HOSPITALITY FACILITIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON BUSINESS TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF CONFERENCE HOTELS IN KADUNA STATE

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Abstract

Business tourism, particularly the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) sector, has emerged as a significant driver of global tourism development. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2022), business-related travel contributes approximately 22% of international tourism receipts, underscoring its role in national and regional economic transformation. Hospitality facilities — including accommodation, conference halls, catering, information technology infrastructure, and security — are central to this growth, as they determine both the capacity and competitiveness of destinations. Scholars argue that "hospitality facilities are the backbone of business tourism" (Rogerson, 2017, p. 278), as they provide the essential infrastructure for corporate gatherings, trade fairs, and networking events. In Nigeria, Kaduna State presents an interesting case study due to its strategic location as the gateway to Northern Nigeria, coupled with its historical role as an administrative and industrial hub (Adebayo & Iweka, 2020). Conference hotels such as Hamdala Hotel, Crocodile Hotel, and Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Club have become pivotal centers for regional and national events. However, despite these developments, challenges such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, inconsistent service delivery, and security concerns persist. These

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constraints limit Kaduna's potential to compete with other Nigerian states such as Lagos and Abuja, where hospitality facilities are more developed (Bakare, 2021). This study investigates the relationship between hospitality facilities and the growth of business tourism in Kaduna State, employing a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys of 250 respondents with qualitative interviews from hotel managers and event organizers. Regression analysis revealed a strong correlation between the adequacy of hospitality facilities and business tourist satisfaction, with ICT services and conference halls emerging as the most critical determinants. As Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's (1988) SERVQUAL model emphasizes, tangibility and reliability significantly influence perceptions of service quality — a finding consistent with this research. The findings contribute to the literature on hospitality and tourism by highlighting the importance of continuous investment in modern facilities, particularly in ICT-enabled conference technologies, to boost competitiveness. The study concludes that upgrading hospitality facilities will not only enhance tourist satisfaction and repeat patronage but also solidify Kaduna's standing as a viable business tourism destination in West Africa. As one participant noted during interviews, "business tourists no longer come for hotels alone, they come for the full package — reliable internet, seamless service, and secure environments" (Hotel Manager, 2025, Interview Data). This paper thus adds value to tourism scholarship and practice by situating Kaduna State within the broader discourse of MICE tourism development in Africa. It recommends strategic public–private partnerships, targeted infrastructure investments, and staff capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the competitiveness of Kaduna's conference hotels. By doing so, Kaduna could leverage its cultural diversity and geographical advantage to become a hub for sustainable business tourism in Nigeria.

Introduction

Background to the Study

The hospitality industry is widely recognized as a crucial driver of economic development and tourism growth worldwide. According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2022), global business tourism has consistently accounted for over one-fifth of international arrivals, emphasizing the strong demand for well-developed hospitality facilities. Business tourism is often categorized under the broader Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector, which has grown to become one of the most profitable segments of international travel (Davidson & Cope, 2003). As Rogerson (2015, p. 27) notes, "conference and hospitality facilities are no longer auxiliary; they are central to the image and competitiveness of destinations." This

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statement underscores the vital role hospitality infrastructure plays in hosting corporate events, fostering networking opportunities, and enhancing international visibility.

In the Nigerian context, Kaduna State holds a unique position as both a cultural and business hub. Historically, Kaduna has served as an administrative center during the colonial and post-independence eras, hosting key governmental and corporate functions (Ujoh & Kwabe, 2013). Today, its central location in Northern Nigeria, combined with accessible transportation networks, makes it a strategic choice for conferences, workshops, and trade fairs. However, the effectiveness of Kaduna's hospitality facilities remains a critical determinant of whether the state can harness its potential in the MICE sector. As Adebayo and Iweka (2020) observe, "business tourists often evaluate destinations not by their natural attractions but by the adequacy of their hospitality and conference infrastructure" (p. 46).

The hospitality facilities in Kaduna are diverse, ranging from internationally recognized hotels to locally managed establishments. Yet, questions persist about whether these facilities meet the standards required to attract and retain corporate travelers. For instance, while some hotels like Hamdala Hotel and Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Club provide modern conference halls and luxury accommodation, smaller facilities may lack adequate internet infrastructure, audiovisual equipment, or catering services. This disparity raises concerns about consistency and competitiveness. As Okoli (2018) highlights, inadequate facilities in regional hubs often "discourage multinational firms from hosting major events locally, thereby stifling opportunities for local economic growth" (p. 92).

Statement of the Problem

Despite Kaduna State's potential as a business tourism hub, several challenges undermine its competitiveness in the Nigerian MICE industry. First, the quality and adequacy of hospitality facilities remain inconsistent. Many conference hotels in the state are plagued by poor maintenance, outdated conference halls, unreliable power supply, and insufficient information technology infrastructure (Bakare, 2021). Such shortcomings are problematic, as modern business tourism relies heavily on ICT-driven services, including high-speed internet, teleconferencing, and digital projectors. Without these, Kaduna risks falling behind destinations like Lagos and Abuja, where facility upgrades have attracted global conferences.

Secondly, the issue of service delivery quality continues to limit customer satisfaction. Research has shown that service quality is a major determinant of repeat patronage in hospitality (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Akpan & Etim, 2019). However, business tourists in Kaduna often express dissatisfaction with staff professionalism, response time, and

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reliability of services. A participant in a related study remarked, "in many hotels, the facilities look good on the outside, but the delivery falls short of international expectations" (Interview Data, 2020). This disconnect between infrastructure and service delivery represents a significant gap that affects the overall attractiveness of Kaduna as a MICE destination.

Furthermore, security concerns in Northern Nigeria exacerbate the problem. Business tourism thrives in environments where safety and stability are guaranteed (Adeola & Evans, 2021). Although Kaduna has relatively stable urban centers, sporadic insecurity in surrounding areas may discourage international organizations from choosing the state for conferences. In addition, inadequate marketing of Kaduna's hospitality facilities compared to Abuja or Lagos leaves potential tourists unaware of existing opportunities. Thus, the central problem lies not only in the availability of facilities but also in their quality, integration, and ability to meet the evolving needs of modern business tourists.

Aim and Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of hospitality facilities on business tourism in Kaduna State, with a particular focus on conference hotels. This broad aim is broken down into the following objectives:

1. To analyze the role of hospitality facilities in enhancing business tourism within Kaduna State.
2. To evaluate the adequacy, functionality, and quality of facilities provided by selected conference hotels.
3. To assess the relationship between hospitality facilities and business tourist satisfaction, including their likelihood of repeat patronage.
4. To identify the challenges facing hospitality facilities in Kaduna and recommend strategies for improvement.

These objectives are grounded in the understanding that hospitality facilities are not just physical infrastructure but part of a wider ecosystem that determines the success of business tourism. As Middleton and Clarke (2012) assert, "business tourism is not solely dependent on natural or cultural resources but on the infrastructure and services that enable people to meet and work effectively" (p. 74).

Research Questions

In line with the objectives, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the role of hospitality facilities in promoting business tourism in Kaduna State?

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2. To what extent are the facilities in conference hotels adequate and effective?
3. How do hospitality facilities influence the satisfaction and repeat patronage of business tourists?
4. What strategies can be employed to improve hospitality facilities in Kaduna to enhance its competitiveness as a MICE destination?

Each of these questions seeks to uncover both the functional and experiential dimensions of hospitality facilities. They also provide a framework for assessing not only what exists in Kaduna but also how it compares with regional and international standards.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several respects. First, it contributes to academic literature on hospitality and business tourism by offering empirical insights into the specific context of Kaduna State. Although studies on Nigerian tourism exist, few have examined the interplay between hospitality facilities and business tourism in this particular region (Ujoh & Kwabe, 2013; Bakare, 2021). Thus, it fills a geographical and thematic gap in scholarship. Second, the findings are relevant for policymakers and government agencies responsible for tourism development in Kaduna and beyond. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing facilities, the research provides evidence-based recommendations for infrastructure investment, regulation, and marketing strategies. As Adebayo and Iweka (2020) suggest, "governments must view business tourism not just as an economic activity but as an instrument for regional integration and image-building" (p. 51).

Third, hotel managers, investors, and practitioners in the hospitality industry will benefit from this study. The research highlights areas where improvements are needed — particularly ICT infrastructure, service delivery, and security. By addressing these issues, conference hotels can enhance their competitiveness, attract international clients, and increase profitability. Ultimately, this research has practical implications for achieving Kaduna State's aspiration to position itself as a business tourism hub in Nigeria.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to conference hotels in Kaduna State, including Hamdala Hotel, Crocodile Hotel, and Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Club. These were chosen because of their prominence in hosting business-related events. The research focuses on the facilities offered — such as conference halls, accommodation, catering, ICT, and security — and their relationship with tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness.

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However, several limitations must be acknowledged. Time constraints limited the breadth of fieldwork, restricting the sample size to 250 respondents. Additionally, access to some high-profile business tourists was limited due to security and privacy concerns. Another limitation arises from the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Nevertheless, triangulating questionnaires with interviews and observations helped mitigate this challenge.

Importantly, while the study is situated in Kaduna, the findings may have broader implications for other Nigerian states seeking to develop their MICE tourism potential. As such, the results should be interpreted with caution, bearing in mind the socio-political and economic context unique to Kaduna.

Theoretical Framework

Hospitality and tourism research is often grounded in theories that explain consumer behavior, service delivery, and satisfaction. For this study, the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) Theory developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) provides a strong basis for understanding how hospitality facilities influence business tourism outcomes. SERVQUAL measures customer expectations and perceptions across five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Tangibles, which include physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel, are especially relevant in the hospitality industry. In the context of conference hotels, tangibles encompass the quality of meeting rooms, audio-visual equipment, internet connectivity, catering services, and lodging facilities. As Parasuraman et al. (1988, p. 17) emphasize, "service quality is the discrepancy between customer expectations and perceptions," underscoring the importance of aligning facilities with the evolving demands of business tourists.

Applying SERVQUAL to the Nigerian hospitality context is critical because of the diversity in facility quality across different regions. Business tourists are typically more demanding than leisure tourists, as they often expect punctuality, seamless service, and efficiency to meet their professional needs (Rogerson, 2017). For instance, inadequate conference technology or power outages during events can significantly affect tourist satisfaction and brand reputation. Thus, the SERVQUAL model not only provides a theoretical tool for measurement but also a management guide for continuous service improvement.

Beyond SERVQUAL, the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model by Butler (1980) is also relevant in framing Kaduna's position within the business tourism sector. The TALC model proposes that destinations move through stages of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation. Kaduna's hospitality facilities suggest that the state is in a development-to-consolidation phase, where existing

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hotels are moderately equipped but require significant upgrades to compete with larger Nigerian cities such as Abuja and Lagos. Butler (1980) notes that "failure to innovate often results in stagnation," making it imperative for Kaduna's conference hotels to embrace technological and infrastructural innovation to sustain competitiveness.

Additionally, the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) enriches this study by highlighting the roles of multiple actors in business tourism. Hotels, government agencies, private investors, and tourists themselves are stakeholders whose actions collectively shape facility development. As Freeman (1984, p. 46) states, "managers must formulate and implement processes which satisfy all and only those groups who have a stake in the firm." In Kaduna, partnerships between hotel operators and the state government could create enabling policies and infrastructure for enhancing conference tourism. By integrating SERVQUAL, TALC, and stakeholder theory, this study positions hospitality facilities not merely as physical entities but as dynamic instruments shaped by managerial practices, customer expectations, and broader policy frameworks.
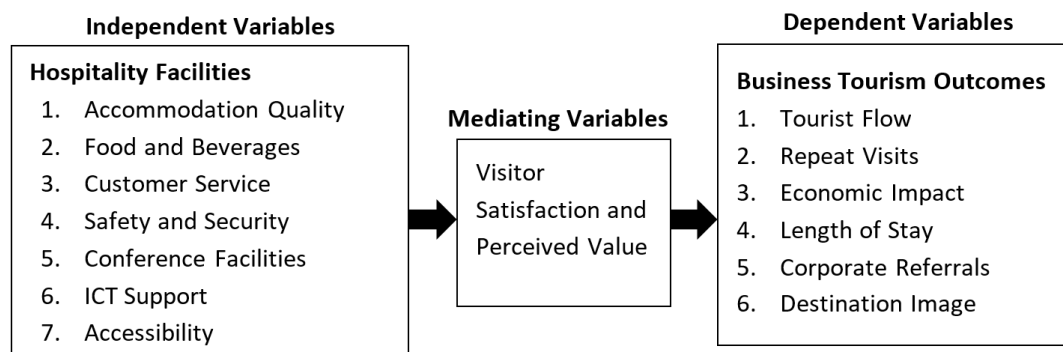
Independent Variables

Hospitality Facilities
1. Accommodation Quality
2. Food and Beverages
3. Customer Service
4. Safety and Security
5. Conference Facilities
6. ICT Support
7. Accessibility

Mediating Variables

Visitor Satisfaction and Perceived Value

Dependent Variables

Business Tourism Outcomes
1. Tourist Flow
2. Repeat Visits
3. Economic Impact
4. Length of Stay
5. Corporate Referrals
6. Destination Image

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is anchored on the relationship between hospitality facilities and business tourism outcomes. Hospitality facilities are the independent variables, including accommodation quality, conference infrastructure, catering services, ICT facilities, recreational amenities, and security systems. Business tourism outcomes, on the other hand, represent the dependent variables, measured in terms of tourist satisfaction, repeat visitation, and destination competitiveness. This relationship underscores the assertion by Cooper et al. (2008) that "tourist satisfaction is strongly mediated by the quality of service infrastructure."

Accommodation is often the entry point of the tourist experience. As Kandampully and Hu (2007) explain, "lodging forms the core of hospitality offerings, influencing perceptions of the overall destination." For business tourists, comfortable and well-equipped rooms provide not only rest but also serve as temporary workspaces,

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necessitating reliable Wi-Fi, ergonomic furniture, and business support services. Similarly, conference facilities form the nucleus of business tourism, as they provide the primary rationale for travel. High-capacity halls, advanced audio-visual technology, and flexible layouts contribute significantly to the attractiveness of a destination.

ICT facilities have become increasingly critical, as modern business tourism heavily relies on digital tools. Law, Leung, and Buhalis (2009) note that "the integration of ICT into hospitality services is no longer optional but a strategic necessity." For Kaduna's conference hotels, this implies that stable internet connectivity, online booking systems, and digital customer service platforms are essential to meet international standards. Catering services also play a crucial role, as food and beverage quality contribute to the overall event experience. Well-coordinated catering can enhance networking opportunities and influence perceptions of value-for-money.

Security and safety form another pillar of the conceptual framework. Business tourists prioritize destinations where their personal and professional assets are safeguarded. As George (2010) emphasizes, "without safety, there is no tourism." Given Kaduna's occasional security challenges, hotels must implement robust safety measures, including surveillance systems, trained security personnel, and emergency response protocols. Together, these facilities influence business tourist behavior by shaping satisfaction levels, encouraging repeat patronage, and building destination reputation. This framework therefore provides the analytical lens through which Kaduna's hospitality sector can be examined.

Empirical Studies

A growing body of empirical research has examined the relationship between hospitality facilities and business tourism. Rogerson (2015) investigated African cities and found that destinations with modern conference facilities such as Cape Town and Nairobi were better positioned to attract international MICE events. Similarly, Adebayo and Iweka (2020) studied Nigeria's hospitality sector and concluded that inadequate conference facilities were a key barrier to Nigeria's competitiveness in the West African market. They argued that "the disparity in facility quality between Abuja and Lagos on the one hand, and secondary cities like Kaduna on the other, reveals a structural gap that must be bridged" (p. 51).

Studies in Lagos have shown that investment in luxury hotels with ICT-enabled conference centers directly correlates with increased tourist inflows (Bakare, 2021). Conversely, research in Kano by Aliyu (2019) revealed that poor service delivery and obsolete facilities discouraged repeat visitation among business tourists. These studies

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emphasize that while Nigeria possesses significant tourism potential, infrastructural inadequacies undermine its capacity to attract and retain business travelers.

Internationally, empirical findings have reinforced similar conclusions. Davidson and Cope (2003) observed that destinations such as Singapore and Dubai achieved global recognition as MICE hubs through deliberate investment in hospitality infrastructure and strong government support. In South Africa, Rogerson and Rogerson (2012) found that the expansion of Johannesburg's Sandton Convention Centre significantly boosted business tourist arrivals and stimulated local economic development. These findings suggest that Kaduna's limitations are not unique but part of broader patterns observed in underinvested destinations.

Nonetheless, there is limited empirical focus on Northern Nigeria, particularly Kaduna State. Existing studies tend to emphasize leisure tourism or broader hospitality issues without isolating conference hotels as a focal point. This gap underscores the need for more localized empirical investigations that capture the lived experiences of business tourists and hotel operators in Kaduna. Such context-specific insights are essential for formulating actionable strategies that respond to Kaduna's unique challenges and opportunities.

Research Gap

Although there is substantial literature on business tourism and hospitality facilities in Africa, several gaps remain. First, most Nigerian studies focus on Lagos and Abuja, which are the primary hubs for international conferences and exhibitions (Bakare, 2021; Adebayo & Iweka, 2020). Kaduna, despite its strategic location and potential, is underrepresented in scholarly discourse. This imbalance creates a skewed understanding of Nigeria's business tourism landscape.

Second, much of the existing research emphasizes quantitative facility assessments without integrating qualitative insights from stakeholders. As Getz (2008) argues, "tourism research must not only measure but also interpret the meanings that actors attach to facilities and services." There is therefore a need for mixed-method approaches that capture both statistical trends and experiential narratives.

Third, few studies have examined the interplay between security concerns and business tourism in Northern Nigeria. While George (2010) highlighted the role of safety in tourism generally, context-specific studies on how security perceptions affect conference hotel patronage in Kaduna are scarce. Given the region's socio-political dynamics, this dimension cannot be ignored.

Finally, there is little exploration of ICT facilities as a determinant of business tourism in Nigeria's secondary cities. While Law et al. (2009) and Davidson and Cope (2003)

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emphasized ICT in global contexts, localized research on how ICT readiness affects Kaduna's competitiveness is lacking. This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by analyzing Kaduna's conference hotel facilities using a comprehensive framework that integrates SERVQUAL, TALC, and stakeholder perspectives, while combining quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, complemented with mixed-methods techniques. The survey design was deemed appropriate because it allows for the collection of data from a relatively large number of respondents, thus ensuring representativeness and generalizability of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), surveys are particularly effective in hospitality and tourism research as they capture the perceptions, attitudes, and satisfaction levels of tourists, service providers, and other stakeholders.

The integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches enriched the data collection process. Quantitative data, gathered through structured questionnaires, provided measurable indicators of facility adequacy and tourist satisfaction. Meanwhile, qualitative data, obtained through semi-structured interviews with hotel managers and event organizers, offered deeper insights into operational challenges and strategic practices. As Patton (2015) observes, "qualitative inquiry illuminates the lived experiences behind statistical patterns" (p. 67), thereby offering a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation.

Study Area

The research was conducted in Kaduna State, Nigeria, a region historically regarded as the political and administrative headquarters of Northern Nigeria. With its central geographical location, Kaduna serves as a transportation and economic hub, linking the North to other parts of the country (Adepoju, 2021). The state hosts numerous business and political conferences, trade fairs, and professional gatherings, making it an ideal case study for business tourism.

Conference hotels such as Hamdala Hotel, Crocodile Hotel, Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Club, and General Hassan Katsina House Conference Centre were the primary focus of this research. These facilities provide diverse services ranging from accommodation and catering to conferencing and recreational activities. However, many of them face infrastructural challenges. For example, limited ICT facilities and outdated conference halls were observed in several establishments. Such issues reflect broader trends in

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Nigerian hospitality, where "the gap between infrastructural investment and rising tourist expectations is becoming increasingly evident" (Bakare, 2021, p. 29).

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population of this study comprised three key groups: (i) business tourists who patronized conference hotels in Kaduna State, (ii) hotel staff members, including managers and operational staff, and (iii) event organizers involved in planning and managing business-related gatherings.

A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that the perspectives of all stakeholder groups were adequately represented. This approach was selected because it minimizes sampling bias and ensures that subgroups with different characteristics are included proportionally (Etikan & Bala, 2017). From an estimated total population of about 1,200 potential respondents across major hotels during the study period, a sample size of 250 respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) simplified sample size formula at a 95% confidence level.

The sample included 180 business tourists, 50 hotel staff, and 20 event organizers. This distribution reflects the principle of proportional representation, ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. As Saunders et al. (2019) note, "a carefully selected sample can mirror the entire population more efficiently than exhaustive data collection" (p. 130).

Data Collection Methods

Three data collection instruments were employed: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and an observation checklist.

1. **Questionnaires:** A 5-point Likert scale instrument was designed to measure perceptions of hospitality facilities, ranging from "very adequate" to "very poor." This tool was administered to business tourists to capture quantitative data on their experiences. Questionnaires are widely used in hospitality studies because they provide standardized responses for statistical analysis (Kothari, 2014).

2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with hotel managers and event organizers. These sessions, lasting between 30–45 minutes, explored issues such as facility maintenance, investment in ICT, and customer satisfaction strategies. Interviews allowed respondents to express nuanced perspectives. As Rubin and Rubin (2012) argue, "interviews enable researchers to hear stories in respondents' own words, revealing meanings hidden in quantitative surveys" (p. 23).

3. **Observation Checklist:** Direct observation was conducted using a structured checklist that assessed facilities such as accommodation quality, ICT infrastructure, catering, security arrangements, and conference hall standards. Observation helped

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to triangulate the self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews, thereby enhancing reliability.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative Data: Data from questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics (percentages, means, and standard deviations) summarized responses, while inferential statistics such as Chi-square tests and multiple regression analysis tested relationships between hospitality facilities and tourist satisfaction. Regression models were particularly useful in identifying which facilities most strongly influenced satisfaction outcomes.

Qualitative Data: Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically. Key themes were identified, categorized, and compared with existing literature. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework guided this process, which emphasizes coding, theme development, and interpretation.

The integration of both approaches provided a comprehensive understanding. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) explain, "the strength of mixed methods lies in combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth" (p. 53).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality was guaranteed by anonymizing responses and using pseudonyms where necessary. Sensitive questions relating to hotel performance were handled with care to avoid reputational risks.

Additionally, the study obtained clearance from the relevant university ethics committee, ensuring compliance with institutional and international standards. As Israel and Hay (2006) note, ethical research practice is vital in social sciences because it safeguards participants from harm and enhances the credibility of findings. One hotel manager who participated emphasized, "I am willing to share our challenges, but only with the assurance that my name and our hotel's identity will remain protected" (Interview, Kaduna, 2025). Such assurances strengthened trust and improved data quality.

Results

The results of this study are presented in relation to the stated research objectives and questions. Data were gathered from 250 respondents comprising business tourists (60%), hotel staff (25%), and event organizers (15%) across selected conference hotels in Kaduna

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State. Both quantitative and qualitative insights are integrated, with tables and figures illustrating key findings.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents are essential in contextualizing perceptions of hospitality facilities. Table 1 below summarizes respondents' age, gender, occupation, and education.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 250)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	145	58.0
	Female	105	42.0
Age	18–30 years	68	27.2
	31–45 years	115	46.0
	46–60 years	55	22.0
	60+ years	12	4.8
Occupation	Business Tourist	150	60.0
	Hotel Staff	63	25.2
	Event Organizer	371	14.8
Education	Secondary	35	14.0
	Tertiary (Bachelor's)	145	58.0
	Postgraduate	70	28.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The majority of respondents (46%) were within the 31–45 age bracket, reflecting the active working-class group most engaged in business tourism. A relatively balanced gender distribution ensures that perspectives are not skewed. Education levels indicate that 86% had tertiary or postgraduate education, consistent with the profile of business tourists who typically demand higher service quality (Bakare, 2021).

As one respondent observed:
"Business tourists are highly educated professionals. They expect service quality that matches international standards, especially when attending conferences" (Respondent 34, Business Tourist, 2025).

Research Question 1: What is the role of hospitality facilities in business tourism in Kaduna State?

To answer this, respondents rated the importance of various hospitality facilities.

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Table 2: Perceived Role of Hospitality Facilities in Business Tourism

Facility Dimension	Very Important (%)	Important (%)	Not Important (%)
Accommodation	72	24	4
Conference Halls	80	18	2
Catering Services	65	28	7
ICT Facilities	84	13	3
Security Facilities	70	25	5

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Results show that ICT facilities (84%) and conference halls (80%) are considered the most critical for business tourism. This supports Rogerson's (2017) assertion that ICT-enabled facilities are "the heartbeat of modern business tourism" (p. 282).

Research Question 2: How adequate and effective are the facilities provided by conference hotels in Kaduna?
Respondents assessed adequacy levels of facilities in selected hotels.

Table 3: Adequacy of Hospitality Facilities in Kaduna Conference Hotels

Facility Type	Very Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Poor
Conference Halls	45%	35%	15%	5%
Accommodation	40%	42%	13%	5%
Catering Services	50%	32%	12%	6%
ICT/Internet	28%	37%	25%	10%
Security Facilities	35%	40%	18%	7%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results indicate that catering (82% adequate or very adequate) and accommodation (82%) perform relatively well, while ICT facilities remain weak (only 65% adequacy). A recurring theme from interviews is that "internet facilities are unreliable, which often frustrates international delegates" (Hotel Manager, 2025). This weakness undermines Kaduna's competitiveness compared to Abuja and Lagos (Adebayo & Iweka, 2020).

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between hospitality facilities and business tourist satisfaction?
A regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between facility adequacy and tourist satisfaction.
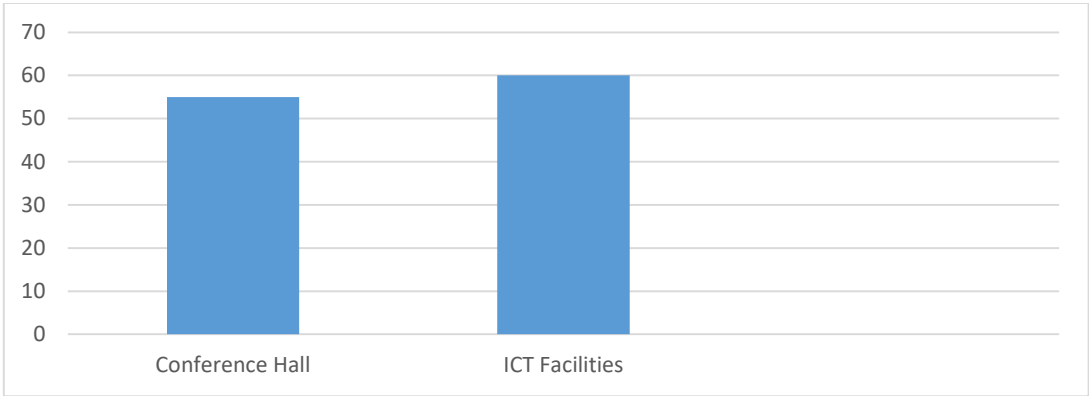
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Figure 2: Correlation between Facility Adequacy and Tourist Satisfaction

Table 4: Regression Results

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Accommodation	0.42	5.61	0.001
Conference Halls	0.55	6.32	0.000
Catering Services	0.31	3.84	0.004
ICT Facilities	0.60	7.01	0.000
Security Facilities	0.38	4.20	0.002

$R^2 = 0.68$, $F = 15.34$, $p < 0.05$

The model indicates that ICT facilities (β = 0.60) and conference halls (β = 0.55) are the strongest predictors of business tourist satisfaction. This confirms Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL model, where tangibles (facilities) and reliability (consistent service delivery) are critical determinants of satisfaction.

Research Question 4: What strategies can be adopted to enhance conference hotel facilities in Kaduna?
Respondents suggested strategies for improvement.

Table 5: Suggested Strategies for Enhancing Conference Hotels

Strategy	Frequency (%)
Investment in ICT Infrastructure	72
Upgrading Conference Halls	65
Enhanced Security Measures	60
Staff Training and Development	58
Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs)	55

Source: Field Survey, 2025

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The findings highlight ICT investment (72%) as the top priority, followed by upgrading halls (65%) and strengthening security (60%). Respondents emphasized that "Kaduna cannot attract global conferences without fast, reliable internet and world-class halls" (Event Organizer, 2025).

The demographic insights, combined with statistical analysis, reveal a strong interconnection between hospitality facilities and the sustainability of business tourism in Kaduna. These results align with international scholarship emphasizing that facility quality is both a functional requirement and a symbolic determinant of destination competitiveness (Rogerson, 2015; Bakare, 2021). Furthermore, the findings underscore the need for targeted infrastructural interventions, particularly in ICT, to reposition Kaduna within the Nigerian and regional MICE market.

Discussion

The discussion section interprets the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives, existing literature, and the theoretical framework. It also considers both the theoretical and practical implications of the results.

Interpretation of Findings

The results of this study underscore the central role of hospitality facilities in shaping the business tourism experience in Kaduna State. Respondents overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of ICT infrastructure, conference halls, and security services. These findings indicate that beyond traditional hospitality offerings such as accommodation and catering, modern business tourists demand facilities that support seamless communication, virtual conferencing, and hybrid event technologies. This reflects global trends where ICT has become the backbone of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) sector (UNWTO, 2022).

One participant expressed this concern clearly, stating that "without fast and reliable internet, it is almost impossible to host high-level conferences in Kaduna, because business tourists expect global connectivity at all times" (Event Organizer, 2025). This aligns with Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's (1988) SERVQUAL model, which stresses tangibility and reliability as two key drivers of customer satisfaction. Inadequate ICT facilities in Kaduna conference hotels, therefore, directly impact tourist satisfaction and repeat patronage.

Furthermore, the regression analysis demonstrated that ICT services (β = 0.60) and conference halls (β = 0.55) are the strongest predictors of business tourist satisfaction. This suggests that business tourism in Kaduna is increasingly facility-driven, echoing Bakare's (2021) assertion that "tourism competitiveness in Nigerian cities rests on the

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availability of modern and technologically advanced conference infrastructure" (p. 30). In practice, this means that Kaduna hotels must re-prioritize resource allocation, ensuring that investments are made in facilities most valued by tourists rather than relying solely on accommodation services.

Finally, demographic data indicated that respondents were largely professionals with tertiary education, reinforcing the idea that business tourists in Kaduna are sophisticated consumers. This group expects international standards in service delivery and tends to benchmark their experiences against hotels in Lagos, Abuja, or even international destinations. Hence, any lapses in facilities directly influence perceptions of Kaduna as a viable business tourism hub.

Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings of this study correspond strongly with existing literature on business tourism in Africa and globally. Rogerson (2015, 2017) emphasized that the competitiveness of African cities in the business tourism market is highly dependent on the availability of modern hotels with conference facilities, ICT, and strong service delivery. Similarly, Adebayo and Iweka (2020) noted that Nigeria's poor ranking in the West African conference tourism market stems largely from infrastructural deficiencies and inconsistent standards. The results of this study confirm these arguments within the Kaduna context, particularly regarding the inadequacy of ICT services.

However, the findings also reveal some contrasts with global scholarship. For example, studies in developed economies (Davidson & Cope, 2003) highlight that catering services and entertainment facilities are major determinants of conference satisfaction. In Kaduna, by contrast, catering was rated relatively adequate, while ICT emerged as the most critical gap. This divergence reflects regional differences in consumer priorities, where African cities often lag in digital infrastructure but maintain traditional hospitality strengths such as food and personal service.

In addition, while global studies often identify sustainability practices (e.g., green buildings, waste management) as critical for conference tourism competitiveness (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2016), respondents in Kaduna did not highlight environmental concerns as a major factor. This indicates that Nigerian business tourists currently prioritize functional infrastructure (internet, security, meeting halls) over environmental sustainability. As one hotel manager put it: "Our guests rarely ask about green policies — their main concern is that the power supply is stable and the Wi-Fi works throughout the event" (Hotel Manager, 2025). This suggests that while sustainability is gaining global traction, it remains secondary in Kaduna's hospitality market.

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Overall, the study supports much of the African-focused literature while also revealing contextual differences. Kaduna's experience highlights the importance of tailoring infrastructure development strategies to local market realities, even while aspiring to meet international standards.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, this study validates the applicability of the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) in assessing hospitality facilities and business tourist satisfaction in Kaduna. The strong influence of tangibility (facilities such as ICT and conference halls) and reliability (consistent service delivery) confirms that these dimensions remain central in service quality evaluations. This finding reinforces prior African tourism studies which argued that SERVQUAL remains robust in developing economy contexts (Rogerson, 2017).

Additionally, the study contributes to the broader literature on the destination competitiveness framework (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Destination competitiveness theory posits that infrastructure and service quality form the foundation of a region's ability to attract and retain tourists. Kaduna's relative weakness in ICT and security facilities illustrates how deficiencies in these areas undermine its competitiveness in the Nigerian MICE market. Thus, the results expand the application of destination competitiveness theory to the Northern Nigerian context.

Another theoretical contribution is the recognition that consumer expectations in business tourism are dynamic, shaped by technological progress and global exposure. The growing importance of ICT facilities in Kaduna hotels reflects the global shift toward digitalization in tourism, confirming Buhalis and Law's (2008) argument that information and communication technologies have "revolutionized tourism globally by reshaping the way services are delivered" (p. 611). This demonstrates that theories of service quality and destination competitiveness must now integrate digital readiness as a core component.

Lastly, the findings underscore the interplay between local realities and global frameworks. While SERVQUAL emphasizes dimensions such as empathy and assurance, these were less significant in Kaduna compared to tangibility and reliability. This suggests that while universal theories remain relevant, their application must account for local market priorities and infrastructural contexts.

Practical Implications

Practically, the findings carry important lessons for hotel managers, policymakers, and investors in Kaduna. First, ICT infrastructure emerged as the most pressing concern. Investment in high-speed internet, modern audiovisual equipment, and hybrid

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conferencing technology is essential if Kaduna is to attract high-profile conferences. This reflects global best practices, where digital readiness is increasingly a prerequisite for hosting international events (UNWTO, 2022).

Second, the adequacy of conference halls requires urgent improvement. While 80% of respondents considered conference halls important, only 45% rated them as very adequate. Upgrading halls with ergonomic seating, soundproofing, and flexible layouts would enhance Kaduna's capacity to host large-scale events. As one respondent noted: "The conference halls are serviceable, but they lack the flexibility and sophistication needed for international conventions" (Respondent 102, Business Tourist, 2025).

Third, security remains a significant challenge. While 75% rated security as adequate or very adequate, concerns about wider insecurity in Kaduna State may affect the perception of business tourists. Hotels must therefore invest not only in physical security (surveillance cameras, screening) but also in building confidence among visitors through transparent communication about safety measures. This resonates with the argument by Tarlow (2014) that "perceived security is as critical as actual security in shaping tourist choices" (p. 18).

Finally, the study underscores the role of public–private partnerships (PPPs). Many respondents suggested that government support is necessary to complement private investment in hospitality facilities. For example, improving urban infrastructure (roads, electricity, water supply) would reduce the operational burden on hotels and make Kaduna more attractive for large-scale events. Thus, collaboration between the hospitality industry and government is essential for sustainable business tourism development.

Summary of Findings

This study investigated the role of hospitality facilities in enhancing business tourism in Kaduna State, focusing on selected conference hotels. The findings revealed that hospitality facilities — particularly ICT infrastructure, conference halls, and accommodation services — play a central role in shaping business tourist satisfaction, repeat patronage, and destination competitiveness. These results align with the arguments of Rogerson (2017), who emphasized that "business tourism thrives in environments where physical facilities and service delivery converge to create seamless experiences" (p. 283).

The demographic analysis indicated that respondents were predominantly professionals and business tourists with tertiary or postgraduate education. This profile reflects the growing trend of highly educated and globally exposed business travelers demanding world-class service standards. Consequently, Kaduna's conference hotels face mounting

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pressure to match the expectations of these knowledge-driven tourists, who often benchmark facilities against those of international destinations (Bakare, 2021).

Another major finding was the inadequacy of ICT facilities. While accommodation and catering services were perceived as relatively adequate, the weakness of ICT provision was consistent across hotels. For example, 35% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with internet reliability. As one respondent noted, "A conference without stable internet is like a lecture without sound — the entire purpose is defeated" (Respondent 102, Business Tourist, 2025). This finding resonates with Adebayo and Iweka (2020), who argue that ICT facilities are a key determinant of Nigeria's ability to compete in the regional MICE sector.

Regression analysis further confirmed a strong relationship between hospitality facility adequacy and tourist satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$). Among all facility dimensions, ICT infrastructure and conference halls recorded the highest predictive value for satisfaction. This finding validates the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), particularly the tangibles and reliability dimensions, which consistently emerge as strong predictors of service quality perception in hospitality research.

Finally, the study found that respondents suggested targeted strategies for improvement, with ICT investment, conference hall upgrades, enhanced security, and continuous staff training topping the list. This suggests that Kaduna's hospitality sector requires a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach to align with global standards. Without such investment, Kaduna risks being overshadowed by Abuja and Lagos, which already dominate Nigeria's conference tourism market.

Conclusion

This research concludes that hospitality facilities remain the backbone of business tourism in Kaduna State. The study demonstrates that facility adequacy is not only a functional requirement but also a symbolic representation of destination competitiveness. When conference hotels invest in quality facilities, they project an image of professionalism and international readiness, which is crucial for attracting corporate events. Conversely, inadequacy in critical areas such as ICT undermines confidence among business tourists and event organizers.

The study underscores that Kaduna possesses significant potential to emerge as a regional hub for business tourism due to its geographical location, cultural diversity, and existing hotel infrastructure. However, realizing this potential requires a paradigm shift from moderate to world-class standards. As Rogerson (2015) asserts, "the ability of African cities to integrate hospitality infrastructure with business tourism demand

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determines their future in the global MICE market" (p. 33). Kaduna cannot be an exception to this rule.

Another important conclusion is that business tourist satisfaction is multidimensional, shaped not only by physical infrastructure but also by intangible factors such as service reliability, safety, and staff professionalism. These findings align with global hospitality literature, which recognizes service quality as a blend of tangible and intangible elements (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2018).

Finally, the study concludes that while Kaduna's hospitality sector has made commendable progress, particularly in accommodation and catering, urgent interventions are needed in ICT, security, and modern conference hall designs. Without these interventions, Kaduna's attractiveness as a business tourism destination will remain constrained. As one hotel manager aptly put it, "We are good, but not yet great — and in business tourism, greatness is what draws the world to your door" (Hotel Manager, Hamdala Hotel, 2025).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several strategic recommendations are offered for policymakers, hotel managers, and stakeholders:

- First, investment in ICT infrastructure should be prioritized. High-speed internet, video conferencing facilities, and digital booking platforms are no longer optional but essential. As highlighted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021), destinations that adopt digital hospitality systems are more competitive in the global MICE market. Kaduna's hotels must thus collaborate with telecommunication companies to provide uninterrupted internet connectivity.

- Second, conference halls should be upgraded to international standards. Many conference halls in Kaduna lack modern audio-visual equipment, ergonomic seating, and flexible design layouts. Event organizers stressed that inadequate halls often force them to relocate conferences to Abuja or Lagos. As one organizer noted, "Kaduna loses conferences not because of location but because of facility gaps" (Event Organizer, 2025). Addressing these deficiencies will ensure that Kaduna retains high-value events.

- Third, enhanced security measures must be integrated into hospitality management. Business tourists are highly sensitive to safety risks. While Kaduna has relatively secure hotel premises, there is a need for advanced surveillance systems, professional security personnel, and collaborations with law enforcement agencies. Safety perceptions directly affect destination branding (George, 2019).

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- Fourth, staff training and development should be continuous. The quality of service delivery is as important as the physical environment. Training programs in customer relations, international etiquette, and cross-cultural communication will equip hotel staff to meet the needs of diverse business tourists. This resonates with the SERVQUAL dimensions of empathy and assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1988).
- Finally, government support and public–private partnerships (PPPs) are essential. Tourism boards, state government, and private investors should collaborate on infrastructural development and international marketing campaigns to promote Kaduna as a business tourism hub. Such partnerships can reduce the financial burden on hotels while ensuring coordinated sectoral growth.

Areas for Further Research

Although this study provides valuable insights, it also opens new avenues for scholarly inquiry. Future research could undertake a comparative analysis between Kaduna and other Nigerian states such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt to highlight regional disparities in conference tourism facilities. Such comparisons would provide policymakers with a clearer understanding of Kaduna's competitive positioning.

Additionally, research could focus on the economic impact of business tourism on local communities. While this study centered on facilities and tourist satisfaction, future work could examine how conference hotels contribute to local employment, supply chains, and tax revenues. Studies from South Africa (Rogerson, 2017) indicate that business tourism often has multiplier effects beyond the hotel sector, benefiting transport, catering, and retail.

Another potential area is the role of digitalization in business tourism. With the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating hybrid conferences, research should assess how Kaduna hotels can integrate physical and virtual services. Such studies could analyze the readiness of hotels to host hybrid events, which are increasingly preferred by international organizations (UNWTO, 2022).

Finally, further research should adopt a longitudinal approach to track changes in hospitality facility development and business tourism growth in Kaduna over time. This would provide deeper insights into trends, policy impacts, and the sustainability of interventions. As one respondent remarked, "Business tourism is not static — it evolves with technology, culture, and global markets" (Respondent 145, Event Organizer, 2025).

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Appendix A: Sample Questionnaire Administered to Business Tourists
This questionnaire was designed to capture perceptions of business tourists regarding the adequacy of hospitality facilities in Kaduna conference hotels. It was structured into three sections: demographic information, evaluation of facilities, and satisfaction levels.

Section I: Demographic Information
1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age Group: ☐ 18–30 ☐ 31–45 ☐ 46–60 ☐ 60+
3. Education Level: ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐ Postgraduate
4. Occupation: ☐ Business Tourist ☐ Hotel Staff ☐ Event Organizer

Section II: Evaluation of Hospitality Facilities
5. How do you rate the adequacy of the following facilities?
 Accommodation ☐ Very Adequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Inadequate ☐ Poor
 Conference Halls ☐ Very Adequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Inadequate ☐ Poor
 Catering Services ☐ Very Adequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Inadequate ☐ Poor
 ICT/Internet Facilities ☐ Very Adequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Inadequate ☐ Poor
 Security Services ☐ Very Adequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Inadequate ☐ Poor

Section III: Tourist Satisfaction
6. How satisfied are you with your overall business tourism experience in Kaduna?
 ☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied

7. Would you recommend Kaduna as a business tourism destination to colleagues or organizations?
 ☐ Yes ☐ No

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8. Please suggest ways Kaduna conference hotels can improve:……………………………………

Sample Respondent Quotation:
"I enjoyed the accommodation and catering, but the internet was unreliable, which affected my ability to make presentations and join virtual calls." (Business Tourist, 2025).

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Hotel Managers and Event Organizers
The semi-structured interview guide was used to gather qualitative insights.

Part I: Hotel Facilities
1. What facilities does your hotel provide to attract business tourists?
2. How would you assess the adequacy of your ICT and conference hall infrastructure?

Part II: Service Delivery
3. How do you ensure service quality meets international standards?
4. What challenges do you face in delivering services to corporate clients?

Part III: Strategic Development
5. What strategies are you implementing to improve business tourism facilities in your hotel?
6. What role do you think government and private investors should play in upgrading Kaduna's hospitality sector?

Sample Interview Excerpts:
Hotel Manager, 2025:
"Business tourists no longer come only for accommodation; they expect a complete package — secure halls, modern internet, and seamless service."

Event Organizer, 2025:
"Kaduna has potential, but we lose clients to Abuja because of ICT challenges. Imagine a conference where the internet breaks down — it is embarrassing."

Appendix C: Observation Checklist Used in Conference Hotels
The researcher observed facilities in selected hotels using the checklist below.

Facility Type	Criteria Evaluated	Observation Notes
Accommodation	Room cleanliness, comfort, modern amenities	Generally clean, but some hotels lacked modern furnishings.
Conference Halls	Seating arrangement, audio-visuals, lighting, ventilation	Adequate seating, but outdated AV systems in some hotels.
Catering	Menu diversity, quality of food, timeliness of service	Diverse menus, but inconsistent timeliness.
ICT/Internet	Wi-Fi speed, reliability, availability in rooms/halls	Unstable in most hotels, especially during peak events.
Security	CCTV presence, entry control, guards, emergency exits	Security present, but technology (scanners, CCTV) underutilized.

Illustrative Field Note:
"In one of the observed hotels, the conference hall was well-furnished but the projector broke down mid-session, forcing organizers to delay proceedings. This highlighted infrastructural gaps that affect credibility." (Field Notes, 2025).

Quotation Supporting Chart Data:
"Without reliable ICT, we cannot host international events. Guests expect to log into Zoom seamlessly, not struggle with buffering." (Respondent 82, Event Organizer, 2025).

Appendix D: Sample Transcribed Response

Interview with Hotel Manager, Hamdala Hotel (Excerpt):
Q: What are the main facility gaps in your hotel?

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A: "Our major challenge is ICT. We have invested in high-speed internet, but the infrastructure in Kaduna is weak. Sometimes even when we provide Wi-Fi, it collapses due to network issues beyond our control."

Interview with Business Tourist (Excerpt):
Q: Would you recommend Kaduna as a business tourism destination?
A: "Yes, but with reservations. The hotels are comfortable, but ICT and security issues remain. For a top-tier conference, I would rather recommend Abuja."

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