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Occupiers' Perception of Service Quality in a Multi-Tenanted Estate: A Case of Rivtaf Golf Estate Portharcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract: Customer satisfaction and service quality in residential estates have been a subject of interest to researchers in the real estate field. This is because these subjects are very significant concepts that organisations, firms and managers must understand to improve the satisfaction level of occupiers. It is on this premise that this study investigated occupier's perception of service quality in RIVTAF Golf Estate Port Harcourt with a view to ascertain whether the occupiers perceive the quality of service as satisfactory. The study population consists of randomly selected occupiers in the estate. 107 questionnaires were administered to the occupiers, while 95, representing 89% were retrieved. The Modified SERVPERF was used as the analytical framework of the study. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential analytical tools, specifically mean and regression analysis. The findings showed that the occupiers generally perceive satisfactory service quality in all service quality dimensions: tangibility, reliability responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. However, the results further indicated that occupiers have higher satisfaction with tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy than reliability. Moreover, the study revealed that occupiers were satisfied with four out of the six facilities studied: gym, central water system, electricity, and recreational centre. They were however not satisfied with the security and

sewage system. The study recommends that the management team should not relent on their timely and continuous review of their services, thereby ensuring occupiers satisfaction. Also, feedbacks should be obtained from occupiers on the security services to enhance or improve their services for occupiers' utmost satisfaction. Finally, the resident's association should liaise with the management team to employ a professional waste management body like the Initial Plc (a popular sewage disposal outlet located in Port-Harcourt) for regular and timely waste disposal.

1.0   Introduction

One of the critical factors that influence customer's satisfaction is the quality of service rendered. Service quality is the difference between what is expected from each service dimension and what the customers perceive and receive (Woo, 2016). In the words of Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985), service quality is the comparison of consumer expectations and actual services performed. The authors asserted that when customers' expectations exceed service performance, dissatisfaction occurs; contrarily, where performance exceeds expectations, satisfaction ensues. Parasuraman et al., (1985) developed a 5-dimensional instrument called "SERVQUAL" to measure service quality to confirm users' satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This instrument has now provided researchers with the opportunity of measuring service quality and performance through five attributes known as tangibility (which includes physical facilities, equipment's, etc.), reliability (which checks whether or not the service provider or facility manager is reliable in delivering the services promised), responsiveness (which is the willingness of the service provider to respond to occupiers' immediate needs), assurance (which creates trust and credibility to customers) and empathy (which shows an attitude of care by the service providers by rendering individual attention) (Manaivannan & Somasundaram, 2014; Olanrele, Ahmed & Smith, 2014; Yosuff & Liew, 2013).

However, it has been observed that several other measuring instruments have been deployed for the assessment of customer expectations and perceptions in different sectors of the economy, such as SERVPERF (service performance), HedPERF (higher education performance), amongst

others. Despite these, researchers have confirmed that the two most prominent instruments are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF (Adil, Ghaswyneh & Albukou, 2013; Oluwunmi, Omirin & Ajayi 2016). The majority of these studies, both in developed and developing countries, particularly for residents' assessment, have adopted SERVQUAL.

Residents' assessment of service quality is key information for facility managers (or service providers) to improve their general performance, competencies and strategically positioning themselves in the real estate market for continuous patronage (Omar, Ariffin & Ahmad, 2016). Furthermore, according to Gilbert, Veloutsou, Goode & Moutinho (2004), firms that provide superior service quality experience higher economic returns with a more satisfied customer base. Hence, service providers need to seek a competitive advantage over others by providing exceptional services to residents.

Revealing resident's perception of service experience has been significant to the successful operation of any service organisation over the years. Therefore, it is paramount for facility managers (service providers) to carefully examine current services from residents' perspective while redesigning their service delivery approach

and environment (Mokhlis, 2012). Furthermore, customers' positive perception of service quality depicts that service providers can render their services without the risk of losing their customers, which therefore shows a clear indication of customer satisfaction and retention (Pradeep, Vadakepat & Rajasenan, 2020).

Numerous past studies have examined resident's perception concerning service quality from various perspectives worldwide. For instance, the work of Li (2020) focused on understanding the perceived service quality by residents in assisted living facilities (ALF) in Athens. The study aimed at understanding perceived quality by residents using the five SERVQUAL dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance & empathy). A qualitative approach was adopted for the study, whereby interviews were conducted. It was revealed that the facilities provided a homelike environment, given the residents a more comfortable stay in ALF based on their perception of services. The residents also perceived the staffs as reassuring due to their professionalism, politeness and trustworthiness. Manaivannan & Somasundaram (2014) researched on perception and expectation of customers about the service quality of promoters of residential apartments in India. The survey method was used through a

modified SERVQUAL to measure residents' perception, and it was found that customers/residents perceived poor service quality in all the service quality dimensions. The study recommended that the service quality of residential flat promoters needs to be improved to close gaps that may lead to customers increased poor perception about service quality. Furthermore, Andráško, Lesová, Kunc & Tonev (2013) in Czech Republic assessed ways of perceiving the quality of life on selected housing estates in Brno city. The authors focused on comparing external and internal factors regarding the quality of life of three residential estates in Brno. Findings revealed a significant difference in the perception of the quality of life on the housing estates.

Providing and improving services by managing agents in the residential estate is a complex task since it involves handling multiple aspects like technology, service systems, employee selection etc (Nakhai & Neves, 2009). However, if service providers do not perform as expected, it affects service quality ratings which can cause the negative word of mouth to run rampant (Yusoff, Ismail & Newell 2008). This was buttressed in the work of Mmutle & Shonhe (2017). The authors examined the impact of customers' perception of service quality on selected hotel

reputation in the hospital premises. Using the SERVQUAL model, a qualitative method and design were adopted to understand customers' perception of service quality. It was found that although the customers had high expectations, the impact of service quality was poor, which invariably led to bad publicity concerning the hotel. The study recommended that there be a team or departments with mechanisms and strategies for meeting and exceeding customer satisfaction, mainly dealing with customer complaints, which is vital for organisational stability.

Based on the foregoing, it appears difficult to examine the perception of service quality without mentioning satisfaction. This explains why some scholars such as Olanrele et al., (2014), Olanrele & Thonetth (2014), Nwagbgara & Irouke (2015), amongst others, focused on residents' satisfaction with service quality. Most of the studies on residents' perception/satisfaction with service quality, as mentioned earlier, adopted the SERVQUAL model. It appears that there is little or no study in Nigeria that adopted the SERVPERF model in residential estates. This present research, which is hinged on RIVTAF Golf Estate in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, was carried out using the SERVPERF measuring instrument. According to Cronin & Tailor (1992) cited in

Oluwunmi et al. (2016), this instrument is considered a better measuring instrument to measure service quality.

2.0   Study Area

The RIVTAF Golf Estate is an estate constructed by TAF Nigeria Homes Limited, a sister company to TAF Africa Global limited, a Gambian Company that has been in the real estate business in other African countries for over 28 years. In partnership with the Government of Rivers State through a special purpose vehicle incorporated as RIVTAF Nigeria Limited, TAF Nigeria Homes Limited developed a middle to a high-income housing estate in Port Harcourt known as RIVTAF Golf Estate. The RIVTAF Golf Estate is the largest luxury housing estate in the South-South region of Nigeria (TAF Africa Global Limited 2013), built on approximately 40 hectares of land. However, due to the large capital outlay expended in such an edifice, it is expedient that the quality of services be studied which is in line with goal 9 of the sustainable development goals that ensures constant improvement of infrastructure through regular maintenance by the service providers, thereby giving the property a facelift while introducing better facility management innovations that will aid occupier's satisfaction while improving the real estate industry at large. It is a luxury estate with

excellent landscaping located in the Trans-Amadi area of Port Harcourt under the Port Harcourt (PHALGA) Local Government Area. Trans Amadi is a thousand hectare (2,500-acre) industrial area as well as a diverse residential neighbourhood.

RIVTAF Golf estate is bounded by various arrays of residential neighbourhoods and estates like the Royal Palm estate, Parkland Estate, Righteousness avenue etc. Further binding the RIVTAF Golf estate is the JDP roundabout which links the Popular slaughter market, rare and front gate of RIVTAF Golf estate, and also a link to Peter Odili road which has an array of eatery's, shopping complexes and event centres amongst which are Chicken Republic, Dominos and cold stone, Market square (Shopping complex), everyday supermarket, Hago heights and The Dome event centres. All these facilities are less than 5km from the RIVTAF Golf estate. The management structure comprises a pool of management team employed by the resident's association, and they oversee the day-to-day activities in the entire estate. The management team includes the GPFI (Global Property & Facilities international Ltd), in charge of plumbing, gardening, fumigation, cleaning common areas and security, and the Dabanani team in charge of electricals. However, all the services are generally overseen by the RIVTAF Golf

estate maintenance and facility management office. RIVTAF Golf Estate comprises of two phases. Phase 1 has the following accommodation: 608 apartments (2/3-bedroom apartments) in blocks of flats; 62 units of 4-bedroom townhouses and 31 units of 4/5 bedroom villas, while Phase 2 have 120 units of 4/5 bedroom luxury villas; 30 units of 4-bedroom town-houses; 180 serviced plots for town-houses/villas and 9-hole golf course. This paper focused on phase 1 as phase 2 is not 100% completed. Figure 1 shows the RIVTAF Golf estate.

Figure 1: Base Map Showing the Study Area (RIVTAF Golf Estate)

3.0   Methodology

The research adopted a cross-sectional survey whereby modified SERVPERF questionnaires were administered to collect relevant data for this study. A total of 107 occupiers in RIVTAF Golf Estate Phase 1 were sampled. Data gotten were coded using Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS v.25) software with the help of an excel spreadsheet. Descriptive and inferential statistics were then used to analyse the data. Specifically, weighted mean and linear regression was adopted for the analysis. The mean was measured using a five-point Likert model of 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Uncertain, 4 - Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree. Twenty-four variables were used to measure tangibility perception, five for reliability perception, four for responsiveness perception, four for assurance perception and five for empathy perception. In all, forty-two variables were used to measure the physical facilities and services in the estate.

4.0   Results   and Discussions

4.1   Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 95 (representing 89%) of the questionnaires were returned and analysed to achieve the aim of the study from the sample size. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were considered based on gender, age, status, academic qualification, marital status and type of accommodation. The distribution of the demographic characteristics of the respondents is reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Profiles

Demographics of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative
Gender			
Male	42	44.21	44.21
Female	53	55.79	100.00
Total	**95**	**100.00**	
Age			
21-30 Years	21	22.11	22.11
31-40 Years	38	40.00	62.11
41-50 Years	18	18.94	81.05
51-60 Years	12	12.63	93.68
Above 60 Years	6	6.32	100.00
Total	**95**	**100.00**	

Status			
Landlord	57	60.00	60.00
Tenant	38	40.00	100.00
Total	**95**	**100.00**	
Academic Qualification			
SSCE/GCE	2	2.11	2.11
OND/HND	15	15.79	17.9
B.Sc./BA	36	37.88	55.78
M.Sc./MA	21	22.11	77.89
Ph.D./DPS	21	22.11	100
Total	**95**	**100.00**	
Marital Status			
Married	41	43.16	43.16
Single	41	43.16	86.32
Divorced	13	13.68	100.00
Total	**95**	**100.00**	
Type of Accommodation			
2-bedroom apartment	33	34.74	34.74
3-bedroom apartment	30	31.58	66.32
4-bedroom terraced building	14	14.74	81.06
4-bedroom duplex	11	11.57	92.63
5-bedroom duplex	7	7.37	100.00
Total	**95**	**100.00**	

The Table shows that the females are 53, representing (55.79%) of the respondents, while the males are 42, representing 44.21% of the respondents. Regarding the respondents' age range, most (81.05%) of the respondents are between the age bracket of 21-50 years, while the remaining respondents (18.95%) are 51 years and above. The Table also revealed that the majority (60%) of the respondents were owners in the estate.

As indicated in Table 1, 41 (43.16%) of the respondents were married, 41 (43.16%) were single, while the remaining 13 (13.68%) of the respondents were divorced. Further analysis on the academic qualification of the respondents showed that 2 (2.11%) had SSCE/GCE, 15 (15.79%) had obtained OND/HND, 36 (37.88%) had B.Sc./BA, 21 (22.11%) had obtained M.Sc./MA, 21 (22.11%) had Ph.D./DPS. This implied that the majority (60%) of the respondents in RIVTAF Golf Estate had obtained a minimum of B.Sc./BA and M.Sc./MA. Hence, the occupiers are academically qualified to understand and provide reliable data for this research.

Finally, the analysis on the type of accommodation occupied by the respondents showed that 33 (34.74%) of them live in a 2-bedroom apartment, 30 (31.58%) live in a 3-bedroom apartment, 14 (14.74%) live in the 4-bedroom terraced building,

11 (11.57%) live in a 4-bedroom duplex while the remaining 7 (7.37%) live in a 5-bedroom duplex. Therefore, the majority (66%) of the respondents in RIVTAF Golf Estate live in 2- and 3-bedroom apartments.

4.2 Available Facilities in RIVTAF Golf Estate
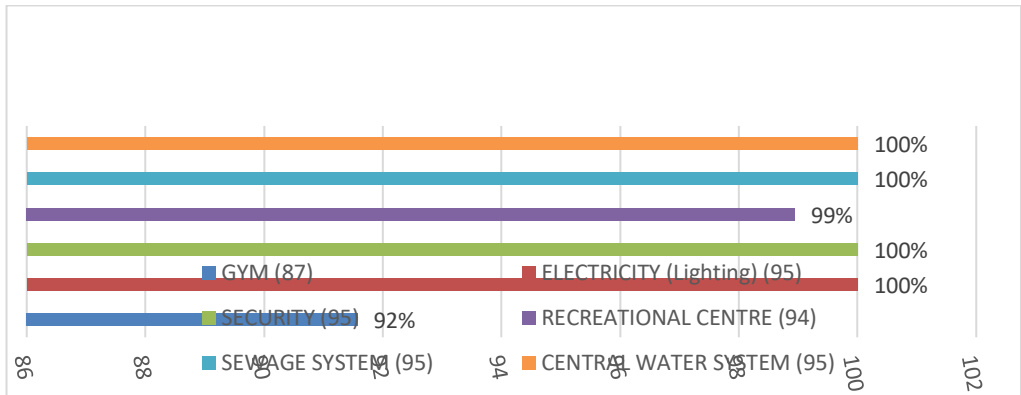

Figure 2: A simple bar chat of the available facilities in RIVTAF Golf Estate

From the bar chat, various facilities were identified to ascertain whether the necessary facilities expected in a residential estate are available to aid resident's satisfaction. The facilities identified were Gym, electricity/lighting, security, recreational centre, sewage system and central water system. From the result, (92%) of the respondents indicated that Gym is available, (100%) indicated electricity facilities

to be available, (100%) indicated the availability of security, (99%) indicated the availability of recreational center, (100%) indicated that sewage system is available and (100%) indicated the availability of central water system. Therefore, the results revealed that the necessary facilities expected in a residential estate are available in RIVTAF Golf Estate.

4.3 Occupiers' Perception of the Quality of Facilities/Services in RIVTAF Golf Estate

Table 2 shows the modified SERVPERF and a summary of the analysis of the responses from occupiers in RIVTAF Golf Estate.

Responses were based on 5-point Likert scale where 5= Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 2 = Strongly Disagree. The outcome of the findings is interpreted using the decision rule of Ogbolo (1996) cited in Ahmed (2013), which states that if the mean score falls within 4.00 to

5.00, it indicates a "Positive Statement", 3.00 indicates a "Fair Statement" and 1.00 to 2.00 "Negative Statement". The modified

SERVPERF questions for resident's perception of the quality of services in RIVTAF Golf Estate are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Occupiers Perception of the Quality of Services in RIVTAF Golf Estate

	Dimension of Service Quality Attribute	Perception					
		SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean
1	The Gym is physically Appealing	53	19	19	3	1	4.26
2	The Gym has up to date equipment	31	37	23	3	1	4.00
3	All the equipment's in the Gym are available for consistent and effective workout	48	23	21	3	0	4.20
4	The gym equipment's are properly maintained	45	30	16	4	0	4.22
5	The central water system is visibly appealing.	66	24	5	0	0	4.64
6	Water supply is constant and the water is regularly treated	63	22	10	0	0	4.56
7	The central water system is up to standard and can cater for the whole residents.	58	22	5	0	0	4.56
8	The service providers regularly maintain the central water system.	62	23	9	1	0	4.54
9	The electricity system has modern looking equipment	57	32	6	0	0	4.54
10	Electricity/power supply is constant.	51	33	11	0	0	4.42
11	Materials associated with services such as electricity bills, forms etc. are always readily available	55	33	7	0	0	4.51
12	The lighting quality around the estate is adequate	54	32	8	1	0	4.46
13	The security personnel are well equipped and armed	52	34	9	0	0	4.45
14	The security lights around the estate are always functional	55	37	3	0	0	4.55
15	Residents feel safe with the security formation system	57	32	6	0	0	4.45

16	There is provision for CCTV cameras within the estate.	68	17	8	2	0	4.59
17	The sewage system is emptied on a regular basis	58	34	3	0	0	4.58
18	The sewage system is large enough to accommodate all wastes	64	21	10	0	0	4.57
19	The layout/design of the sewage system is neatly constructed	62	32	1	0	0	4.64
20	The pipe works for the sewage system is well maintained	61	26	8	0	0	4.56
21	The facilities in the recreational centre are always clean and well maintained.	55	26	14	0	0	4.43
22	The recreational centre has up to date and physically comfortable equipment's	57	24	14	0	0	4.45
23	The recreational centre has quality equipment's in large quantity	49	30	15	1	0	4.34
24	All the facilities needed in the recreational centre are physically available.	49	31	14	1	0	4.36
	Average Tangibility						**4.45**
25	When the facility managers promise to do something at a certain time, they do so.	50	27	17	1	0	4.33
26	The facility managers are dependable	51	28	16	0	0	4.37
27	The facility managers are sympathetic and reassuring when the residents have problems.	50	28	17	0	0	4.35
28	The facility managers keep their records accurately	52	29	13	1	0	4.39
29	The facility managers provide their services as at when due.	45	36	14	0	0	4.33
	Average Reliability						**4.35**
30	Services delivered to the residents are prompt and realistic	45	34	16	0	0	4.31
31	Facility managers are expected to tell the residents exactly when services will be performed	44	39	11	1	0	4.33
32	The facility management services are provided in accordance to residents needs	65	23	6	1	0	4.60
33	The facility managers understand the	50	36	9	0	0	4.43

	difficulties of the residents, and they assist them by rendering prompt services					
	Average Responsiveness					**4.41**
34	Residents can trust facility managers	54	33	18	0	0	4.38
35	Residents feel safe with the facility managers as regards the daily activities and services provided	53	32	9	1	0	4.44
36	The facility managers are polite	52	32	10	1	0	4.42
37	The facility managers have adequate knowledge of the facilities and services available in the estate.	53	24	18	0	0	4.37
	Average Assurance					**4.40**
38	The facility managers give residents individual attention	50	36	8	1	0	4.42
39	The facility managers know the needs of the residents	50	25	19	1	0	4.31
40	The facility managers have the residents' best interest at heart	53	27	14	1	0	4.39
41	The facility managers care for the residents	56	32	6	1	0	4.51
42	The facility managers are fair and impartial	58	30	6	1	0	4.53
	Average Empathy					**4.43**

A close examination of the above table shows the decisions of the respondents based on the perception statements of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. In addition, the table shows the mean scores of the respondents' decisions. Judging from table 2, all the perception statements (dimensions of service quality attributes) are within the range of 4.00 and 4.64. This indicates a positive perception from the respondents based on the quality of services rendered in RIVTAF Golf Estate. Furthermore, the average mean scores were computed to determine the dimension attribute in which the respondents perceive high quality service as against the other dimensions. From the results, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy have the highest average mean scores between 4.10 and 4.45. This simply depicts that the respondents perceive higher positive quality service in the tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions than reliability.

4.4 Occupiers Overall Satisfaction with the Quality of Facilities in RIVTAF Golf Estate

In a bid to achieve this, regression analysis was adopted. In regression analysis, when the significant (sig) value is less than 0.05 for 95% confidence level or less than 0.01 for 99% confidence level, then the independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable. In this study, the independent variables are the following facilities (gym, central water system, electricity, security, sewage system, recreational centre) while the dependent variable is overall satisfaction.

Table 3a: Model Summary of Occupiers' Overall Satisfaction

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.809[a]	.655	.631	.488
a. Predictors: (Constant), gym, central water system, electricity, security, sewage system, recreational centre.				

Table 3a revealed a strong relationship at R = .809 between the facilities (gym, central water system, electricity, security, sewage system, recreational centre) and occupiers' overall satisfaction. An examination of the table shows that R square = .655, which implies that the gym, central water system, Electricity, security, sewage system, and recreational centre account for 65.5% of variations having a significant effect on occupiers' overall satisfaction.

Table 3b: ANOVA Table of Occupiers Overall Satisfaction

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	39.675	6	6.612	27.823	.000[b]
	Residual	20.915	88	.238		
	Total	60.589	94			
a. Dependent Variable: Overall satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), gym, central water system, electricity, security, sewage system, recreational centre.						

Table 3b shows that the F-value is the Mean Square Regression (6.612) divided by the Mean Square Residual (.238), yielding F=27.823. From the results, the model in this table is statistically significant (Sig =.000). Therefore, gym, central water

system, electricity, security, sewage system and recreational center are significant predictors

of overall satisfaction at $F_{(6, 94)} = 27.823$

Table 3c: Coefficient Table of Occupiers Overall Satisfaction

	Coefficients[a]					
		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-1.081	.538		-2.009	.048
	Gym2	.241	.063	.328	3.860	.000
	Central water system	.471	.107	.370	4.382	.000
	Electricity	.285	.108	.195	2.640	.010
	Security	.135	.102	.100	1.325	.189
	Sewage system	-.109	.094	-.087	-1.161	.249
	Recreational centre	.175	.071	.219	2.463	.016
a. Dependent Variable: Overall satisfaction						

The table above revealed the degree of influence of gym (G), central water system (CWS), electricity (E), security (S), sewage system (SS) and recreational centre (RC) on the overall satisfaction of residence and its level of significance. The statistical result is given as; (G; β=.241; t=3.860; p <0.01), (CWS; β=.471; t=4.382; p <0.01), (E; β=.285; t=2.640; p =0.01), (S; β=.135; t=1.325; p >0.05), (SS; β=-.109; t=-1.161; p >0.05) and (RC; β=.175; t=2.463; p =0.01), The statistical result implies that gym, central water system, electricity and recreational centre are statistically significant predators of the overall satisfaction of occupiers.

Linear Regression Model is given as $Y = a + \beta X$

Where Y = Overall satisfaction

a = constant

Therefore, overall satisfaction = -1.081+ 0.241G + 0.471CWS + 0.285E +.135S +-0.109SS 0.175RC

Based on the results, the significance level for gym, central water system, electricity and recreational centre is less than or equal to 0.01. This means the occupiers are satisfied with most of the available facilities used in rendering quality services in RIVTAF Golf Estate.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has successfully examined occupier's perception with service quality in RIVTAF

Golf Estate Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study also investigated occupier's satisfaction with the quality of facilities in the estate. Judging from the results, it was shown that the occupiers perceived a satisfactory service quality in all dimensions namely; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. However, tangibility, empathy, responsiveness & assurance had the highest average mean scores of 4.45, 4.43, 4.41 & 4.40 respectively. The implication of this is that the occupiers perceive higher quality service in these dimensions than the reliability dimension which had a mean score of 4.35. Further results from the regression analysis revealed that overall, the occupiers were satisfied with four (4) out of the six (6) facilities in the estate; Gym, central water system, electricity and recreational center. Finally, there is a strong evidence that suggests that the quality of the physical facilities is a strong predictor for occupiers' satisfaction. Also, it was revealed that service quality has a significant impact on occupiers' overall perception, which invariably aids their satisfaction. Based on the findings, the authors made the following recommendations:

1. Although the occupiers perceived the overall service quality in RIVTAF Golf Estate as satisfactory in all the service quality dimensions, the study suggests that the management team should not relent on their timely and continuous review of their services, thereby ensuring occupiers' satisfaction.

2. The study established that occupiers are majorly satisfied with the Gym, central water system, Electricity and recreational centre. However, they are not satisfied with the security services. Therefore, the study recommends that the management team obtain feedback from occupiers on the security services to enhance or improve their utmost satisfaction. Moreover, the study suggests adequate training of security personnel.

3. The study revealed that the occupiers were not satisfied with the sewage system. Hence, it was recommended that the residents association liaise with the management team to employ a professional waste management body like the Initial Plc (a popular sewage disposal outlet located in Port-Harcourt) for regular and timely waste disposal.

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