

## ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY IN NIGERIA'S MUSEUMS AND ITS EFFECTS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF SLAVE HISTORY MUSEUM IN CALABAR

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examines the determinant factors for the effectiveness of quality service offered towards customer satisfactions in museum centers in Nigeria, taking Slave History Museum in Calabar as the case study. Two independent variables: responsiveness and professionalism were identified as possible constructs that can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty as dependent variable. Previous studies explored the relationship between some of these constructs and loyalty. But this study examines more constructs. Therefore, the major findings of this research provide insights into the factors determining customer satisfactions in Nigeria. The findings have established that service quality is very important in providing customer satisfaction and loyalty in the traditional industries especially museums in Nigeria. It was recommended that Slave History Museum center and other historic or cultural centers in Nigeria should increase efficiency by ensuring that customers are satisfied. For instance, they should reduce or eliminate other charges in the organization to commensurate with the quality of the service they get.*

## **Introduction**

Service quality and customer satisfaction are important concepts to practitioners as a means of creating competitive advantages and customers loyalty (Lacobucci et al., 2009). Providing excellent service quality and high customer satisfaction is an important issue and challenge facing the contemporary service industry (Hung, 2010). Service Quality is an important subject in both public and private tourism sectors. Slave History Museum is a public service-oriented tourism sector in Nigeria which demands a high degree of services quality.

According to Njovu (2010) service quality has strong impact on business performance, lower costs, return of investment, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and higher gains. Hunt (2009) argues that companies that are not capable of offering high quality products or services eventually lose their competitive advantage, which through narrowing their market potentials may lead to economic isolation. In order to be able to remain competitive on today`s market, companies need to pursue high quality in all respects. Worldwide, museums have changed from being predominantly custodial institutions becoming increasingly focused on audience attraction (Audrey Gilmore et al 2002). This change in the purposes of priorities of museums has impacted upon the nature of museum customer satisfaction. The American Association of Museums (AAM) in 2012 estimated that the number of museum visitors has approximately increased by 500 million people per year worldwide. In countries like Ireland and Europe, management of services quality in museums have changed to be one of the key functions of most national museums and particularly a national historical museum for education, contributes to formulation of sense of the country`s national identity and position in the World (Dillon, et al. 2008).

Despite the fact that Nigeria has a vast cultural heritage which is potential for the development of cultural tourism industry, yet little research has been done on services quality - more particularly on Museums. Furthermore, the rapid development and competition of service quality, in both developed and developing countries have made it important for companies to measure and evaluate the quality-of-service encounters. Additionally, several conceptual models have been developed by different researchers for measuring service quality. Each model uses different determinant of service quality.

## **Statement of the Problem**

A study of linking service quality and customer satisfaction revealed that service quality is among variables which influence customer satisfactions (Shahin and Seaman, 2010; Bedi, 2011). In Nigeria, despite the existence of a vast cultural heritage which may attract domestic and international visitors, unfortunately, Nigerian Museums are less visited by both Nigerians and Non- Nigerians; hence the values of these important buildings become insignificant. This is because many determinants of service quality are not clear and yet there is no empirical evidence of factors for quality dimensions on Nigeria Museums. The consequences of not attracting visitors affect the government revenue as well as drawing the museum services from global competitiveness. It is in this light the present study intends to assess service quality on customer satisfaction at the Slave History Museum so as to come up with possible determinant of services quality to improve customer satisfaction at Slave History Museum.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of service quality in Nigeria`s museums and its effects to visitors` satisfaction. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To assess the extent of professionalism on customer satisfaction in Nigerian museum
2. To examine the extent of responsiveness on customer satisfaction in Nigerian museum

### **Research Questions**

The following are the research questions.

1. What is the extent of professionalism on customer satisfaction in Nigerian museum?
2. What is the extent of responsiveness on customer satisfaction in Nigerian museum?

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Professional dealing is positively influencing customer satisfaction

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Responsiveness is positively influencing customer satisfaction

### **Conceptual Definitions**

#### **Service Quality**

Service quality is a result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about service and their perception of the way the service has been performed giving a three dimensional view of service quality (Caruana 2000). The phrase Service Quality varies from one author to another. In particular, consumers prefer service quality when the price and other cost elements are held constant (Turban, 2002). Service quality can be measured in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction and attitude (Sachdev et al (2004). Ekinici (2003) indicates that the evaluation of service quality leads to customer satisfaction.

#### **Museum**

A museum is a complex institution, and defining it is not easy to define. In its simplest form, a museum consists of a building to house collections of objects for inspection, study and enjoyment. Allan (2002) defines Museum as a great potential, not only as stabilizing, regenerative force in modern society, but as a crusading force for quality and excellence. However, the American Association of Museums (1995) defines a museum as an organized and permanent nonprofit making institution, essentially educational or aesthetic in purpose, professional staff, which owns and utilizes tangible object, care for them and exhibits them to the public on some regular schedule.

### **Theoretical Literature Review**

#### **Service Quality Gaps Model by Parasuraman**

The most well-known model is that of Parasuraman et al. (1985) which is widely utilized in the literature. The model attempts to show the salient activities of the service organization that influence the perception of quality. Moreover, the model shows the interaction between these activities and identifies the linkages between the key activities of the service organization or marketer which are pertinent to the delivery of a satisfactory level of service quality. The links are described as gaps or discrepancies: that is to say, a gap represents a significant hurdle to achieving a satisfactory level of service quality.

Parasuraman et al. (op.cit) proposed that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. They developed a service quality model based on gap analysis. The gaps include:

- Gap 1 Customer expectation-management gap: This gap addresses the difference between consumers' expectations and management's perceptions of service quality.
- Gap 2 Management perception-service quality specifications gap: This gap addresses the difference between management's perceptions of consumer's expectations and service quality specifications, i.e. improper service-quality standards.
- Gap 3 Service quality specification-service delivery gap: This gap addresses the difference between service quality specifications and service actually delivered, i.e. the service performance gap.
- Gap 4 Service delivery-external communication gap: This gap addresses the difference between service delivery and the communications to consumers about service delivery, i.e. whether promises match delivery.
- Gap 5 Expected service-perceived service gap: This gap addresses the difference between consumer's expectation and perceived service. The gap depends on size and direction of the four gaps associated with the delivery of service quality on the marketer's side.

Parasuraman et al. (op.cit) mentioned ten factors for evaluating service quality (including tangible, reliability, responsiveness, courtesy, credibility, security, accessibility, communication and understanding the customer). These ten factors are simplified and collapsed into five factors. The five dimensions are stated as follows:

- i. Tangibles: Physical facilities, equipments and appearance of personnel.
- ii. Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- iii. Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- iv. Assurance (including competence, courtesy, credibility and security): Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
- v. Empathy (including access, communication, understanding the customer): Caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers.

The other authors used the same model of SERVQUAL are Brooks et al., (1999); Chaston (1994); Edvardson et al, (1997); Reynoso and Moore, (1995); Young and Varbe, (1997); Sahney et al., (2004). SERVQUAL instrument has been extensive criticized on both theoretical and operational grounds Buttle, (1996) and Asubonteng et al (1996).

Besides the above weaknesses, a particular advantage of SERVQUAL is that it is a tried and tested instrument which can be used comparatively for benchmarking purposes Brysland and Curry (2001). This model helped the researcher in assessing the effectiveness of service quality in Tanzanian museums and in examining the employees' service quality evaluation in Tanzanian museums. Furthermore, the models helped the researcher to investigate the effectiveness of customer satisfaction in Tanzanian museums.

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## Empirical Literature Review

The existing theories and empirical evidences suggest that customer expectations are among the factors that influence customer satisfaction (Stanton, 1994; Kotler and Fox, 2007). Moreover, it is said that customer satisfaction is influenced by employee behaviors (Seidman and Johnson, 2010). Additionally, service quality is also considered as one of the predictors of customer satisfaction (Shemwell, et al, 1998; Martensen, et al, 2010). The relationship between customer satisfaction and each of the three factors is elaborated below.

### Customer Expectations

Customer satisfaction is regarded as a function of perceived performance and expectations (Kotler and Fox, 2007). Expectations are considered as beliefs (likelihood or probability) that a product or service (with certain attributes, features or characteristics) will produce certain outcomes (Smith, 2007). These expectations are based on previous affective, cognitive and behavioral experiences. The concept of customer expectation has been further clarified by Smith (2007) who identified six types of customer expectations: the first one is explicit expectations which are regarded as mental targets for product performance, such as well identified performance standards; the second type is implicit expectations which represent the norms of performance that reflect accepted standards established by business in general, other companies, industries, and even cultures whereas the third type is static performance expectations which address how performance and quality for a specific application are defined, these are the visible part of the iceberg; they are the performance we see.

Generally, satisfaction is determined by how closely a product meets or exceeds customers' expectations (Stanton, 1994). This is also supported by the studies conducted in USA Universities by Palihawadana and Holmes (2006) which show that satisfaction or dissatisfaction results mainly from the confirmation or denial of expectations. Palihawadana and Holmes (2006) further clarified the concept by stating that the theoretical underpinnings of the expectations–performance paradigm imply that levels of student satisfaction are a direct function of the extent to which expectations are realized and that confirmation of expectations occurs if outcomes exceed or at least match the expectation, which leads to student satisfaction.

### Employee Behaviors

Behaviour patterns are defined as regular repeating sequence of actions (Robertson, 1994). In any organization there are sets of behavior patterns known as work style or on the job behaviors which have been shown to be associated with positive organization performance (Robertson, 2011). The behaviors in the work place are influenced by social factors which include individuals' characters, group characteristics and organizational culture; physical setting factors which include tangible features and working environment; technology factors which include workflow, technical expertise and lastly job content and organization arrangements which include formal goals, strategies, structures and reward system. Sometimes, particularly if there is a strong situation, an organization may find that unintended on job styles which have emerged are negative in terms of customer service (Robertson, 1994).

### Service Quality

Service quality and customer satisfaction have, of late, attracted much attention in both organizational behavior and marketing theory. The attraction has been triggered by

identification of the links between service quality, customer satisfaction and performance of organizations through various models developed by researchers in organization behaviors and marketing perspectives, for example Shemwell, et al, (2008) developed and tested a causal model that portrayed a link between service quality, satisfaction and relationship oriented outcomes such as minimization of complaints, emotional bonding and an increased inclination to continue the customer service provider relationship. Service quality is characterized by timeliness, courtesy, consistency, accessibility, noise-freeness, accuracy and cleanliness (Kimeme, 1999).

Given the recognition of the importance of service quality towards customer satisfaction and eventually performance improvements, many researchers and quality scholars have recognized the need of developing a valid and distinct measures of service quality, example Gronroos (1984) developed a model of service quality based on three dimensions, viz. (a) functional quality- how the service is performed and delivered, (b) technical quality - what the consumer receives and (c) the image of the service firm. Furthermore, Parasuraman, et al, (1988), developed another instrument called SERVQUAL that measured service quality along five dimensions, viz. reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles.

The existing empirical evidences suggest a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, for example a study conducted by Martensen, et al, (2010) revealed that perceived product quality is the main drive within the field of internet, cable TV, soft drinks and fast-food restaurants. This has been further confirmed by studies conducted by Eskildsen, et al, (2004) and Chakraborty, et al, (2007). The study conducted by Eskildsen, et al, (2004) on a sample of customers from Danish mobile phone companies, banks and supermarkets revealed that service quality is an important aspect in customer satisfaction whereas the study conducted by Chakraborty, et al, (2007) indicates three drivers of customer satisfaction-reliability, product-related information, and commercial aspects.

### **Relationship Between the Variables**

As the behaviors expressed by employees who are rendering services improve, the level of customer satisfaction is likely to increase i.e., the higher the level of friendliness, courtesy, honest, professionalism and a responsive service expressed by employees, the higher is likely to be the level of satisfaction expressed by the customers whereas improper conduct of employees is likely to decrease the level of customer satisfaction.

Basing on the aforementioned arguments, it is obvious that there is a positive correlation between the level of customer satisfaction and each of these variables; employee behavior and customer expectation i.e., improvement of these variables would lead to improvement in the customer satisfaction level. Furthermore, there is negative correlation between the level of customer satisfaction and customer expectations i.e., increasing customer expectations tends to decrease the level of customer satisfaction.

### **Research Methodology**

**Study Area:** The study was conducted at Slave History Museum in Calabar, Nigeria.

**Research Approach:** The study adopted a mixed method approach namely qualitative and quantitative.

**Research Design:** In this study, exploratory design and descriptive design were used.

**Population of the Study:** The targeted population was the customers visiting Slave History Museum and senior staff making a total population of 50 respondents.

**Sampling Technique and Sampling Procedure:** A stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain a total of 48 respondents from Slave History Museum.

**Sample Size:** In this study, the sample size that will be used is 44 respondents.

**Data Collection Methods:** The qualitative part employed in-depth interviews with the senior staff of Slave History Museum. Data collection for the survey part of this research was done using self-administered questionnaires. Also, documentation like annual reports and visitors/customer's comment book of the Slave History Museum as a secondary data source will be used for the addition of information.

**Validity and Reliability of the Study:** In order to ensure construct validity a pre-testing study was conducted prior to the survey. Afterward, the study employed the analysis of Cronbach alpha coefficients to test for reliability of scales. Reliability of data collection ensured; pilot questionnaires were modified and then redistribute to all target respondents for final data collect.

**Data Analysis Method:** In analyzing the data for this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation analysis technique and regression analysis were used to predict and describe the variables in terms of magnitude and direction.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What is the extent of professionalism on customer satisfaction in Nigerian museum?

**Table 1: Extent of Staff Treating Customers in a Professional Manner**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	9
Disagree	5	11
Undecided	7	16
Agree	16	36
Strongly Agree	12	27
Total	44	100

**Source: Data (2013)**



**Figure 1:** Extent of Staff Treating Customers in A Professional Manner

**Source:** Data (2013)

Table 1 and Figure 1 above it indicates that most of the respondents agree that customers are treated in a professional way (37%) followed by 27% of the respondents who strongly agree while 16% (were neutral). On the other hand, the rest of the respondents (11% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed). This implies that employees at Slave History Museum act professionally when performing their daily activities. It therefore implies that professionalism is observed at the Slave History Museum.

**Research Question Two:** What is the extent of responsiveness on customer satisfaction in Nigerian museum?

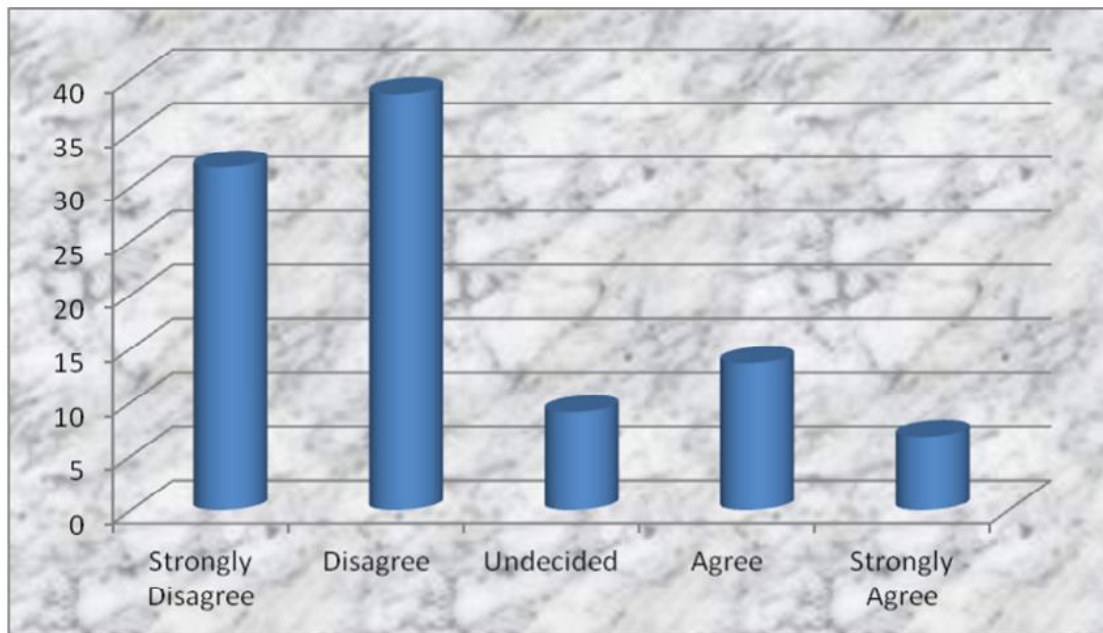
**Table 2: Response of Slave History Museum Staff Towards Customers**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	36
Disagree	19	44
Undecided	4	9
Agree	4	9
Strongly Agree	1	2
Total	44	100

**Source:** Data (2013)

Table 2 indicates that 44% of the respondents do not agree that staff are positive towards their customers while 36% of the strongly agreed that staff were strongly positive towards their respondents. The rest (20%) were neutral (9%) while respondents who agreed were 9% and only 2% strongly agreed. This now implies visitors to the Slave History Museum feel that customers at the Slave History Museum do not get much attention from the employees of the Centre.





**Figure 2:** Employees' Manner Towards Customers in Percentage

**Source:** Data (2013)

### Finding Based on the Hypotheses

#### H<sub>1</sub>: Professional dealing is positively influencing customer satisfaction

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship and direction of relationship between professional dealing and customer satisfaction in Slave History Museum as it is described in the table below.

**Table 3: Correlations Table under Profession Towards Customer Satisfaction**

Item		Customer satisfaction	Professional dealings
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	178	178
Professional dealings	Pearson Correlation	.697**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	178	178

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

**Source:** Data (2013)

Correlation Table 3 a Pearson product-moment correlation output between professional dealing and customer satisfaction revealed that there was a strong, positive correlation between professional dealing and customer satisfaction which was statistically significant ( $r = .697$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). This indicates that the better the professional dealing positive influence the customer satisfaction. Therefore, from this analysis the hypothesis which state that Professional dealing is positively influencing customer satisfaction is accepted.

Further analysis was done using regression method to test the relationship between professional dealing and customer satisfaction as it is described in the three Tables below.

**Table 4: Model Summary Under Professional Dealings**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.697 <sup>a</sup>	.486	.483	.679

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional dealings

Source: Data (2013)

The first table of interest is the Model Summary table. This table provides the R and R<sup>2</sup> value. The R value is 0.697, which represents the simple correlation. It indicates a high degree of correlation. The R<sup>2</sup> value indicates how much of the dependent variable, "customer satisfaction", can be explained by the independent variable, "professional dealing". In this case, The R<sup>2</sup> is .48, this means that the independent variables explain 48% of the variation in the dependent variable, which is moderate large.

**Table 5: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> (Regression Model)**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76.710	1	76.710	166.546	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	81.065	176	.461		
	Total	157.775	177			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Professional Dealings

Source: Data (2013)

The next table is the ANOVA table. This table indicates that the regression model predicts the outcome variable significantly well. Here,  $p < 0.000$ , which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, the model applied can statistically significantly predict the outcome variable. That is professional dealing positively influence customer satisfaction.

**Table 6: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> (Customer Satisfaction Vs Professional Dealing)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.515	.225		6.749	.000
	Professional dealings	.641	.050	.697	12.905	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

Source: Data (2013)

Coefficients table above provides us with information on the predictor variable. This gives us the information we need to predict customer satisfaction from professional dealing. We can see that both the constant and professional dealing contribute significantly to the model by  $p < 0.05$ .

**H2: Responsiveness is positively influencing customer satisfaction**

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship and direction of relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction in Slave History Museum as it is described in the Table 7.

**Table 7: Correlations Responsiveness**

		Customer satisfaction	Responsiveness
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	178	178
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	178	178

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

**Source:** Data (2013)

Correlation Table 7 is a Pearson product-moment correlation output between responsiveness to customer and customer satisfaction revealed that there was a strong, positive correlation between professional dealing and customer satisfaction which was statistically significant ( $r = .642$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). This indicate that the better the responsiveness to customer is high positive correlated to customer satisfaction. Therefore, from this analysis the hypothesis which state that Responsiveness to customer is positively influencing customer satisfaction is accepted. Further analysis was done using regression method to test the relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction as it is described in the three Tables 8.

**Table 8: Model Summary of Correlation**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.642 <sup>a</sup>	.412	.409	.726

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness

**Source:** Data (2013)

The first table of interest is the Model Summary table. This table provides the R and  $R^2$  value. The R value is 0.642, which represents the simple correlation. It indicates a high degree of correlation. The  $R^2$  value indicates how much of the dependent variable, "customer satisfaction", can be explained by the independent variable, "responsiveness". In this case, The  $R^2$  is .412, this means that the independent variables explain 41% of the variation in the dependent variable, which is moderate large.

**Table 9: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> (Regression Model)**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	65.075	1	65.075	123.552	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	92.700	176	.527		
	Total	157.775	177			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness

Source: Data (2013)

The next table is the ANOVA table. This table indicates that the regression model predicts the outcome variable significantly well. Here,  $p < 0.000$ , which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, the model applied can statistically significantly predict the outcome variable. That is responsiveness positively influence customer satisfaction.

**Table 10: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> (Customer Satisfaction Vs Responsiveness)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.550	.257		6.041	.000
	Responsiveness	.656	.059	.642	11.115	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

Source: Data (2013)

Coefficients table above provides us with information on the predictor variable. This gives us the information we need to predict customer satisfaction from responsiveness. We can see that both the constant and responsiveness contribute significantly to the model by  $p < 0.005$ .

### Discussion of the Hypotheses

The researcher collected the data to test the hypotheses which state that Professional dealing is positively influencing customer satisfaction. Pearson product-moment correlation was run to test the hypothesis which revealed that there was a strong, positive correlation between professional dealing and customer satisfaction which was statistically significant as it is described in the table above. Further analysis using a multiple regression was run to predict customer satisfaction from professional dealing revealed that professional dealing statistically significantly predicted customer satisfaction. Therefore, based on findings it is revealed that professional dealing positively influence customer satisfaction. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. This result supports Model of Service Quality Gaps by Luk and Layton (2002).

The researcher collected the data to test the hypothesis which state that responsiveness is positively influencing customer satisfaction. Pearson product-moment correlation was run to test the hypothesis which revealed that there was a strong, positive correlation between responsiveness and customer satisfaction which was statistically significant as it is described in the table above. Further analysis using a multiple regression was run to predict customer

satisfaction from responsiveness revealed that responsiveness statistically significantly predicted customer satisfaction. Therefore, based on this finding it is revealed that responsiveness positively influence customer satisfaction. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. This results support Model of Service Quality Gaps by Luk and Layton (2002).

### **Conclusions**

The study examined the determinant factors for the effectiveness of quality service offered for customer satisfactions in museum centers in Nigeria, taking Slave History Museum in Calabar as the case study. Two independent variables: responsiveness and professionalism were identified as possible constructs that can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty as dependent variable. The major findings of this research provide insights into the factors determining customer satisfactions in Nigeria. The findings have also established that service quality is very important in providing customer satisfaction and loyalty in the traditional industry especially museums in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends that Slave History Museum center and other historic or cultural centers in Nigeria should increase efficiency by ensuring that customers are satisfied. For instance they should reduce or eliminate other charges in the organization to commensurate with the quality of the service they get. It is further recommended that museums in Nigeria adopt up to date technology that can simplify and reduce the queries of customers on things that are available in the museum, this will enable customers to increase their level of satisfactions and become loyal.

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