

INFLUENCE OF SECURITY CHALLENGES ON HOTELS OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION IN NORTH WEST; NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study investigated the Influence of security challenges on hotels operations and customers' satisfaction in North West; Nigeria and adopted descriptive research method as the design with two (2) null hypotheses to guide the study. The population of one thousand five hundred (1,500) and three hundred and sixteen (316) sample size which consisted of 79 hotel management staff, 126 hotel employees and 111 hotel customers/guests which was obtained using Taro Yamane formula. Mixed sampling technique A structured questionnaire by the authors titled "Security and Safety Practices in the Hotel Industries (SSPH) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from Test and measurement unit of the Educational Foundation Department of University of Calabar, Calabar. Cronbach Alpha and reliability indices of 0.82, and 0.78 were obtained. Data collected from the instrument was analyzed using ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The study concludes that effective security and safety management practices are crucial for hotels to ensure guest safety, prevent security breaches, maintain a positive reputation, and enhance customers' satisfaction.

Keywords: Influence, security challenges, hotels operations, customers' satisfaction

Introduction

A hotel is an establishment that provides temporary lodging, meals, and other services for travelers and tourists in exchange for payment (Bardi, 2016). It is a commercial establishment which provides lodging, meals, and other guest services (Oxford Languages, 2021; Merriam-Webster, 2021). According to Hayes and Ninemeier (2019), a hotel is a hospitality business that offers a variety of accommodations, amenities, and services to travelers, serving as a temporary home away from home. Hayes and Ninemeier (2019) emphasized the role of a hotel as a temporary living space for travelers, providing not only accommodation but also a range of amenities and services to enhance the guest experience. It is an enterprise that offers paid accommodation, food, and other services to guests, typically located in urban or tourist areas and varying in size and style (Olsen, 2017). Hotels are crucial part of the hospitality industry and are designed to offer comfort and convenience to guests during their stay.

Hotels play a significant role in shaping the overall travel experience for guests, as they provide a home-away-from-home environment. The importance of creating a positive and memorable experience for hotel guests, as it can lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Kim & Oh, 2021). The hotel industry aims to provide exceptional customer service experiences to build customer loyalty and satisfaction (AlJazeera Centre for Studies, 2021). The primary goal of hotel industries is to generate and maximize revenue through various revenue management strategies and techniques. Liang et al. (2020), Kusmawan et al. (2022) demonstrate the need for hotels to provide a positive and memorable experience for guests through thoughtful design, personalized service, and the integration of technology. Good quality service delivering in hotels enhances her ratings.

Hotel ratings serve as an important guide for travelers looking to make informed decisions about their accommodations. These ratings can vary by criteria used, and different systems may incorporate aspects such as amenities, service quality, cleanliness, and overall guest experience (Ibidunni & Ilesanmi, 2021). The most recognized rating system is the star rating, which ranges from one to five stars. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC)

administers ratings based on criteria such as service, facilities, maintenance, and customer service (Ajaegbu & Ogunnaike, 2021). According to the authors, a one-star hotel is basic and offers minimal services, while a five-star hotel provides luxurious accommodations and extensive amenities. Hotel ratings directly influence guests' perceptions of security and safety. By prioritizing safety and effective service, hotels can improve their ratings and attract more guests. High hotel ratings can also be achieved through improved management practices.

Hotel management involves overseeing the day-to-day operations of a hotel, including guest services, housekeeping, and food and beverage management (Kandampully, 2013). Hotel management is the efficient management and operation of a hotel establishment, including all aspects of planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, directing, and controlling the activities within the hotel to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Woods & King, 2020). The authors further stated that, to successfully manage a hotel, it involves optimizing resources, delivering quality service, and ensuring guest satisfaction. Hotel management as applied to this study entails overseeing the activities and the affairs of hotels in order to enhance guests' satisfaction. Effective hotel management on the other hand is described as the seamless integration of operational efficiency and superior customer experience to drive overall hotel performance and guest satisfaction (Kwortnik, & Thompson, 2021). Effective hotel management goes beyond mere operational efficiency; it focuses on the integration of various departments such as front desk, housekeeping, food and beverage to create a cohesive experience for guests. Effective hotels prioritize recruiting, training, and retaining skilled employees and creating a positive organizational culture that empowers staff (Karatepe, 2021). One of the important aspects of hotel management is security and safety management practices.

Security of lives and properties is very important in every organization. This justifies why security is one of the major needs of man. Security encompasses the protection of assets, information, and people from potential harm or danger (Yavari, 2020). According to Brophy, (2019), security is a comprehensive approach to protect the physical, financial, and reputational assets of an organization. Collins and Sun (2021) stated that security involves the establishment and maintenance of conditions that ensure the safety and well-being of individuals, organizations, and societies, including protection from physical, digital, and other forms of harm. Security involves the proactive identification and management of potential threats to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals and property (Becker, 2017). In the context of hotel management, this definition emphasizes the importance of risk assessment and contingency planning to address various security concerns. In the context of this study, security involves the act of protecting the lives of hotel guests, employees, employers as well as all the properties belonging the hotels while safety entails identifying vulnerabilities, evaluating potential threats, and implementing measures to address them, such as emergency response plans and crisis management protocols.

The hotel industry in Nigeria and North West in particular is facing numerous security threats, which are posing significant risks to guests, staff, and the overall business operations. The current security threats include terrorism, kidnappings, armed robberies, cyberattacks, and political unrest (Omonijo, 2020). Ibrahim and Olaiya (2018) also pointed that the prevalence of fraudulent activities in Nigeria hotels such as identity theft, credit card scams, and financial fraud, has led to financial losses and eroded trust in the industry. Egunjobi (2020) observed that with the increasing reliance on technology for business operations and guest services, hotels are vulnerable to cyber

threats such as data breaches and ransom payments which are becoming very common. The safety and security of guests and staff are at risk due to physical threats such as terrorism, robberies, and violent crimes (Vanguard Nigeria, 2020). Hotels in Nigeria are vulnerable to various types of fraud, including credit card fraud, identity theft, and reservation scams (Ojo & Oluwawemimo, 2018).

The prevalence of fraudulent activities in the Nigerian hotel industry is on the very high side which have a lot of negative effects on the overall hotel business operations and customer satisfaction. For instance, Punch Newspaper (2023) reported the incidence of abduction in September 19, 2023 in a hotel in Kogi State which led to the attack and abduction of several hotel guests. News had it that gunmen stormed the hotel in the early hours, disrupting the peace and leading to chaos as they forcefully took guests away. The Kogi State Police Command later conducted operations aimed at rescuing the victims. Also, in March 2024, the Guardian Nigeria (2024) reported a terrible insecurity threat in hotel in Lagos by armed robbers. The robbers, numbering about five, invaded the hotel and went from room to room, threatening guests and staff. They made away with personal belongings, including money and valuables, before escaping.

Furthermore, a notable case of insecurity unfolded in November 2022, where armed men stormed a hotel in Kaduna State, leading to the abduction and subsequently confirmed execution of several guests (BBC News, 2022). Following the abduction, there were significant searches coordinated by the local police. Unfortunately, reports later emerged confirming that some of the kidnapped individuals had been killed, leading to public outcry and increased calls for improved security measures across the state. Also, Nigerian Guardian reported a case of kidnapping incident in hotel in Asaba, Delta State which occurred on January 20, 2023. The kidnappers abducted a hotel manager in Asaba while leaving work. The incident raised concerns about the safety of hospitality workers in the region. Insecurity especially in hotels has led to a decrease in tourism and business travel to Nigeria, resulting in a decline in hotel occupancy rates and revenue (Dali-ya et al., 2020). The fear of insecurity has also deterred potential investors from establishing new hotels and resorts in the country, further hindering the growth of the industry (Nwachukwu et al., 2019). In addition, the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria has forced many hotels to invest heavily in security measures, such as hiring private security personnel and installing surveillance systems, to ensure the safety of hotel guests, management team, and hotel employees (Umar et al., 2018).

Hotel management staff as it relates to this study are group of hotel personnel that are responsible for overseeing the daily hotel operations, ensuring exceptional guest experiences, and driving business success. They develop and implement strategies to enhance customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and revenue growth (Okonkwo et al., 2021). The hotel management team include the general manager, Front Desk Supervisor, Human Resources Manager, Accounting Manager, Sales and Marketing Manager, Procurement Manager, operational manager, Executive Chef, event manager, housekeeping manager among others. Hotel employees on the other hand are the backbone of the hotel industry, providing essential services to guests (Adeyeye & Aremu, 2020). Hotel employees can be categorized into front desk staff, housekeeping staff, food and beverage service staff, security personnel, maintenance staff, spa and wellness staff among others. Employee performance directly influences guest satisfaction, which is critical for hotel success.

Hotel guests or customers as applied in this study are individuals who stay in hotels for various purposes, including leisure, business, or transit. Understanding guest demographics and preferences is crucial for hotels to tailor their services and enhance customer satisfaction. The hotel guests are also badly affected by the insecurity challenges in Nigeria hotel industry. According to Van Hoof et al. (2021), guest experience and security are closely intertwined, and hotels must prioritize both to build trust and loyalty. Customer security management in the hotel industry is the implementation of strategies and measures to ensure the safety and privacy of guests during their stay, including physical security and data protection (Gow, 2020). It involves the use of technology and staff training to prevent unauthorized access to guest rooms and public areas, as well as ensuring the security of payment card data and personal information (Dyerson, 2021). Customer security management also encompasses the development and enforcement of policies and procedures to address emergency situations such as natural disasters, medical emergencies, and security threats (Howie, 2019). Customer security management in the hotel industries in North West and other parts of the country requires a multi-faceted approach that encompasses physical security, cybersecurity, staff training, and transparent communication with guests. Aside customer security management, another key aspect of security management in the hotel industries is employee security management. To curtail the insecurity menace militating against the hotel industries in Nigeria, there is need to adopt best security management practices.

Best security management practices in hotels requires the use of modern security technologies to detect and prevent the occurrence of crimes in hotels. Hua et al. (2017) stated that best security management practices include implementing biometric security systems in hotels, installation of surveillance cameras, constant training staff in security protocols and management, providing secure Wi-Fi access, conducting regular security assessments, implementing emergency response plans, utilizing smart locks among others. Smart lock systems can also be installed on doors to enhance security in hotel rooms and other areas. These locks offer advanced features such as remote access control and activity monitoring (Kim et al., 2018). Also, Young et al. (2018) opined that hotels should ensure that their Wi-Fi networks are secure to protect guests from potential cyber threats. Aside security management practices, another vital area in hotel management which needs to be given adequate attention is safety management practices.

Safety management is very crucial in day-to-day activities of individuals not only in hotels but in all spheres of human life. Safety practices in the hotel industry are utmost importance due to the high number of employees and guests present in a hotel at any given time. The large number of individuals within the hotel space increases the likelihood of accidents or emergencies occurring, this calls for safety. Safety is a state of being free from harm or danger. Rosen (2018) defined safety as a state of being free from harm or danger. It emphasizes the importance of creating an environment in which guests and staff of hotel industries are protected from physical or psychological harm. Davis and Lockwood (2019) referred to safety as the feeling of security and well-being that individuals experience in a particular environment. In a hotel setting, this definition emphasizes the importance of creating a welcoming and secure atmosphere for guests. Chathoth, (2016) defined safety management practices in the hotel industry as the systematic identification, assessment, and control of safety hazards to ensure the well-being of guests and staff. According to Lundberg and Johansson (2018), safety management practices in the hotel industry encompass the enforcement of health and safety policies and procedures, including regular inspections of facilities and equipment to ensure compliance with regulations. It also encompasses the integration

of technology, such as surveillance systems and emergency response apps, to enhance security and improve incident response effectiveness (Sheldon, 2019).

In this study, security is seen as protecting hotel guests and workers and property from external threats, such as unauthorized access, theft, or violence; while hotel insecurity is seen as threats typically originating from intentional acts, such as theft, vandalism, or violence in the hotels. Safety practices in hotels as it applies to this study arise from unintentional hazards or accidents, such as slips, trips, or fires. Hotel safety measures focus on preventing injuries and ensuring a safe environment for guests and staff. Safety measures in hotels may include also fire alarms, sprinkler systems, regular safety inspections, and staff training on emergency procedures. There is need for hotels operators to constantly improve safety management practices in hotels by adopting best safety management practices. Best safety management practices in hotel industries as stated by Choi (2020) include the use of technology such as keyless entry systems, surveillance cameras, and electronic safety and security systems. The adoption of these technologies can significantly enhance safety measures in hotels. Also, Gupta (2021) noted that another best safety management practice in hotel is conducting regular maintenance checks on equipment, facilities, and infrastructure. This practice can help identify and address safety hazards before they escalate. Enhanced communication systems within the hotel, such as two-way radios or mobile devices, can facilitate quick and effective response to emergency situations (Pizam, 2019). In addition, regular training of hotel employees on safety measures in the hotel is one of the best safety management practice hotels should adopt. Conducting regular safety training sessions for hotel staff can ensure that they are well-prepared to handle emergency situations and uphold safety protocols in order to enhance customers' satisfaction (Henderson & Brooks, 2016).

Customer satisfaction is the degree to which a product or service meets or exceeds the expectations of the consumer (Olatokun & Eweoya, 2021). Customer satisfaction is determined by the perceived quality of a service compared to the customer's expectation. Customer satisfaction according to Nwogbaga and Eme (2023) reflects a customer's overall assessment of the experience they have had with a service provider such as the hotel industry. This takes into account all interactions the customer has with the business, including their service experience, the ambiance, and customer support. Continuous feedback collection especially in the areas of security and safety management practices can help hotel business improve their overall service design and delivery (Nwogbaga and Eme, 2023). The importance of providing proper security and safety management practices in the hotels cannot be over emphasized especially in the case of hotels in North West, Nigeria which are badly affected with numerous security challenges (Offiong, et al 2025). A lot of insecurity cases in hotels have been reported in recent times. For instance, the Whistler Newspaper (2025) reported that Delta youth set hotel ablaze over guest's mysterious death. The report had it that Mr. Ogofotha, who had travelled all the way from Lagos to attend a relative's funeral allegedly met his untimely death under unclear circumstances. Also, Premium Times Nigeria (2025) also reported that hotel manager and two hotel workers allegedly murdered a hotel guest. As reported by the Premium Times Nigeria, the police stated that the victim was stabbed severely which led to his untimely death. These security challenges have a lot of adverse negative effects on hotel operations and performance in North East, Nigeria.

North West States in Nigeria, have experienced an upsurge in hospitality-related activities driven by an increase in tourism and business travel. However, the region is also witnessing rising security concerns, including theft, armed robbery, and terrorism, which pose significant threats to the

hospitality industry (Nwankwo et al., 2021). The precarious security situation has implications for the hotel sector's operational efficiency and guest satisfaction. Existing studies indicate a deficiency in effective security and safety management practices within hotels, leading to vulnerabilities that not only jeopardize guests but also the hotel's reputation and financial sustainability (Olorunfemi & Karuge, 2022).

One of the major causes of the insecurity menace in the hotels is lack of comprehensive understanding of the current security and safety management practices needed in hotel industries in this 21st century. This lack of understanding may lead to potential risks and vulnerabilities for both hotel staff and guests. The security challenges have a lot of adverse negative effects on hotel operations and performance. Also, the security challenges do not have negative impacts on hotel industries alone but also on the Nigeria economy at large. This is because, insecurity has deterred many potential investors especially foreign investors from investing their resources on hospitality industries in Nigeria thereby taking their investments to other nations of the world where there is little or no security challenges. There is need to identify the security challenges facing the hotel industries in North West with the view of providing best security and safety management practices in order to mitigate the challenges. Hence, the study aimed at determining the influence of security challenges on hotels operations and customers' satisfaction in North West; Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the current security challenges facing hotel industries in North West; Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the influence of the current security challenges on hotel industry operations and customers' satisfaction in North West; Nigeria.

Research Method

Ethical Considerations

Primarily, the researchers obtained an approval from the research and ethics committee of the University of Calabar, to execute the study. They further obtained informed consent from participants to fill and sign. The purpose of the research was clearly explained to the participants, and they were further assured of strict confidentiality and anonymity.

Design and Procedure

The study adopted descriptive research method design. The study area was North East of Nigeria with population of one thousand five hundred (1,500) respondents, which consisted of 133 hotel management staff, 982 hotel employees and 385 hotel guests from the thirty-two (32) registered hotels in six (6) randomly selected States of the North East Nigeria. Three hundred and sixteen (316) sample size which consisted of 79 hotel management staff, 126 hotel employees and 111 hotel customers/guests. The sample size was obtained using Taro Yamane formula. Mixed sampling technique involving proportionate sampling, simple random sampling and accidental sampling techniques was adopted. technique was used to allocate certain proportions/ percentages to the population constituents (hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel guests) at the proportions of 25%, 40% and 35% respectively; simple random sampling technique was used to sample 2 hotel management staff and 4 hotel employees in each of the 32 hotels studied, although, in some big hotels, 3 management staff was sampled whereas in some small hotels, 3 employees

staff were also sampled. Accidental sampling technique was used to sample hotel guests, that is, 2 guests for small hotels and 3 guests for big hotels that were available and accessible at the point of administering the data. This was carried out in all the 32 registered hotels. A structured questionnaire by the authors titled “Security and Safety Practices in the Hotel Industries (SSPH) was used for data collection.

The instrument validated by two experts from Test and measurement unit of the Educational Foundation Department of University of Calabar, Calabar. In order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, the instrument was trial tested. The data generated from the pilot testing were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha and reliability indices of 0.82, and 0.78 were obtained

With the help of three research assistants, administration of the instruments to the respondents, were carried out. After the questionnaires were collated, it was observed that some were not properly rated or ticked and they were not used for the final analysis. Thus, only the responses of 301 respondents comprising 75 hotel management staff, 120 hotel employees, and 106 hotel guests/customers were used in this study. This implied that only 95.25% of the instrument was retrieved and used for data analysis. Data collected from the instrument was analyzed using ANOVA to test the two (2) null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria.

Table 1: ANOVA Analysis on the Mean Responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria.

S/ N	Items on the current security challenges facing hotels	F-Ratio	P-value	Remarks	Decision
1	Armed robbery and theft	.281	.755	N.S	Accept
2	Fraud, including credit card fraud and identity theft	.923	.398	N.S	Accept
3	Cybersecurity threats	.960	.384	N.S	Accept
4	Human trafficking	1.499	.225	N.S	Accept
5	Terrorism threats	.342	.711	N.S	Accept
6	Assault or harassment of guests or staff	.192	.825	N.S	Accept
7	Unauthorized entry into guest rooms and other areas of the hotel	.149	.862	N.S	Accept
8	Drug trafficking and usage	2.131	.120	N.S	Accept
9	Kidnapping and ransom demands	1.006	.367	N.S	Accept
10	Security of hotel information and data	.434	.649	N.S	Accept
11	Civil unrest	.667	.514	N.S	Accept
12	Political instability	.817	.443	N.S	Accept

13	Food water and poisoning	.817	.443	N.S	Accept
14	Corruption and bribery issues	.808	.447	N.S	Accept
15	Compliance with security regulations and standards	.053	.949	N.S	Accept
16	Natural disasters and environmental hazards	.350	.705	N.S	Accept
17	Wildlife animals on hotel premises	.404	.668	N.S	Accept
18	Inadequate emergency response plans	1.103	.333	N.S	Accept
19	Safety of guests during events and gatherings	1.203	.302	N.S	Accept
20	Safety of hotel facilities and amenities	5.305	.005	N.S	Accept
Overall Mean and Decision		0.972	0.505	N.S	Accept

Key: Hotel Mgt. Staff No. = 75 & Grand Mean = 3.08; Hotel Employees No. = 120 & Grand Mean = 3.18; Hotel Customers No. = 106 & Grand Mean = 3.13; Total No. = 301 and Overall Grand Mean = 3.13; Df (Degree of Freedom) = 300; N.S = Not Significant, S = Significant

Table 1 showed the ANOVA result of the hypothesis of no significant difference among the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria. The result revealed that all the items had probability values greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$) indicating not significant. Also, the overall p-value was 0.50 which is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$). This indicated that there is no significant difference among the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the influence of the current security challenges on hotel industry operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria.

Table 2: ANOVA Analysis on the Mean Responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the influence of the current security challenges on hotel industry operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria.

S/ N	Items on the influence of security challenges on hotel operations and customers' satisfaction	F-Ratio	P-value	Remarks	Decision
1	Loss of revenue due to reduced guest bookings	.334	.716	N.S	Accept
2	Damaged reputation, affecting future bookings and revenue	.542	.582	N.S	Accept
3	High employee turnover and loss of experienced workers	.791	.454	N.S	Accept
4	Loss of business deals from corporate clients	.226	.798	N.S	Accept
5	Increased staff absenteeism due to fear for safety	2.970	.053	N.S	Accept
6	Loss of intellectual property, such as guest data or sensitive business information	.325	.723	N.S	Accept
7	Legal liabilities, including lawsuits and fines	2.676	.070	N.S	Accept
8	Damage to physical assets, such as the hotel building	1.870	.156	N.S	Accept
9	Increased cost of security measures	.057	.945	N.S	Accept
10	Loss of customer confidence	.312	.732	N.S	Accept
11	Increased insurance premiums	.686	.504	N.S	Accept
12	Reduced tourists visits and patronages	.159	.853	N.S	Accept

13	Inability to attract foreign investors	.470	.626	N.S	Accept
14	Decreased competitiveness	.282	.755	N.S	Accept
15	Increased risk of theft and fraud	.235	.791	N.S	Accept
16	Low customer satisfaction	.479	.620	N.S	Accept
17	Difficulty in retaining skilled staff	.808	.447	N.S	Accept
18	Negative impact on economic growth	.755	.471	N.S	Accept
19	Reduced employee inputs and morale	.226	.798	N.S	Accept
20	Increased risk of vandalism	2.421	.091	N.S	Accept
21	Low customer patronage	.499	.608	N.S	Accept
Overall Mean and Decision		.8154	.5616	N.S	Accept

Key: Hotel Mgt. Staff No. = 75 & Grand Mean = 2.99; Hotel Employees No. = 120 & Grand Mean = 3.06; Hotel Customers No. = 106 & Grand Mean = 3.07; Total No. = 301 and Overall Grand Mean = 3.; Df (Degree of Freedom) = 300; N.S = Not Significant, S = Significant

The data presented in Table 2 showed the ANOVA result of the hypothesis of no significant difference among the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the influence of security challenges on hotel industry operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria. The result indicated that all the 21 items got probability values above 0.05 with the overall probability value of 0.5616 ($P > 0.05$), this implied that there is no significant difference among the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the influence of security challenges on hotel industry operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis is upheld.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings obtained from this study were grouped and discussed according to the research hypotheses.

Current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria.

The findings on the current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria identified twenty (20) security challenges; they are armed robbery and theft, fraud, including credit card fraud and identity theft, cybersecurity threats, human trafficking, terrorism threats, assault or harassment of guests or staff, unauthorized entry into guest rooms and other areas of the hotel, drug trafficking and usage, kidnapping and ransom demands, security of hotel information and data, civil unrest, political instability, food water and poisoning, corruption and bribery issues, compliance with security regulations and standards, natural disasters and environmental hazards, wildlife animals on hotel premises, inadequate emergency response plans, safety of guests during events and gatherings, and safety of hotel facilities and amenities. Also, the supporting hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the current security challenges facing hotel industry in North East of Nigeria.

The findings are in support of Omonijo (2020) who posited that hotels in Nigeria and North East in particular faces security threats such as terrorism, kidnappings, armed robberies, cyberattacks, and political unrest. Criminal elements and militant groups often target hotels to abduct foreign nationals and wealthy individuals for ransom. Similar report was made by Nigerian Guardian Newspaper on January 20, 2023 about a case of kidnapping incident in hotel in North East of Nigeria where kidnappers abducted a hotel manager in at close of work. Furthermore, Egberongbe

et al. (2020) highlighted the increasing incidents of kidnappings in the country, with hotels being identified as high-risk areas for such criminal activities. The findings further align with Egunjobi (2020) who stated that hotels in Asaba and other part of the nation are vulnerable to cyber threats such as data breaches and ransomware attacks presently; and this is a result of the increasing reliance on technology for business operations and guest services. The absence of cybersecurity infrastructure and awareness in the Nigerian hotel industry makes it susceptible to cyberattacks, which can have severe repercussions on the business (Adegbuyi (2018). Hotels in Asaba as noted by The Guardian (2021) are being targeted by cybercriminals for sensitive customer information.

Influence of security challenges on hotels operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria

The findings emanating from this study discovered nineteen (19) ways security challenges affect hotels operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria. They are as follows: loss of revenue due to reduced guest bookings, damaged reputation, affecting future bookings and revenue, high employee turnover and loss of experienced workers, loss of business deals from corporate clients, increased staff absenteeism due to fear for safety, loss of intellectual property, such as guest data or sensitive business information, damage to physical assets, such as the hotel building or furnishings, increased cost of security measures, increased insurance premiums, reduced tourists visits and patronages, inability to attract foreign investors, decreased competitiveness, increased risk of theft and fraud, low customer satisfaction, difficulty in retaining skilled staff, negative impact on economic growth, reduced employee inputs and morale, increased risk of vandalism, and low customer patronage. In addition, the corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of hotel management staff, hotel employees and hotel customers on the influence of security challenges on hotel industry operations and customers' satisfaction in North East of Nigeria.

The findings are in line with Dali-ya et al. (2020) who contended that insecurity has led to a decrease in tourism and business travel to Nigeria, resulting in a decline in hotel occupancy rates and revenue. Nkanga and Uzochukwu (2021) noted that insecurity has led to a decline in international tourist arrivals in Nigeria, impacting the hotel industry negatively. Nwachukwu et al. (2019) also buttressed that the fear of insecurity has deterred potential investors from establishing new hotels and resorts in Nigeria. This scenario hinders the growth of hospitality industries in the industry. Adama & Ekwueme (2019) found that insecurity especially in hotels have led to a decline in tourism in Nigeria, causing hotels to struggle with maintaining high occupancy rates and profitability. The findings further show conformity with Ibrahim and Olaiya (2018) who stressed that the prevalence of fraudulent activities in Nigeria hotels such as include identity theft, credit card scams, and financial fraud, has led to financial losses and eroded trust in the industry. The findings also agree with Ogu & Nwosu (2021) who pointed out that insecure environments often require additional security measures and resources, leading to increased operational costs for hotels in Nigeria. Security threats most times have forced hotels to invest in security measures, leading to increased operational costs. According to Ogbuigwe et al. (2018) hotels in Nigeria do allocate more financial resources to security measures which has impacted their overall performance and profitability. The finding is in accordance with Olowookere (2017), who opined that security threats impact negatively on the reputation of the hotel industry, and this has resulted to decreased in customer loyalty and reduction in the number of returning guests. According to Okoro and

Nduka (2020), insecurity has damaged the reputation of the Nigerian hotel industry, leading to a lack of trust and confidence from both domestic and international travelers (Okoro & Nduka, 2020).

Conclusion

The research highlights the critical importance of robust security measures to safeguard personnel, guests, and property, while ensuring compliance with national and international safety standards. The findings reveal that while many hotels have established basic security protocols, significant gaps remain in their effective implementation and employee training. Issues such as inadequate surveillance systems, insufficient staff training, and a lack of coordinated emergency response strategies were prevalent. The study underscores the need for a multi-faceted approach to security that incorporates digital technologies, staff engagement, guest awareness, and collaboration with local law enforcement agencies. The study therefore concludes that effective security and safety management practices are crucial for hotels to ensure guest safety, prevent security breaches, maintain a positive reputation, and enhance customers' satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended the following:

1. Hotels should invest in regular training programmes focused on security and safety protocols and emergency response to ensure staff are well-prepared to handle potential security incidents that may arise.
2. Hotels should incorporate modern security technologies such as CCTV surveillance, biometric access controls, and alarm systems to enhance hotel security.
3. Hotels should create detailed security management plans that include risk assessments, incident response strategies, and guest communication policies.

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