

SUSTAINABLE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE NIGERIAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

SATISFAÇÃO SUSTENTÁVEL DO CLIENTE ATRAVÉS DO PLANEJAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO NO SETOR DE HOSPITALIDADE DA NIGÉRIA

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Abstract

Ineffective strategic planning disrupts the efficient deployment of resources, ultimately undermining service quality and customer satisfaction. The present study evaluates the degree to which strategic planning serves as a mechanism for enhancing customer satisfaction within the Nigerian hospitality industry. A correlational survey design was used to obtain empirical data from nine hospitality firms in Nigeria selected through simple random sampling. The sampled firms, namely Sugar Villa, Graziella, Clairbon Plaza, Links, De-Legend, Mavis, Villa Gerden, Beland, and Concord, provided the basis for analysis. Correlation techniques were applied in testing the hypotheses. Findings demonstrated that proactive, customer-focused planning supported by transformational leadership is crucial for achieving immediate service excellence and sustaining long-term customer satisfaction. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between strategic planning and customer satisfaction within Nigeria's hospitality sector. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient indicated

Resumo

Um planejamento estratégico ineficaz prejudica a alocação eficiente de recursos, comprometendo, em última instância, a qualidade do serviço e a satisfação do cliente. O presente estudo avalia em que medida o planejamento estratégico serve como mecanismo para aumentar a satisfação do cliente no setor hoteleiro nigeriano. Utilizou-se um modelo de pesquisa correlacional para obter dados empíricos de nove empresas hoteleiras na Nigéria, selecionadas por meio de amostragem aleatória simples. As empresas da amostra, nomeadamente Sugar Villa, Graziella, Clairbon Plaza, Links, De-Legend, Mavis, Villa Gerden, Beland e Concord, serviram de base para a análise. Foram aplicadas técnicas de correlação para testar as hipóteses. Os resultados demonstraram que um planejamento proativo e centrado no cliente, apoiado por uma liderança transformacional, é crucial para alcançar a excelência imediata no serviço e manter a satisfação do cliente a longo prazo. Os resultados revelaram uma forte relação positiva entre o planejamento estratégico e a satisfação



$r=0.987$, $N=152$, $p<0.001$ suggesting that well-formulated strategic initiatives significantly enhance customer experience. Organizations should embed customer satisfaction goals explicitly into their strategic frameworks to ensure alignment between long-term planning and customer expectations. The study contributes to the body of knowledge by enhancing the transformative leadership model and extending its conceptual boundaries to integrate strategic planning and customer satisfaction within the hospitality industry. Measuring sustainability in customer satisfaction is challenging, as perceptions differ between international and local guests. Nigerian customers may evaluate satisfaction differently from international tourists.

Keywords: Strategic Planning, Customer Satisfaction, Hospitality Industry, Transformational Leadership and Pearson Correlation.

do cliente no setor hoteleiro da Nigéria. O Coeficiente de Correlação de Pearson indicou $r=0,987$, $N=152$, $p<0,001$, sugerindo que iniciativas estratégicas bem formuladas melhoram significativamente a experiência do cliente. As organizações devem incorporar metas de satisfação do cliente explicitamente em suas estruturas estratégicas para garantir o alinhamento entre o planejamento de longo prazo e as expectativas do cliente. O estudo contribui para o conjunto de conhecimentos, aprimorando o modelo de liderança transformacional e ampliando seus limites conceituais para integrar o planejamento estratégico e a satisfação do cliente no setor de hospitalidade. Medir a sustentabilidade na satisfação do cliente é um desafio, pois as percepções diferem entre hóspedes internacionais e locais. Os clientes nigerianos podem avaliar a satisfação de maneira diferente dos turistas internacionais.

Palavras-chave: Planejamento estratégico. Satisfação do cliente. Setor de hospitalidade. Liderança transformacional e correlação de Pearson.

1 INTRODUCTION

Within the rapidly evolving hospitality sector, strategic planning has become central to achieving long-term customer satisfaction. Effective strategic planning now emphasizes long-term goals, resource alignment, and customer-focused service delivery (Otoo, Ankomah, & Essuman, 2022). In hospitality, where sustainability depends on customer satisfaction, strategies must align with evolving customer expectations. Zheng, Qiu, and Tse (2023) posit that strategic investments in staff training, personalized services, and technological advancements can enhance service quality and guest satisfaction levels substantially. Nonetheless, studies also find that firms that incorporate feedback loops and market intelligence into their strategic planning processes are more agile and better able to respond to evolving customer needs and trends.

The Nigerian hospitality industry continues to face challenges in achieving sustainable customer satisfaction due to fragmented and inconsistent strategic planning practices. The absence of integrated long-term strategies has resulted in fluctuating service quality and declining customer loyalty. This persistent gap necessitates systematic

evaluation of strategic planning frameworks to enhance customer-centered sustainability outcomes.

The literature on strategic planning and customer satisfaction reveals varied outcomes. In the hospitality industry, Adebayo and Oladipo (2023) confirmed that formalized strategic frameworks yield improved customer satisfaction, while Bonsu et al. (2023) reported a significant positive relationship between strategic management and customer loyalty in Kumasi hotels. Similar patterns emerged in other sectors, with Taroum and Masaud (2024) associating strategic planning with enhanced service quality in Libyan higher education, and Tryson (2022) establishing that customer focus partially mediates the strategic planning–competitive advantage link. Drawing from these perspectives, this study examines how strategic planning influences customer satisfaction in Nigeria’s hospitality sector.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concept of strategic planning

Strategic planning is a managerial approach that enables organizations to define long-term objectives and targets aimed at fostering sustainable and predictable growth. It also delineates the specific actions required to accomplish these objectives (Hall, 2013). As a vital component of organizational success, strategic planning provides a clear sense of direction and sets measurable performance benchmarks. It serves as a framework for guiding routine decision-making, monitoring progress, and making necessary strategic adjustments. Hall emphasizes that strategic planning should prioritize the articulation of strategic objectives supported by realistic, evidence-based, and quantifiable indicators to assess organizational performance.

According to Schmidt, Enock, and Laycock (2009) and Andrews, Beynon, and Genc (2017), strategic planning involves a deliberate process of articulating a preferred future state, converting that vision into comprehensive objectives, and devising a plan for its realization. In contrast to long-term planning—which commences with the current state and projects forward to meet anticipated needs—strategic planning begins with the end goal and traces backward to the present, identifying necessary actions along the way. This methodology equips organizations to marshal their resources, expertise, and

capabilities toward fulfilling their mission in complex and fluid environments. Moreover, strategic planning fosters a heightened state of preparedness, enhancing responsiveness to market dynamics and external pressures, and enabling significant adjustments to strategic and operational priorities when faced with profound socio-economic or political change.

Strategic planning is conceptualized as a **systematic, future-oriented process** in which an organization defines a vision, assesses internal and external environments, formulates long- and short-term objectives, and allocates resources to bridge the gap between its present state and desired future (Dhlamini, 2024). Recent literature emphasizes that strategic planning is not merely formal documentation, but involves **connected lineages of decision events**—including environmental scanning, implementation designs, evaluation, and adaptation—to maintain competitiveness in dynamic business environments (Alhosseiny, 2023). Moreover, contemporary studies assert that strategic planning fosters competitive advantage by promoting agility, integrative stakeholder participation, and continuous revisiting of strategic alternatives, thereby enabling organizations to respond to volatility and disruptors effectively (Gerrits, Marks, Pagliarin, & Rauws, 2022).

The four basic business strategies, according to Peter Drucker, are attaining dominance, supplying the missing ingredient, and finding and maintaining a special market position. When economic conditions are unsteady, strategic planning conjures vision statements as a powerful instrument for accomplishing desired goals (Meshack & Awino, 2025). The vision statement emphasizes gaining a competitive advantage over other businesses in the industry. A strategic plan also includes a mission statement that outlines the strategy's principal purpose and path to completion. It enables a firm to gain market dominance, boost market stability, customer satisfaction, and revenue. Mission statements are turned into goals and tactics are developed (Habeeb & Eyupoglu, 2024)

2.2 Customer satisfaction

According to the American Society of Quality (ASQ, 2022), customer satisfaction is a measure of how well a company's products, services, and capabilities meet or exceed customer expectations. Feedback mechanisms such as surveys and ratings are instrumental in identifying opportunities for improvement. Customer satisfaction is

defined as the degree to which customers' expectations are met or exceeded by a product or service, shaped by both cognitive evaluations (quality, price) and emotional responses to the consumption experience. (Sum et al., 2025; Shir, Silalahi, Baljir & Jargalsaikhan, 2023). It plays a crucial role in financial and market sustainability by influencing loyalty, repeat patronage, word-of-mouth, and brand image, which in turn support long-term organizational viability (Al Karima & Rabiul, 2022; Murrar, Batra & Rodger, 2021). Moreover, integrating sustainability dimensions—environmental, social, economic—into service delivery can enhance customer satisfaction, leading to stronger competitive advantage and reinforcing sustainable consumption behaviour. (Ozkan, Cek & Eyupoglu, 2022; Shir, Silalahi, Baljir & Jargalsaikhan, 2023). When the delivered product or service meets or surpasses expectations, the customer experiences satisfaction; conversely, when performance falls short, dissatisfaction results. Thus, customer satisfaction is shaped by both the actual quality of the offering and the consumer's initial expectations (Kotler, 2005; as cited in Widyaningrum & Widiarti, 2019).

Neil (2022) asserts that customer satisfaction reflects the extent to which consumers experience positive feelings when engaging with a product or service. Multiple factors influence this construction, including perceived quality, perceived value, customer expectations, effective communication, and the handling of complaints. It is a critical determinant of organizational success; regardless of the innovation of a firm's products or pricing, retaining customers is challenging if they remain dissatisfied.

The American Society for Quality (ASQ, 2022) emphasizes that fostering customer satisfaction should be a priority across diverse sectors—ranging from manufacturing, retail, and wholesale to government agencies, service industries, non-profit organizations, and internal departments within larger enterprises. In this context, the term “customer” encompasses all recipients of an organization's goods or services. Methods such as customer surveys, focus groups, and polls are valuable tools for gathering client feedback and adapting products or services to not only meet but exceed customer expectations.

Recent investigations into customer satisfaction have yielded varied outcomes. Chang, Chanda, Vafaei-Zadeh, Hanifah, and Gui (2024), examining eco-friendly hotels in Bangladesh, revealed that service quality, green practices, perceived value, and environmental sensitivity are significant determinants of guest satisfaction, which subsequently enhances revisit intention, positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay

more. In the Chinese hospitality industry, Sun and Nasrullah (2024) reported that customer and competitive pressures substantially stimulate green innovations and corporate social responsibility initiatives, thereby mediating sustainable firm performance; they further concluded that market forces act as critical drivers of hotel sustainability. Similarly, in Nigeria, Ndalnamu, Ezenagu, and Olugbemi-Gabriel (2024) demonstrated that environmentally sustainable practices exert a strong and positive influence on hotel guest satisfaction and retention.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The present study is based on Transformational Leadership Theory, originally formulated and propounded by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. This theory emphasizes the dynamic relationship between leaders and subordinates, whereby leaders engage collaboratively with their followers to identify necessary changes, articulate a compelling vision, and implement strategic actions through inspiration and influence. According to Burns, transformational leadership transcends transactional exchanges by fostering intrinsic motivation and aligning individual aspirations with organizational goals.

As noted by Jauhari, Singh, and Kumar (2016), transformational leadership is a critical tool for managers, as it strengthens the connection between leadership effectiveness, employee commitment, and job satisfaction. Transformational leaders not only motivate subordinates but also cultivate a culture of active engagement, which in turn promotes managerial efficiency, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational performance.

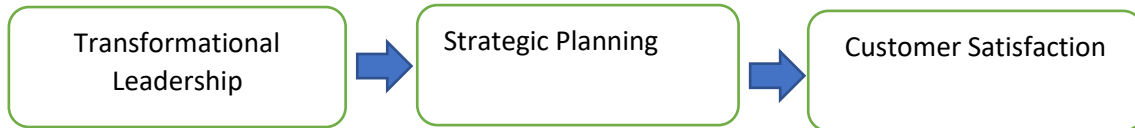
This theoretical framework is directly relevant to “Strategic Planning and Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality Firms, Nigeria”. Transformational Leadership Theory underpins the assumption that organizational success can be significantly enhanced through visionary leadership and empowered employee participation, making it a suitable lens for examining the relationship between strategic planning and firm performance in the hospitality sector.

The model in figure 1 demonstrates that transformational leadership functions as a catalyst for developing and directing strategic planning. By engaging in such planning, organizations are able to align their vision with available resources to enhance efficiency

and service provision. In turn, effective strategic planning contributes to greater customer satisfaction, reinforcing loyalty and ensuring organizational sustainability.

Figure 1

Summary of Theoretical Framework on Strategic Planning and Customer Satisfaction



2.4 Empirical review

Research on strategic planning and customer satisfaction has been conducted across Nigeria and other countries, with findings showing notable variations.

Maulana (2024) examined the link between risk perception and guest satisfaction in Indonesia's hospitality industry, considering hotel attributes as a mediating variable. Based on a quantitative survey of 568 domestic and foreign tourists in major tourist areas, the study employed SEM-PLS with bootstrapping to assess mediation effects. The findings indicated that while financial risk does not directly affect guest satisfaction, it notably influences the preference for certain hotel attributes.

Lingadkar and Sankaranarayanan (2023) investigated the psychological contract among tourism and hospitality professionals in India. Utilizing a structured questionnaire, the study collected data on the relationship between pre-employment expectations and post-employment experiences, measured on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, mean and gap analysis, factor analysis, and simple regression techniques. The results revealed that elements of the psychological contract—particularly competitive remuneration and organizational initiatives to support a healthy work-life balance—are crucial in shaping employees' perceptions and expectations.

The study by Valachis and Tachmatzidis (2023) focused on evaluating the metacognitive skills and knowledge of tourism and hospitality professionals in Greece. Drawing on responses from 102 participants via an online survey, the findings emphasized the critical role of these competencies in industry performance. In a related but distinct context, Ojo and Tamunoipiriala (2019) investigated the organizational

drivers of workplace deviance in Port Harcourt's hotel industry. Data from 138 hotel workers, analyzed using Pearson's correlation, showed that four of six organizational predictors were positively and significantly linked to deviant workplace conduct

Göral (2020) examined the determinants influencing hotel selection among leisure travelers in Turkey, employing the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) as the primary analytical tool. Data was obtained through a structured survey administered to a panel of trainers who vacation at least once per year. The analysis revealed gender-based variations in the prioritization of selection criteria. However, regardless of gender, the most critical factors in hotel choice were identified as safety and security, pleasure, and room facilities, while informing, parking facilities, and network services ranked lowest in importance.

Francis, Wamathai, Wandaka, and Jilo's (2020) research assessed the skills gap affecting Kenya's tourism and hospitality workforce. Based on responses from 200 hotel managers and supervisors in establishments rated between two and five stars, the study combined questionnaires and interviews to gather data. The results highlighted that training institutions focus more on supply-driven programs than on industry demand, creating a disconnect between graduate capabilities and labor market expectations.

The study by Bonsu, Owusu, Brefo-Manuh, and Antwi (2023) explored whether strategic management practices shape customer satisfaction and loyalty in Kumasi's hotel industry. Drawing on a purposive sample of 200 hotel customers, the researchers administered a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed the responses using descriptive and inferential statistics as well as ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in SPSS 21. The analysis found that strategic management practices have a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty. Taroum and Masaud (2024) examined the influence of strategic planning on service quality within Libya's higher education sector. Utilizing survey data from 360 employees at Sabratha University, the study found that strategic planning exerts a positive effect on the delivery of quality services in higher education.

Tryson (2022) investigated the mediating role of customer focus in the relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage within Zambia's railway sector. Drawing on secondary data from management-level employees at the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA), the study found a significant positive relationship among strategic planning, customer focus, and competitive advantage. Moreover, customer focus was identified as a partial mediator, indicating that while

strategic planning directly enhances competitive performance, part of its influence operates through customer-oriented practices.

Ugwu, Kekeocha, Nnaji-ihedinmah, and Ebomuche (2022) examined the impact of contingency planning on organizational performance in Nigeria's hotel industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a correlational survey design, data was gathered through questionnaires administered in nine hotel firms. The study population comprised 295 employees, with a sample size of 170 determined via Taro Yamane's formula. Pearson's correlation analysis indicated that contingency planning has a positive effect on organizational performance.

These investigations are outlined in a comparative table highlighting the authors, year of study, geographical context, sample, and main conclusions.

Table 1

Summary of Empirical Studies on Strategic Planning and Customer Satisfaction

S/N	Authors and Year	Country	Sample	Method	Findings
1	Maulana (2024)	Indonesia	568 domestic & foreign tourists in major tourist areas	Quantitative survey; SEM-PLS with bootstrapping	Financial risk does not directly affect guest satisfaction, but significantly influences preference for hotel attributes.
2	Lingadkar & Sankaranarayanan (2023)	India	Tourism & hospitality professionals (survey via structured questionnaire).	Descriptive statistics, gap & factor analysis, regression.	Competitive remuneration and work-life balance are vital in shaping psychological contract and employee perceptions.
3	Valachis & Tachmatzidis (2023)	Greece	102 tourism & hospitality professionals	Online survey	Metacognitive skills and knowledge are critical for industry performance.
4	Ojo & Tamunopiriala (2019)	Nigeria (Port Harcourt)	138 hotel workers	Pearson's correlation	4 of 6 organizational predictors significantly linked to deviant workplace conduct.
5	Göral (2020)	Turkey	Leisure travelers (panel of trainers who vacation yearly)	Structured survey; Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)	Hotel choice influenced by gender, but safety, pleasure, and room facilities are top priorities.
6	Francis, Wamathai, Wandaka & Jilo (2020)	Kenya	200 hotel managers & supervisors (2–5 star hotels)	Questionnaires & interviews	Training institutions emphasize supply-driven programs over industry demand, causing skills gap.
7	Bonsu, Owusu, Brefo-Manuh & Antwi (2023).	Ghana (Kumasi)	200 hotel customers	Likert-scale survey; Descriptive & inferential statistics; OLS regression	Strategic management practices positively affect customer satisfaction & loyalty.
8	Taroum & Masaud (2024)	Libya	360 employees at Sabratha University	Survey	Strategic planning positively influences service quality in higher education.

9	Tryson (2022)	Zambia (TAZARA Railway)	Secondary data from management-level employees	Analysis of secondary data	Strategic planning enhances competitive advantage; customer focus partially mediates relationship.
10	Ugwu, Kekeocha, Nnaji-ihedinmah & Ebomuche (2022)	Nigeria	170 employees from 9 hotel firms (out of 295 population)	Correlational survey; Pearson's correlation	Contingency planning positively affects organizational performance during COVID-19

Source: Authors Own Creation.

Previous research conducted in various countries, including Libya, Zambia, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, and Kenya, has explored the link between strategic planning and outcomes such as service quality, competitive advantage, and customer loyalty. However, there remains a scarcity of empirical studies investigating how strategic planning specifically contributes to customer satisfaction in Nigeria's hospitality sector. Much of the existing literature emphasizes general performance indicators or operational efficiency, with limited attention to how poor strategic planning undermines resource utilization and adversely impacts customer experience. Consequently, there is a knowledge gap regarding the mechanisms through which strategic planning can be leveraged to improve customer satisfaction in Nigeria's distinctive hospitality context.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research methodology, employing a correlational survey design to examine how customer satisfaction is sustained through strategic planning across nine selected hospitality firms in Nigeria. Nine (9) firms, namely Sugar Villa, Graziella, Clairbon Plaza, Links, De-Legend, Mavis, Villa Gerden, Beland, and Concord were purposefully selected because they collectively reflect diversity in size, service orientation, and customer base, thereby strengthening the representativeness of the study.

Again these firms represent a diverse mix of hospitality establishments that cater to different market segments, thus offering a comprehensive view of how strategic planning impacts customer satisfaction in varied operational contexts. The hospitality sector was selected for this study due to its critical role in Nigeria's service economy and its direct dependence on customer satisfaction as a key performance indicator. Unlike many other industries, service quality in hospitality is experienced and evaluated in real

time by customers, making strategic planning vital for aligning resources, staff capabilities, and service delivery processes to meet or exceed guest expectations.

The questionnaire was distributed using simple random sampling techniques to ensure that each stratum had an equal chance of being represented in the survey. The choice of simple random sampling was based on its ability to provide every population member with an equal chance of selection, thereby reducing bias and ensuring representativeness of responses on strategic planning and customer satisfaction. The questionnaire was rigorously validated with the aid of experts to ensure the instrument meets its content, face, and criterion level, thereby confirming its adequacy in measuring the intended constructs.

The target population comprises personnel across different hierarchical levels within the selected organizations, including General Managers, Senior Managers, Frontline Supervisors, and other operational employees. The inclusion of employees from various hierarchical levels ensures a comprehensive representation of perspectives on strategic planning and performance in the hospitality industry. While executives contribute insights into policy direction, frontline and operational staff provide practical experiences that shape customer satisfaction outcomes. This population consists of both permanent and temporary staff, totaling 295 employees across the hospitality sector.

The pilot study enhanced the instrument's clarity and ensured its suitability for the main study. Cronbach's Alpha was applied to establish internal consistency, while Pearson's correlation enabled the assessment of linear relationships between strategic planning and customer satisfaction.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULT

4.1 Data presentation

Raw field data are presented to promote transparency and strengthen the validity of the analysis. Of the 158 questionnaires distributed, 152 were returned and analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 20, with 6 excluded due to non-return.

Table 2*Schedule of Questionnaire Administered and Returned for Hospitality Firm*

Item	Frequency	% of Survey
Responded Survey	152	92.6
Responded Survey	6	7.4
Total Number of Recovered Survey	158	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

4.2 Demographic Information of the participants

This section present gender distribution below

Table 3*Gender Distribution*

Gender	Frequency
Male	60
Female	40

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The pie chart illustrates the gender distribution of the participants. 60% of the participants are male, while 40% are represented by females.

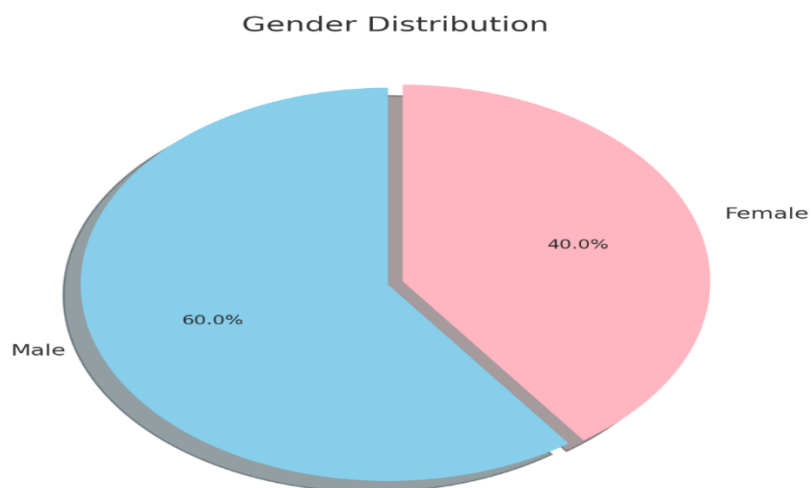
Figure 2*Gender Distribution*

Table 4*Age Distribution*

Gender	Frequency
11-20 Yrs	10
21-30 Yr	30
31-40 Yr	40
Over 50 Yrs	20

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The pie chart shows the proportion of respondents across different age groups:

The 31–40 years group has the highest representation at 40%, indicating this age bracket dominates the sample. The 21–30 years group accounts for 30%, making it the second largest. Individuals over 50 years constitute 20% of the sample. The 11–20 years age group has the lowest representation at 10%. This suggests that most participants are within the productive working age range (21–40 years), which could influence the outcomes of any study related to workforce behavior, preferences, or capacity.

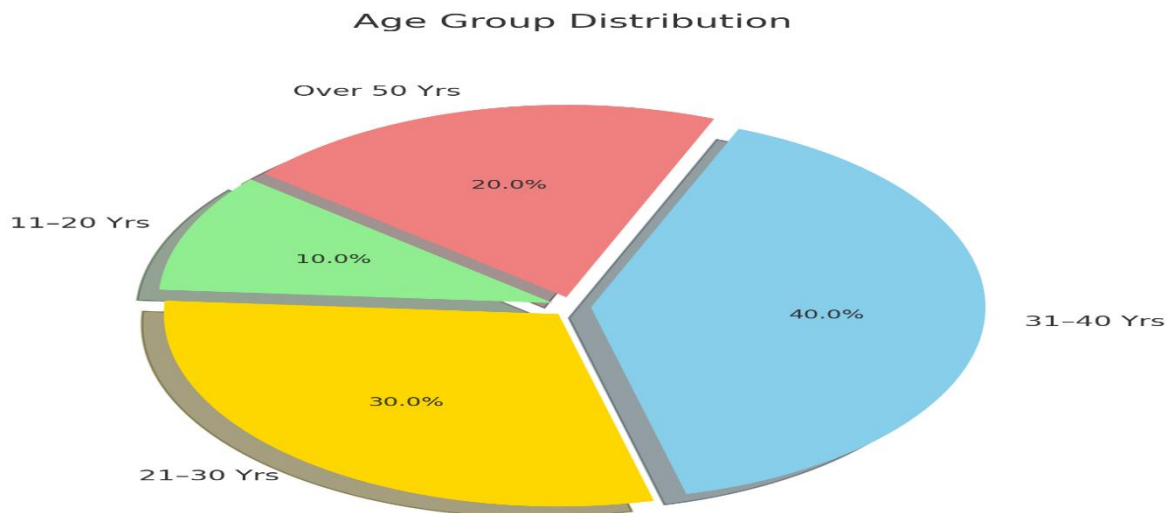
Figure 3*Age Group Distribution*

Table 5*Position Held*

Position	Frequency
Managing Director	10
Senior Manager	20
Middle Manager	40
Others	30

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The pie chart represents positions held by participants. Middle Managers (40%) form the largest group, indicating a strong operational or supervisory tier within the organization. Others (30%) make up nearly a third, possibly reflecting diverse roles outside the standard managerial hierarchy. Senior Managers (20%) represent a fifth of the total, likely overseeing strategic or departmental leadership. Managing Directors (10%) are the smallest group, consistent with their typically limited number in most organizations due to their top-level authority.

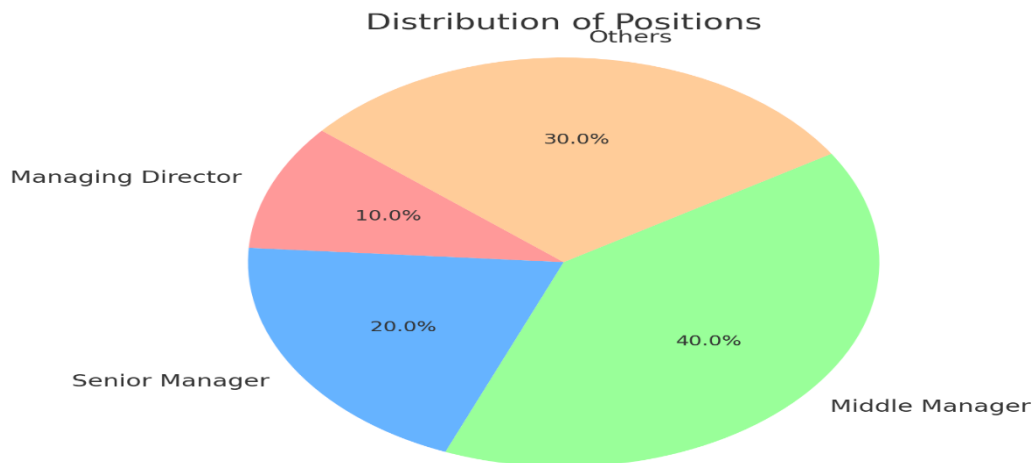
Figure 4*Distribution of Positions***4.3 Analysis of Research Question One**

Table 4 presents the distribution of participants' responses to Research Question One, measured using a five-point Likert scale. Respondents were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each statement by ticking (✓) the option that best reflected their opinion: **Strongly Agree (SA = 5)**, **Agree (AG = 4)**, **Undecided (UN = 3)**, **Disagree (DA = 2)**, and **Strongly Disagree (SD = 1)**.

Table 6*Statement on Strategic Planning and Customer Satisfaction*

S/N	Items	SA	AG	UN	DA	SD	Total
A.	Strategic Planning (Independent Variable)						
1	Our fundamental business goals are clearly articulated within the mission and vision statements.	66	61	14	8	3	152
2	The mission and vision statements serve as a framework for defining our primary business objectives.	60	56	22	8	6	152
3	Although assessments occur frequently, challenges remain in identifying more effective ways of working.	58	64	20	6	4	152
4	Our architectural features and strategic location are exceptional.	72	59	14	1	6	152
5	Regular performance assessments help us identify and implement more effective work methods.	54	62	21	12	3	152
6	Sometimes performance evaluations do not lead to improvements in working processes.	66	56	15	6	9	152
7	We regularly assess our performance and explore innovative approaches to our work.	37	32	3	3	0	152
B.	Customer Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)						
1	We are committed to delivering exceptional services to our customers.	68	70	4	6	3	152
2	Our aim is to provide superior quality services to clients.	64	72	11	4	1	152
3	Despite improvements, our skills are not yet sufficient to secure a leadership position in the hospitality sector.	60	62	15	9	6	152
4	We consistently seek to deliver services of the highest quality to those we serve.	61	64	14	6	7	152
5	We regularly conduct customer surveys to assess their satisfaction levels.	77	70	3	1	1	152
6	Our current level of competence falls short of making us a dominant player in the hospitality industry.	75	73	1	1	2	152
7	We still face gaps in our competencies, which hinder our ability to lead in the hospitality industry.	71	69	3	7	2	152

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

4.2.1 Test of hypothesis

This section presents the study hypothesis.

H_{A1}: Strategic Planning has a significant influence on Customer Satisfaction.

Table 7*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
STP	152	.00	152	25.0238	25.82728
CSF	152	1.00	152	25.1905	26.25693
Valid N (listwise)	152				

Source: SPSS Version 20.

Table 8*Result of Pearson Correlation*

		STP	CSF
STP	Pearson Correlation	1	.987**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	152	152
CSF	Pearson Correlation	.987**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	152	152

Source: (SPSS Version 20)

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

STP represents strategic planning

CSF represents customer satisfaction

4.2.2. Rule decision

A p-value ≤ 0.05 indicates rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0); otherwise, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. Table 8 presents the Pearson Correlation analysis, showing a p-value of 0.000, below the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the study accepts that strategic planning significantly impacts customer satisfaction and rejects the notion of no relationship between the variables. The **Pearson correlation** in Table 8 confirms that **strategic planning is a statistically significant and very strong predictor of customer satisfaction** ($r = 0.987$, $p < 0.001$).

4.3 Interpretation and analysis of findings

The hypothesis was examined using Pearson's Correlation, as presented in Table 7. The analysis produced a correlation coefficient of ($r=0.987$, $N=152$, $r = 0.987$, $p < 0.001$), indicating statistical significance. The positive correlation coefficient suggests that an increase in strategic planning is associated with a corresponding increase in customer satisfaction. Given that the p-value is below the 0.05 significance threshold, the alternative hypothesis—that strategic planning significantly influences customer satisfaction—is accepted, while the null hypothesis is rejected.

4.4 Contribution to knowledge

This study significantly enriches the existing body of literature by refining the transformative leadership model and extending its theoretical foundation to strategic planning and customer satisfaction within the hospitality industry. It further contributes to the extant literature by identifying critical challenges and consequences of insufficient strategic direction and weak transformational leadership, customer attrition and service delivery challenges on hospitality industry and proffering solutions.

4.5 Practical limitations/implications of the study

Present study encountered **sampling bias, cultural measurement issues, design restrictions (cross-sectional), and operational uncertainties** as methodological limits. Nigeria's ethnic and cultural diversity could influence staff-customer interactions, which may not be adequately addressed methodologically. Using only questionnaires can produce mono-method bias; triangulation with observations, secondary data, or case studies would strengthen findings. Measuring "sustainability" in customer satisfaction is challenging, as perceptions differ between international and local guests.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study revealed that strategic planning exerts a positive influence on customer satisfaction within Nigeria's hospitality sector, as evidenced by the Pearson

product–moment correlation coefficient. These results corroborate the findings of Bonsu, Owusu, Brefo-Manuh, and Antwi (2023), who reported a statistically significant and positive association between strategic management practices and customer loyalty in hotels located in Kumasi. Similarly, the current study aligns with the conclusions of Taroum and Masaud (2024), whose work established that strategic planning positively affects the quality-of-service delivery in higher education institutions.

The study's results indicate that strategically designed initiatives considerably improve customer experience in the hospitality industry. Findings suggest that proactive, customer-focused planning supported by transformational leadership is crucial for achieving immediate service excellence and sustaining long-term customer satisfaction. This enduring satisfaction, in turn, fosters loyalty, enhances brand image, and enables hospitality organizations to sustain a competitive edge in an increasingly dynamic, customer-centric marketplace. By empirically establishing a robust positive link between strategic planning and customer satisfaction, the research offers valuable contributions to both theoretical perspectives and practical applications of strategic management in hospitality services. Stemming from the above the following recommendations are worth considering:

1. Organizations should integrate customer satisfaction indicators (e.g., Net Promoter Score, Customer Satisfaction Index) into the organization's balanced scorecard or strategic plan to achieving long-term goal.
2. Strategic planning should incorporate digital feedback tools from customers to inform future strategies and adjustments. This should be done by implementing periodic customer surveys, suggestion boxes, and digital feedback platforms essential for achieving short term goals.
3. To strengthen the alignment between strategic planning and customer satisfaction, managers and executives should undergo targeted training tied to customer satisfaction indicators. In addition, mentorship schemes led by senior leaders are necessary to exemplify and reinforce best practices for enhancing customer expectations.
4. Training programs should be provided for managers and executives to align strategic decision-making with customer satisfaction. This effort should be reinforced through mentorship initiatives where senior leaders model customer-focused strategic practices vital for long term goals.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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