



HOTEL EFFECTIVENESS INDEX (HEI) DEVELOPMENT FOR BOLSTERING HOTEL GRADING AND CLASSIFICATION IN LAGOS NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Hotel Effectiveness Index (HEI) is hereby explored as an instrument for bolstering hotel grading and classification system. For HEI development, a survey research was conducted targeted at collecting data from hotels' customers in conjunction with physical evaluation of the hotels and review of hotel operational systems in Lagos metropolis. Stratified sampling technique was used while data analysis was performed by means of descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for social Sciences (Version 20). 'HEI' as developed might be regarded as a straightforward and unsophisticated instrument that could be adopted by Tourism Boards to bolster the current classification and grading system of hotels.

Keywords: Customers' Perception, Facilities, Hotel Classification and Grading, Hotel Effectiveness Index (HEI), Services

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1. INTRODUCTION

The problems associated with classification and grading of hotels in Nigeria became more compounded recently due to the Supreme Court judgement confirming the rights of the States to have oversight functions over hotels within their jurisdiction. Lagos State, the litigant and the immediate beneficiary of the judgement found it napping as regards classification and

grading and its immediate solution is recourse to appointing a consultant to handle the issue; recourse to ad-hoc system that may not produce a satisfactory result. This research developed hotel effectiveness index (HEI) as a reinforcing instrument to the “Star System” which hopefully wipes off or modulate the perceived anomalies and weaknesses associated with the “Star System” as developed by Nigerian Tourist Corporation (NTDC)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hotel classification is usually done on a scale of one to ten and each unit is represented by a star or diamond. Thus, we have 1-star, 2-star, 3-star hotels and above. Higher star ratings indicate more luxury. The rating is anchored to the quality of food services, entertainment, view, room, variations such as size and additional amenities, spas and fitness centers among others without taking into consideration customers’ perception of the quality of services or how satisfied they are with available facilities (Parasuraman et al, 1988)[12].

Madani, Ghadami and Sarafizadeh (2012)’s[9] work re-echoed most of the facts enunciated by the Research Department of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (RDCTO) (2002)[11] detailing the provenance, terms and major shortcomings associated with classification and grading. From their view, registration, classification and grading are supposed to have different meanings and usage but are being interchangeably used in most cases causing problems and this can be seen in some grading and classification systems around the world.

The British ‘AA’ rating system emphasis on consumer’s perception of accommodation features essentially aiming to emphasis grading system, which could be easier for customers to understand. Callan (1995)[4], commenting on the British system averred that grading are expressed using appellations. Each of these quality assessments is affixed to the classification level to show the final result.

The Yahoo! Travel Star ratings and the AAA Diamond ratings (2004)[16] which are American based, follow the format of the ‘AA’ classification system but with more elaborate requirements that have to be met. At the lower end of the ladder is the 1–Star hotel which is required to be just a reasonable sleeping place with scanty facilities The 5 – Star hotel has the most fantabulous, exciting and most complicated requirements with a lot of intangibles. Above all, there must be sustained maintenance achievable over the years and there must be consistency of service, continued upkeep and impeccable housekeeping. The AAA Diamond Ratings follow the same pattern with different sets of requirements.

Baker and Crompton (2000)[2] discussed the classification method introduced by the Botswana Bureau of Standards which comprises of six parts captioned ‘Hotel and Related Establishments – Grading Requirements’. The problem with this, is that the specifications are too simplistic and that reliance on committee members even though inevitable, side track the perception and feelings of hotels’ customers in relation to the services they are purchasing and enjoying. Besides, no matter how dexterous the selection process of committee members is, there is no guarantee that decision is not crowded by self-interest.

The major problem of the AA rating system is that it lacks input from the consumers of the hotel products who are better placed to assess the products they are buying. They are the buyers and the users of the facilities and in a better position to assess the facilities and the services being rendered. However, the current defects of the existing classification systems and difficulties associated with the formation of international classification system implies that nations and regions would continue to develop their own hotel classification system to take account of the shortcomings associated with the existing ones and local peculiarities.

The same criticisms were raised by Madani, Ghadami and Sarafizadeh (2012)[9] prompting the trio to develop a domestic conceptual model for classification and grading of hotels in Iran.

The conceptual model of the study indicated that factors like style of management, human capital, location and structure do affect the hotel classification and grading in Iran. This essentially brought in customers' perception of hotel services and facilities which is verifiable as an essential variable of importance in hotel classification and grading.

Lungiswa (2009)[7] averred that there are numerous ways of evaluating service quality of service and customer expectation by measuring perception and attitudes of the customers. Zhon, Brown, Dev and Agarwal (2007)[17] also emphasized the need to accord importance to hotel customers' view.

The Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation Decree 81 of 1992 titled 'Hospitality and Tourism Establishments (Registration, Grading and Classification) Regulations (1997)'[13] made registration, grading and classification of hotels and other service accommodation compulsory in Nigeria. The Regulation viewed "certificate of registration" to mean a certificate granted or transferred in accordance with the provision of the regulation. Classification or reclassification is construed to mean categorization of Hospitality and Tourism Establishments based on physical assessment and minimum standards, provided. Grading is viewed to mean the assessment of Hospitality and Tourism Establishment by ranked characteristics based on the range and scope of facilities and services provided. The classification is then based on the star system as usual with brief specification covering capacity, bedrooms, bathrooms/toilets, lighting, linen, reception counter, kitchen, crockery, drinking water, staff and service, laundry service, housekeeping, firefighting and facilities. All these for each type of 'star' are lumped together and regarded as minimum standard. However, the domineering parameter was the room numbers with 10 rooms as one – star, 20 rooms as 2 – star, 30 rooms as 3 – star, 40 rooms as 4 – star and 50 rooms and above as 5 – star. The Regulation was supplanted with Standard for National Classification and Grading of Hotels and other Serviced Accommodation in 2002 which is more comprehensive than the earlier one but still retains the number of rooms as domineering variable. The foreword is succinct and a reflection of the direction of the document.

This Standard for National Classification and Grading of Hotels and other Serviced Accommodations in the country is prepared by the NTDC in conjunction with the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) and endorsed by the Technical Committee of Tourism Stakeholders (TCTS). The Standard is intended to provide minimum rating criteria for hotels and other serviced accommodations in the country.

It is thus apparent that the Nigerian Classification System bears total resemblance with its counterpart in Britain and America. The criticisms that trailed those ones are also applicable to it. While some elements of customers' satisfaction embedded in the determination of 'star' for foreign hotels, Nigeria's Standard is totally devoid of customers' satisfaction relying instead on the judgment of ad-hoc committees whose decisions may be prejudiced. In the light of these identified weaknesses, it is crucial that attempt should be made to find a way of bringing in the opinion of the users and buyers of hotel services who are in the best position to assess the accommodation packages and services they buy.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a survey research involving collection of data about the perception of hotel customers concerning the hotels' facilities and services they currently patronize and predilection towards hotels they have been patronizing. The study covers Lagos State, a State in South-Western

Nigeria with particular reference to Metropolitan Lagos. Lagos State has over 200 hotels and it is regarded as the pillar of hotel businesses in Nigeria with the bulk of standard hotels located within metropolitan Lagos. The hotels chosen for this research were those that align with the National Classification and Grading of Hotels as contained in the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation document (2001)[8] amounting to 50 hotels.

Thus, the population for the study was 50 hotels while the sample frame was 20 hotels which are hotels that registered with Lagos State Tourism Board and conform to NTDC (2001) grading system and willing to participate in the research. The sample size is thus 20 hotels conforming to Bartlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001)[3] recommendation that where the population is less than 100 and the degree of accuracy required is plus or minus 5% then the whole population becomes the sample size. Analysis was anchored to favourability disposition of customers to hotels propounded by Durodola et al (2016)[6] aided by use of SPSS version 20. This step was taken relying on the fact that those customers are swayed by hotel effectiveness; which then means there is perfect correlation between favourability of the hotels by the customers and effectiveness of the hotels.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Effective Hotels Determination via Inter-Hotel Favourability Analysis

A total number of 435 questionnaires were administered on the selected respondents out of which 222 of the questionnaires were retrieved representing 51% retrieval rate as shown in Table 1. Then, out of the 222 retrieved questionnaires, 155 or 70% respondents did indicate that they favoured one hotel or the other while 67 or 30% refrained from indicating their predilection towards any hotel. The favoured hotels, twenty in numbers and representing 43% of the hotels surveyed are as shown in Table 2.

Table 1 Participating Hotels, Distributed and Retrieved Questionnaires

S/No	NAME	QDIST	QRET	Fav.Ind.
1	Protea Hotel Ikeja	23	14	13
2	Lagos Airport	26	13	10
3	Eko Hotel and Suites	32	23	18
4	Bluenet	13	5	2
5	Excellence	19	8	4
6	Mainland	32	14	10
7	Kilo	12	5	3
8	Lagos Sheraton	39	21	17
9	Federal Palace	36	11	9
10	Southern Sun	23	8	6
11	Best Western	16	5	3
12	Ibis	19	13	8
13	Duban	26	13	8
14	Excel Oriental	14	8	7
15	Raddington	13	8	5
16	Niger Palace	8	4	2
17	Hotel Newcastle	13	7	4
18	Rital Lories	16	8	4
19	Protea Hotel Ikoyi	20	11	9
20	Hotel Continental	35	23	13
		435	222	155
Key: QDIST> Questionnaires Distributed; QRET> Questionnaires Returned				
Fav. Ind.> Favorability Indicator				

As shown in in Table 1 above, Eko Hotel and Suites topped the hotels while Niger Palace hotel is at the bottom of the ladder. Thus, ranking based on predilection of customers towards

the hotels could even form a pedestal for hotel classification and grading. However, the mean of the frequency is 7.75 which constitute almost 8 on the other hand; the lower quartile is 5, the median 10 and the upper quartile 15. With regard to the re-designation of the hotels in terms of predilection of the customers towards the hotels, the quartile is used. Thus, hotels with favourability frequency (FF) of 15 and above representing the upper quartile could be regarded as highly favoured. Hotels with FF of 10 and above but less than 15 representing the median as favoured hotels while hotels with FF of 5 and above but less than 10 representing the lower quartile as moderately favoured.

Table 2 Favourability Analysis for the Participating Hotels

S/No	Hotels	Fav. Ind.	Freq	Rankg
1	Niger Palace	2	2	12
2	Bluenet	2	2	12
3	Best Western	3	2	11
4	Kilo	3	2	11
5	Excellence	4	3	10
6	Hotel Newcastle	4	3	10
7	Rital Lories	4	3	10
8	Raddington	5	1	9
9	Southern Sun	6	1	8
10	Excel Oriental	7	1	7
11	Ibis	8	2	6
12	Duban	8	2	6
13	Protea Hotel Ikoyi	9	2	5
14	Federal Palace	9	2	5
15	Mainland	10	2	4
16	Lagos Airport	10	2	4
17	Protea Hotel	13	2	3
18	Hotel Continental	13	2	3
19	Lagos Sheraton Hotel	17	1	2
20	Eko Hotel and Suites	18	1	1

Key > Fav Ind = Favourability Indicator; Freq. = Frequency; Rankg. = Ranking

The hotels with FF of less than 5 could then be regarded as un-favoured hotels. Based on this re-classification methodology, Table 2 shows that Eko Hotel and Suites and Lagos Sheraton Hotel are highly favoured; Hotel Continental, Protea Hotel Ikeja, Lagos Airport Hotel and Mainland Hotel are favoured hotels. On the other hand, Raddington Hotel, Southern Sun Hotel, Excel Oriental Hotel, Ibis Hotel, Duban Hotel, Protea Hotel Ikoyi and Federal Palace hotel are moderately favoured while such hotels as Niger Palace, Bluenet, Best western, Kilo Hotel, Excellence, Newcastle and Rita Lorries Hotel are un-favoured hotels. There is need to determine on the spot level of effectiveness using intra-hotel favorability analysis.

4.2. Effective Hotel (Intra – Hotel Favorability Analysis)

This shows on the spot assessment of the efficiency of the hotels from the users' perspectives. In order to achieve this, respondents were asked to rank the hotels where questionnaires were administered on them based on the way they perceived the functionality of facilities and services of the hotels. Likert scale was then used for this assessment where somewhat effective was regarded as threshold between effective hotels and in-effective hotels.

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution for effectiveness indicators for the sampled hotels and the hotels are now numbered in reverse order reflecting their level of favourability starting with highly favoured hotels.

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The principle here is based on what could be called “privacy in mobs” which tries to identify the hotels that are not following the normal trend in the industry. For the overall frequencies in column 2, the highly efficient and efficient were lumped together and this gave 39% over the total respondents. Since this figure is less than 50%, then the whole hotels investigated could be classed as in-effective. Total numbers of responses for each hotel are now shown ranging from highly effective to in-effective and the same principle of calculating effectiveness responses over total responses was also used. Thus, 39% or 0.39 is taken as the boundary of effective hotel. With this threshold determined, one can then re-categorize by taking 0 to less than 0.39 as in-effective hotels; 0.39 to less than 0.50 as mildly effective; 0.50 to less than 0.69 as effective hotels and 0.69 to 1 as highly effective hotels. This re-classification enables comparison with favorability classification as reflected in Table 2. Hence, in Table 4 favorability levels are compared with effectiveness level and safe in three instances of Excel Oriental, Duban Hotel and Protea Hotel Ikoyi, both indicators tally all through, indicating perfect relation between the two variables. That means both terms can be used interchangeably. Interestingly, the computation of the spearman correlation between the effectiveness levels for the whole hotels and that of the individual hotel display the same trend consolidating the authenticity and reliability of the derived effectiveness index.

The Spearman rank correlation, ‘r’ here has the property $-1 < r < 1$ where when r is equal to 1, signifies perfect correlation in positive sense; when ‘r’ is equal to 0.6 implies that upward correlation in the positive sense; when ‘r’ is equal to -1 implies perfect correlation in the negative sense and when ‘r’ is equal to zero implies no correlation at all.

Table 3 Effectiveness Index Determination

Effectiveness	Over all	Highly Favored		Favored Hotels				Mildly Favored Hotels			
		Hote 1	Hote 1	Hot el	Hot el	Hot el	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	
Degree	%	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Highly Effective	29	10	12	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	2
Effective	58	13	9	12	7	5	7	4	2	4	4
Somewhat effective	78	0	0	7	4	6	5	6	5	5	6
In-Effective	57	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	3	1
Total	222	23	21	23	14	13	14	11	11	13	13
% of HE/E over Total	39	100	100	0.65	0.57	0.54	0.57	0.45	0.36	0.38	0.46
SpCA	SpC A	0.1	-0.27	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.3	1	0.9
HEI	0.39	1	1	0.65	0.57	0.54	0.57	0.45	0.36	0.38	0.46
Efficiency Class	I	HE	HE	E	ME	ME	ME	I	I	I	I
		Mildly Favored Hotels					Un - Favored Hotels				
	Over all	Hote 1	Hote 1	Hot el	Hot el	Hot el	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel
	%	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Highly Effective	29	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Effective	58	3	3	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat effective	78	4	4	4	2	5	1	2	0	0	2
In-Effective	57	0	1	1	4	2	5	2	4	3	1
Total	222	8	8	8	8	7	8	5	5	5	4
% of HE/E over Total	39	0.5	0.38	0.38	0.25	0	0.25	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.25

SpCA	SpC A	0.8	1	1	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.5	-0.9	0.2	-0.9
HEI	HEI	0.5	0.38	0.38	0.25	0	0.25	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.25
	I	ME	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
KEY											
Hotel 1 > Eko Hotel and Suites		Hotel 11 > Excel Oriental				HE > Highly Effective					
Hotel 2 > Lagos Sheraton		Hotel 12 > Southersun Hotel				E > Effective					
Hotel 3 > Hotel Continental		Hotel 13 > Raddington Hotel				I > In –efficient					
Hotel 4 > Protea Hotel Ikeja		Hotel 14 > Rita Lorries Hotel				SpCA> Spearman Correlation					
Hotel 5 > Lagos Airport Hotel		Hotel 15 > Hotel Newcastle				Analysis					
Hotel 6 > Mainland Hotel		Hotel 16 > Excellence Hotel				HEI > Hotel Effectiveness Index					
Hotel 7 > Federal Palace Hotel		Hotel 17 > Kilo Hotel				ME> Mildly effective					
Hotel 8 > Protea Hotel Ikoyi		Hotel 18 > Best Western hotel									
Hotel 9 > Duban Hotel		Hotel 19 > Bluenet Hotel									
Hotel 10 > Ibis Hotel		Hotel > Niger Palace Hotel									

Table 4 Marching Favourability Level with Effectiveness Level

S/No	Hotels	Fav. Ind.	Fav. Lev	EFF. Lev	HEI	SpCA
1	Niger Palace	2	UF	Inef.	0.25	-0.9
2	Bluenet	2	UF	Inef.	0.2	0.2
3	Best Western	3	UF	Inef.	0.2	-0.9
4	Kilo	3	UF	Inef.	0.2	0.5
5	Excellence	4	UF	Inef.	0.25	0.1
6	Newcastle	4	UF	Inef.	0	0.7
7	Rital Lories	4	UF	Inef.	0.25	0.3
8	Raddington	5	MF	Inef.	0.38	1
9	Southern Sun	6	MF	Inef.	0.38	1
10	Excel Oriental	7	MF	Eff	0.5	0.8
11	Ibis	8	MF	ME	0.46	0.9
12	Duban	8	MF	Inef.	0.38	1
13	Protea	9	MF	Inef.	0.36	0.3
14	Federal Palace	9	MF	ME	0.45	0.8
15	Mainland	10	Fav	Eff	0.57	0.7
16	Lagos Airport	10	Fav	Eff	0.54	0.8
17	Protea Hotel	13	Fav	Eff	0.57	0.4
18	Continental	13	Fav	Eff	0.65	0.4
19	Lagos Sheraton l	17	HF	HE	1	0.27
20	Eko Hotel and Suites	18	HF	HE	1	0.1
Key > Fav Ind = Favourability Indicator; Fav. Lev = Favorability Level;						
Key > EFF.Lev = Effectiveness Level; UF = Un-favored						
Key > MF - Mildly Favored; Fav. = Favored; HF = Highly Favored						
Key > Inef. = Ineffective; Eff. = Effective; ME = Mildly Effective						
Key > HE = Highly Effective; HEI = Hotel effectiveness Index						
Key > SpCA = Spearman Correlation Analysis						

The interpretation here is that when there is perfect correlation, the hotel is not effective and when there is no correlation the hotel is effective. The implication is that the two may

have to be read together to arrive at conclusion. From Table 4, it could be seen that effective hotels are found mostly amongst the high flier hotels in the category of 4- Star and 5- Star hotels except in some cases like Excellence hotel but this is not sacrosanct.

5. DERIVED INDEX AND EXISTING CLASSIFICATION OF SURVEYED HOTELS

Using the classification earlier proposed and used for effectiveness index, that is 0 to less than 0.49 for 2- Star; 0.49 to less than 0.59 for 3- Star; 0.59 to less than 0.69 for 4- Star and 0.69+ for 5- Star then a new grading would emerge as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Derived Index (HEI) and Existing Classification

S/No	Hotels	Room Range	Designated Star	HEI	HEI – Class
1	Niger Palace	11 - 20	2	0.25	2
2	Bluenet	31 - 40	3	0.2	2
3	Best Western	31 - 40	3	0.2	2
4	Kilo	31 - 40	3	0.2	2
5	Excellence	41 - 50	4	0.25	2
6	Hotel Newcastle	31 - 40	3	0	2
7	Rital Lories	41 - 50	3	0.25	2
8	Raddington	31 - 40	3	0.38	2
9	Southern Sun	50+	5	0.38	2
10	Excel Oriental	41 - 50	4	0.5	3
11	Ibis	41 - 50	4	0.46	3
12	Duban	50+	5	0.38	2
13	Protea Hotel Ikoyi	50+	4	0.36	2
14	Federal Palace	50+	5	0.45	3
15	Mainland	50+	4	0.57	3
16	Lagos Airport	50+	5	0.54	3
17	Protea Hotel Ikoyi	41 - 50	4	0.57	3
18	Hotel Continental	50+	5	0.65	4
19	Lagos Sheraton Hotel	50+	5	1	5
20	Eko Hotel and Suites	50+	5	1	5

A discreet examination of Table 5 revealed that most of the hotels dropped by a step on Star classification system, although some are more than a step, which may prompt re-examination of or the up-grading of the facilities of the hotels or looking inward on services deficiency among others. Those hotels that were able to retain the existing classification really deserved such grading and may have to be commended.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Hotel Effective Index (HEI), a heuristic system based on social survey research is herein developed taken into cognizance customers' perception of services being rendered and facilities made available by the hotels. This is an unsophisticated instrument that is recommended to Tourism Boards for adoption to bolster the current classification and grading system.

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