to enhance the service provider's ability to delivery satisfactory service capable of securing customer loyalty (Al-Azzam, 2015).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the extent to which a service offering meets and/or surpasses customers' expectation. In this study customer satisfaction consists of customer patronage, loyalty and referrals. Customers derive satisfaction from a product or a service based on whether their needs are met effortlessly, in a convenient way that makes them loyal to the firm. Hence, customer satisfaction is an important step to gain customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction according to Prakash and Mohanty (2012) is the degree to which products or services provided by a company meet a customer's expectation.

Bernazzani (2018), opines that customer satisfaction is a metric used to quantify the degree to which a customer is happy with a product, service, or experience. This metric is usually calculated by deploying a customer satisfaction survey that asks on a five or seven-point scale how a customer feels about a support interaction, purchase, or overall customer experience, with answers between "highly unsatisfied" and "highly satisfied" to choose from. Customer satisfaction is a reflection of how a customer feels about interacting with a brand, hence businesses and brands quantify this positive or negative feeling primarily using customer satisfaction surveys. These responses provide an idea of a firm's average level of customer satisfaction, along with a picture of customer loyalty, which predicts the likelihood of customer referrals.

Robertson (2019) asserts that customer satisfaction is the degree to which customers are happy with their purchase or experience with a company. It indicates the fulfilment that customers derive from doing business with a firm. In other words, it is how happy customers are with their transaction and overall experience with a company. In the view of Paul, Neil, Bendle, Phillip and David (2010), customer satisfaction is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectations. It is the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience with a firm, its products or services (ratings) exceeds specified satisfaction goals. In a competitive marketplace where businesses

compete for customers, customer satisfaction is seen as a key differentiator and has increasingly become a focal element of business strategy

Juneja (2019) views customer satisfaction as the measure of how the needs and responses are collaborated and delivered to excel customer expectation. It can only be attained if the customer has an overall good relationship with the supplier. In today's competitive business marketplace, customer satisfaction is an important performance exponent and basic differentiator of business strategies. The author further explains that customer satisfaction is a part of customer's experience that exposes a supplier's behavior on customer's expectation. It also depends on how services are efficiently managed and promptly provided. Thus, customer satisfaction is be related to the performance and success stories of various business aspects like marketing, product manufacturing, engineering, quality of products and services, responses to customers' problems and queries, completion of project, post delivery services, complaint management etc.

Empirical Review

The relationship between service tangibles and customer satisfaction has been investigated by researchers around the world. Various studies have been conducted to determine the correlation between the tangible dimension of the SERVQUAL model and customer satisfaction across service-dominated industries. A few of these studies are examined below.

Oyeobu, Oyebisi, Olateju and Sesede (2014) studied "An assessment of effects of service quality on performance of a road transport company in Nigeria." The study was conducted to determine the effects of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance) on the performance (customer satisfaction) of road transportation companies in Nigeria. The study adopted a 4-Point Likert Scale questionnaire and personal interview to obtain primary data from 200 passengers and managers of ABC Transport Plc in Lagos State. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics (regression and correlation analysis). The findings revealed that among other dimensions, tangibles had a significant effect on customer satisfaction in ABC Transport Plc in Lagos.

Khan and Fasih (2014) work was on “Impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty: Evidence from banking sector”. The purpose of the study was to determine the statistical association between tangibles and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The study adopted a 5-Point Likert Scale questionnaire to collect primary data from 270 customers of commercial banks in Pakistan using stratified random and convenience sampling techniques. Data was analysed was using descriptive statistics, one sample t-test, correlation and regression analyses. The findings of the study revealed that tangibles, among other dimensions of service quality, had a significant and positive association with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the Pakistani banking sector.

Hashem (2015) research was on “The impact of quality of services in the car rental companies on customer satisfaction”. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of service quality (including tangibility) on customer satisfaction. The study adopted a 5-Point Likert scale questionnaire to obtain primary data from 357 employees and customers of car rental companies in Amman, Jordan using a convenience sampling technique. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations), and multiple regression in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Consequently, the findings revealed that among other dimensions, tangibility had a significant impact on customer satisfaction of car-rental companies in Jordan.

Similarly, Adeniran and Adekunle (2016) investigated “Is service quality a correlate of customer satisfaction? Evidence from Nigerian airports”. Its aim was to demonstrate the relationship between service quality (including tangibles) and customer satisfaction. The study adopted a structured and closed-ended questionnaire to collect primary data from 425 air passengers at Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port-Harcourt airports using convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis was done using regression analysis and descriptive statistics, and the findings revealed that tangibles, among other dimensions, had a significant relationship with customer satisfaction in Nigerian airports.

Furthermore, Amponsah and Adams (2016) studied “Service quality and customer satisfaction

in public transport operations”. The aim of the study was to determine the statistical relationship between service quality dimensions (including tangibility) and customer satisfaction. The study adopted a structured questionnaire to obtain primary data from 205 commuters within Vancouver Lower Mainland in Canada using a judgmental sampling technique. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson’s correlation analysis). The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction in public transport operations.

Also, Jahmani (2017) investigated “The effect of royal Jordanian airline service quality on passengers’ satisfaction”. The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of service quality (including tangibility) on passengers’ satisfaction. The study adopted a structured questionnaire to obtain primary data from 475 passengers of Royal Jordanian airline at the Queen Alia International Airport, Amman using a convenience sampling technique. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data obtained. The findings revealed that among other dimensions, tangibility had a positive relationship on passengers’ satisfaction in Jordan.

Again, Aremu, Aremu and Ademola (2018) studied “Enhancing service quality dimensions as means of sustaining customer satisfaction in Nigerian banking industry”. Its aim was to investigate the relationship between service quality dimensions (including tangibility) and customer satisfaction in the Nigerian banking industry. The study used a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from 250 customers of 5 Nigerian commercial banks in Ilorin Metropolis. Data analysis was completed using descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation) and multiple linear regression in SPSS 20. The findings revealed that among other dimensions, tangibility had a significant positive relationship and influence on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian banking industry.

In addition, Pathirana (2019) researched “Impact of SERVQUAL model dimensions for customer satisfaction towards vehicle leasing providers in Sri Lanka”. The aim of the study was to demonstrate the impact of SERVQUAL

dimensions (including tangibility) on customer satisfaction. The study adopted a structured questionnaire to obtain primary data from 100 customers of vehicle leasing providers in Sri Lanka using a convenience sampling technique. The data obtained were analyzed statistically using one-sample T-test, correlation analysis and regression analysis. And, the findings revealed that tangibility among other dimensions had a significant relationship and impact on customer satisfaction towards vehicle leasing providers in Sri Lanka.

Finally, Ogiemwonyi, Harun, Rahman, Alam and Hamawandy (2020) investigated “The relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction towards hypermarkets in Malaysia”. It examined the relationship between service quality dimensions (including tangibility) and customer satisfaction. The study employed a 5-Point Likert Scale structured questionnaire to collect primary data from 160 customers of hypermarkets in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia using the convenience sampling technique. Data analysis was done with the aid of Partial Least Squares (PLS) in SPSS 20. The findings of the study revealed that tangibility, among other dimensions, had a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction towards hypermarkets in Malaysia.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria, and adopted the cross sectional survey research design. The target

population of this study comprised all customers of car (rental) hire services and is unknown. Thus, a sample size of 246 was obtained using the Topman sample size determination procedure and the judgemental sampling technique for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 5-Point Likert scale structured questionnaire and administered to passengers of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. The instrument was made up of two sections, namely: Section A dealt with respondents’ demographic data, while Section B contained statements on service tangibles (appearance of personnel, cleanliness of vehicle, air-conditioning system) and customer satisfaction. Out of a total number of 246 questionnaire copies administered, 228 copies representing 92.7 percent were successfully retrieved, while 18 copies representing 7.3 percent were not returned, giving a response rate of 92.7 percent. Data for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation in the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS 23).

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Appearance of personnel has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Test statistic = Pearson’s product moment correlation analysis

Decision criteria: Accept H₁ if (P < .05) and reject H₀, if otherwise.

Table 1: Pearson’s product moment correlation showing the relationship between appearance of personnel and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis

		Appearance of personnel	Customer satisfaction
Appearance of personnel	Pearson Correlation	1	.553**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	228	228
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.553**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	228	228

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Source:** SPSS output (2021)

Interpretation

The result on Table 1 shows the Pearson’s product moment correlation of the relationship between appearance of personnel and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. From the result, it can be seen that each variable is perfectly correlated with itself,

which is why r = 1 along the diagonal of the table. The correlation coefficient (r = 0.553) indicates that appearance of personnel has a 55.3 percent relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis; which is a very strong degree of relationship. The table also shows that the probability value (0.000) is

less than the error margin of 0.05; hence we reject the null hypothesis, accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that appearance of personnel has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Ho₂: Cleanliness of vehicle has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Table 2: Pearson’s product moment correlation showing the relationship between cleanliness of vehicle and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis

		Cleanliness of vehicle	Customer satisfaction
Cleanliness of vehicle	Pearson Correlation	1	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	228	228
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	228	228

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

Source: SPSS output (2021)

Interpretation

The result on Table 2 shows the Pearson’s product moment correlation of the relationship between cleanliness of vehicle and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. From the result, it can be seen that each variable is perfectly correlated with itself, which is why $r = 1$ along the diagonal of the table. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.426$) indicates that cleanliness of vehicle has a 42.6 percent relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis; which is

a fairly strong degree of relationship. The table also shows that the probability value (0.003) is less than the error margin of 0.05; hence we reject the null hypothesis, accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that cleanliness of vehicle has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Ho₃: Air-conditioning system has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Table 3: Pearson’s product moment correlation showing the relationship between air-conditioning system and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis

		Air-conditioning system	Customer satisfaction
Air-conditioning system	Pearson Correlation	1	.598**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	228	228
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.598**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	228	228

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

Source: SPSS output (2021)

Interpretation

The result on Table 3 shows the Pearson’s product moment correlation of the relationship between air-conditioning system and customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. From the result, it can be seen that each variable is perfectly correlated with itself,

which is why $r = 1$ along the diagonal of the table. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.598$) indicates that air-conditioning system has a 59.8 percent relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis; which is a very strong degree of relationship. The table also shows that the probability value (0.000) is

less than the error margin of 0.05; hence we reject the null hypothesis, accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that air-conditioning system has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one revealed that appearance of personnel has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. This finding aligns with the findings of Oyeobu, Oyebisi, Olateju and Sesede (2014), and Aremu, Aremu and Ademola (2018). Their findings assert that tangible elements of car rental companies such as the physical appearance of personnel (including drivers) could significantly improve customers' satisfaction with overall service received.

The second hypothesis test showed that cleanliness of vehicle has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. This finding is in tandem with Adeniran and Adekunle (2016), and Amponsah and Adams (2016). These findings imply that tangible elements of car rental companies such as the cleanliness of vehicle could significantly improve customers' satisfaction with overall service received.

Finally, test of hypothesis three revealed that air-conditioning system has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction of car rental companies in Calabar Metropolis. This finding corresponds with the study of Pathirana (2019) and Hashem (2015). The implication of these findings is that tangible elements of car rental companies such as the air-conditioning system could significantly improve overall customers' satisfaction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on empirical reviews and findings of the study, we conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between service tangible dimensions of car companies (appearance of personnel, cleanliness of vehicle and air-conditioning system) and customer satisfaction in Calabar Metropolis. Cross River State.

Sequel to the findings and the conclusion drawn there from, the following recommendations are thereby proffered:

1. Car rental companies should pay close attention to the physical appearance of their personnel (including frontline staff and drivers) and to ensure that they are always neat and presentable to customers.
2. To enhance customer satisfaction, it is essential that car rental companies should provide customers with cars whose interiors and exteriors are clean.
3. Well-functioning car air-conditioning systems should be installed by car rental companies to provide comfort to their (passengers) customers.

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