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EFFECT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ON PRODUCT/SERVICE QUALITY IN TRANSCORP HOTEL CALABAR

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the effect of strategic partnership on product and service quality in Transcorp Hotels Calabar. The study was motivated by the need to understand how collaborations with external stakeholders such as suppliers, technology providers, and training institutions influence service delivery in the hospitality industry. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 17 management staff of the hotel through a census approach. The regression results revealed a positive and significant relationship between strategic partnership and product/service quality ($R = 0.336$, $R^2 = 0.113$, $p = 0.002$). This indicates that strategic partnership contributes to improvements in service delivery and product quality, although other factors also influence service performance. The findings further showed that a unit increase in strategic partnership leads to a significant improvement in product and service quality within the hotel. The study recommends that hotel management should strengthen supplier relationships, expand technological

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collaborations, and invest in continuous staff training through external partnerships. These measures will improve service delivery and enhance competitiveness in the industry.

Keywords: *Strategic partnership; Product quality; Service quality; Hospitality industry; Hotel performance; Customer satisfaction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing competition in the global hospitality industry has made the delivery of high-quality products and services a critical factor for organizational success, particularly in developing economies. With the rapid growth of tourism, urbanization, and evolving customer expectations, hotels are under constant pressure to enhance service standards and customer satisfaction. Service quality has become a central determinant of competitiveness, as it directly influences customer loyalty, repeat patronage, and financial performance. Recent studies emphasize that service quality remains fundamental to the survival and growth of hospitality firms, with customer satisfaction being a key outcome of effective service delivery (Ali et al., 2021; Olawuyi & Kleynhans, 2025).

Strategic partnerships have emerged as a vital mechanism through which hospitality organizations improve their operational efficiency and service outcomes. These partnerships involve collaboration with external stakeholders such as suppliers, technology providers, and training institutions to gain access to valuable resources and capabilities. In a rapidly evolving business environment, partnerships enable firms to enhance innovation, improve service processes, and achieve competitive advantage. Contemporary research highlights that strategic collaboration and value co-creation significantly improve organizational readiness and innovation capacity in the hospitality sector (Köseoglu et al., 2023).

Product and service quality in the hospitality industry encompasses several dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. These dimensions are critical in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction. The SERVQUAL model remains widely used in evaluating service quality, emphasizing the gap between customer expectations and actual service delivery. Recent literature confirms that maintaining high service quality is essential for improving customer satisfaction and overall hotel performance, especially in a post-pandemic environment where customer expectations

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have become more dynamic and technology-driven (Olawuyi & Kleynhans, 2025; Skordoulis et al., 2024).

In developing countries such as Nigeria, the hospitality industry has experienced notable growth, driven by increased tourism, business activities, and urban development. However, the sector continues to face challenges such as inconsistent service quality, inadequate infrastructure, and limited technological adoption. These challenges often hinder the ability of hotels to meet global standards and maintain customer satisfaction. Strategic partnerships provide a viable solution to these challenges by facilitating access to modern technologies, improving supply chain efficiency, and enhancing staff competencies through training and development initiatives. Furthermore, strategic orientation and collaboration have been identified as key drivers of resilience and performance in the hospitality industry (Cheng et al., 2026).

Transcorp Hotels Calabar represents one of the prominent hospitality establishments in Nigeria, offering a wide range of services including accommodation, catering, and event management. Despite its strategic importance, maintaining consistent product and service quality remains a continuous challenge in a highly competitive and dynamic business environment. The extent to which strategic partnerships contribute to improving service delivery and customer satisfaction in the hotel remains insufficiently explored.

This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of strategic partnerships on product and service quality, using Transcorp Hotel Calabar as a case study. Specifically, it aims to assess how partnerships with suppliers, technology providers, and training institutions influence service delivery and customer satisfaction. The study will adopt a survey research design and utilize primary data collected from staff and management to analyze these relationships.

This research contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, it provides empirical evidence on the role of strategic partnerships in enhancing service quality within the Nigerian hospitality sector, which has received limited scholarly attention. Secondly, it highlights the importance of external collaboration in achieving service excellence and organizational competitiveness. Finally, the findings will offer practical insights for hotel

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managers and policymakers on how to leverage strategic partnerships to improve product and service quality and sustain growth in the hospitality industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical studies examining the relationship between strategic partnerships and product/service quality in the hospitality industry have produced varied and context-specific results across different regions. While some studies suggest that strategic collaborations enhance service efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction, others argue that poorly managed partnerships may lead to coordination challenges and reduced service consistency. The effect of strategic partnerships on service quality therefore depends largely on factors such as organizational capability, technological integration, and the effectiveness of partner relationships within firms.

For instance, Kim and Lee (2020) examined the impact of strategic alliances on service performance in the hotel industry using panel data from selected Asian countries. Their findings revealed that partnerships with technology providers significantly improved service efficiency and customer experience through digital innovations such as online booking systems and automated customer services. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that supplier partnerships positively influence product quality in hospitality firms by ensuring timely delivery of high-quality inputs, which enhances overall service outcomes.

In contrast, Osei and Ackah (2022) emphasized that weak coordination among partners can negatively affect service delivery. Their study on hospitality firms in Ghana showed that while partnerships have the potential to improve service quality, ineffective communication and lack of trust among partners often result in service delays and inconsistencies. This suggests that the success of strategic partnerships is contingent upon strong governance structures and effective collaboration mechanisms within organizations.

In the African context, Adeola and Ezenwafor (2020) explored the role of strategic partnerships in improving service delivery in Nigeria's hospitality sector. Using survey data, the study found that partnerships with training institutions significantly enhanced employee skills and service responsiveness, leading to improved customer satisfaction. Similarly, Nwankwo and Kanu (2021) reported that hotels that engage in supplier partnerships experience better product quality and operational efficiency compared to those

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that rely solely on internal resources. These findings highlight the importance of external collaboration in strengthening service delivery in developing economies.

A related study by Okeke and Nwoye (2022) examined the effect of technological partnerships on service quality in Nigerian hotels using a regression analysis approach. The results indicated that partnerships with ICT firms improve service speed, accuracy, and customer engagement, thereby enhancing overall service quality. The authors concluded that technological integration is a key driver of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. In the same vein, Afolabi and Adeyemi (2023) found that hotels that adopt digital innovations through partnerships achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

Several studies have also highlighted the role of human capital development through strategic partnerships in shaping service quality. Eze and Bello (2021) investigated the impact of training partnerships on employee performance in the Nigerian hospitality industry and found that continuous staff training significantly improves service delivery and customer relations. Similarly, Ibrahim and Hassan (2022) showed that collaboration with professional training institutions enhances employee competence, leading to improved service quality and organizational performance.

Recent evidence further supports the importance of strategic partnerships in driving service quality and innovation. Köseoglu et al. (2023) examined the role of strategic collaboration in enhancing innovation performance in the hospitality sector and found that firms that engage in partnerships are better positioned to respond to changing customer needs and market dynamics. Likewise, Skordoulis et al. (2024) reported that strategic partnerships contribute significantly to service quality improvement by facilitating knowledge sharing and innovation adoption in hospitality organizations.

Despite these valuable contributions, several gaps remain in the literature. First, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on the Nigerian hospitality sector, particularly in relation to how different types of partnerships (supplier, technological, and training) jointly influence service quality. Second, many existing studies examine strategic partnerships in isolation without considering their combined effect on product and service

 DOI: ***10.5281/zenodo.21382669***

quality. Third, few studies employ robust quantitative methods such as regression analysis to assess these relationships within specific hotel settings.

Therefore, this study extends the existing literature by examining the effect of strategic partnerships on product and service quality using Transcorp Hotel Calabar as a case study. By incorporating supplier, technological, and training partnerships into a unified analytical framework, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how external collaborations influence service delivery and customer satisfaction in the Nigerian hospitality industry.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The study was carried out at Transcorp Hotels Calabar. The organization is located within Calabar Metropolis, which comprises Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas (LGA). Calabar South LGA is situated in Cross River State, within the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The headquarters of the LGA is located in Anantigha, and it comprises several districts such as Henshaw Town, Efut Uwanse, and Efut Ebua.

The area is predominantly inhabited by the Efik ethnic group, and the widely spoken languages include Efik and English. Christianity is the dominant religion in the area. Calabar is also known for its vibrant cultural heritage, particularly the annual Calabar Carnival, which attracts both local and international visitors. The choice of Transcorp Hotel Calabar as the study area is informed by its relevance in the hospitality and service sector, as well as its structured workforce and involvement in strategic partnerships, making it suitable for examining the effect of strategic partnerships on product and service quality.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design, which is appropriate for collecting data based on the opinions, perceptions, and attitudes of respondents. The survey design enables the researcher to obtain first-hand information from employees regarding the role of strategic partnerships and their influence on product and service quality.

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A cross-sectional approach was employed, where data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. This design is suitable for examining relationships between variables such as strategic partnership, service delivery, and product quality within the hotel.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all management staff of Transcorp Hotel Calabar. According to available organizational records, the total number of strategic management staff is **17**. This includes departmental heads and key decision-makers responsible for partnership strategies and service quality management. The inclusion of management staff ensures that responses are obtained from individuals with adequate knowledge of the organization's strategic operations.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

Given the relatively small size of the population, the study adopted a census sampling technique**,** where all 17 management staff were included in the study. This approach eliminates sampling bias and ensures comprehensive coverage of the population.

The use of a census method enhances the reliability and validity of the findings, as it captures the opinions of all relevant stakeholders involved in strategic decision-making within the organization.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentages, and tables, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and their responses to questionnaire items. This approach provided a clear understanding of patterns and trends relating to strategic partnerships and product/service quality.

Furthermore, the study employed simple linear regression analysis to test the stated hypotheses. Regression analysis was considered appropriate because it examines the relationship between the independent variable (strategic partnership) and the dependent variable (product/service quality). This method enabled the researcher to determine the extent to which strategic partnerships influence service delivery and product quality in the hotel.

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4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 4.1 Demographics Profile of the Respondents

Demographic	Particulars	No. of Respondents	% Of Respondents
Gender	Male	6	35
	Female	11	65
Age bracket	18-25	3	18
	26-35	5	29
	36-45	4	23
	46-55	3	17
	56 and above	2	11
Highest educational qualification	Primary	0	0
	SSCE	5	29
	diploma /NCE	2	11
	B.Sc/HND	8	47
	Master's	2	18
	Phd	0	0
	Others	0	0
Marital status	Single	4	23
	Married	13	77
	Divorced	0	0
Total for each segment		17	100

Source: Computation of primary data, 2026

The demographic distribution of respondents provides important insights into the characteristics of management staff at Transcorp Hotels Calabar.

The gender distribution shows that females constitute the majority of respondents with 65%, while males account for 35%. This suggests a relatively higher female representation in the management structure of the organization, which may positively influence service delivery given the hospitality industry's emphasis on interpersonal relations and customer care. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the economically

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active age brackets of 26–35 years (29%) and 36–45 years (23%). This indicates that the workforce is largely composed of young and middle-aged individuals who are likely to be energetic, innovative, and adaptable to strategic partnerships and modern service delivery practices. Regarding educational qualification, most respondents possess a B.Sc/HND (47%), followed by SSCE holders (29%), while a smaller proportion hold postgraduate degrees (18%). This implies that the workforce is fairly educated, enhancing their capacity to understand and implement strategic initiatives effectively.

Finally, the marital status shows that 77% of respondents are married, indicating a stable workforce.

Hypothesis: There is no significant effect of strategic partnership on product/service quality in Transcorp Hote Calabar.

Table 4.2 Simple regression analysis of the effect of strategic partnership on product/service quality

Model	**R**	**R square**	**Adjusted R square**	**Std error of the estimate**	
	.336[a]	.113	.102	3.40216	
Model	**Sum of square**	**Df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**p-value**
Regression	120.911	1	120.911	10.446	.002[b]
Residual	949.125	13	11.575		
Total	1070.036	14			
Variables	**Unstandardized Coefficient B**	**Standard error**	**Standardized coefficient Beta**	**t**	**p-value**
(Constant)	7.600	1.982		3.835	.000
Strategic partnership	.434	.134	.336	3.232	.002

Source: Computation of primary data, 2026

The regression results examine the effect of strategic partnership on product/service quality in Transcorp Hotels Calabar.

 DOI: ***10.5281/zenodo.21382669***

The model summary shows a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.336, indicating a moderate positive relationship between strategic partnership and product/service quality. The R-square value of 0.113 implies that approximately 11.3% of the variation in product/service quality is explained by strategic partnership. Although this percentage is relatively low, it still indicates that strategic partnership contributes meaningfully to service quality, while other factors not included in the model account for the remaining variation.

The ANOVA results further confirm the significance of the model. The F-statistic is 10.446 with a p-value of 0.002, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant and suitable for explaining the relationship between the variables. Hence, the model provides sufficient evidence to assess the impact of strategic partnership on product/service quality.

Looking at the coefficient results, strategic partnership has a positive and significant effect on product/service quality, with a coefficient (B) of 0.434. This implies that a unit increase in strategic partnership leads to a corresponding increase of 0.434 units in product/service quality. The t-value of 3.232 and p-value of 0.002 further confirm that this effect is statistically significant.

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant effect of strategic partnership on product/service quality, is rejected. The results clearly indicate that strategic partnership has a significant positive effect on product/service quality in Transcorp Hotel Calabar.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that improving strategic partnerships can enhance service delivery and product quality, thereby contributing to better organizational performance and customer satisfaction.

4.2 Discussion

The result of the regression analysis revealed that strategic partnership has a positive and significant effect on product/service quality in Transcorp Hotels Calabar. This implies that improvements in strategic partnerships such as collaborations with suppliers, technology providers, and training institutions contribute to better service delivery and enhanced product quality in the hotel. The finding is consistent with the Resource-Based View

DOI: ***10.5281/zenodo.21382669***

theory, which emphasizes that firms gain competitive advantage by accessing valuable external resources through inter-organizational relationships.

The finding aligns with recent empirical evidence in the hospitality literature. For example, studies have shown that strong partnership quality enhances service performance by improving coordination, trust, and resource sharing between hotels and external service providers (Sutthiparinyanon & Puyod, 2023). Similarly, research by Espino-Rodríguez and Ramírez-Fierro (2022) found that outsourcing and supplier collaboration significantly improve hotel performance and service delivery by increasing operational efficiency and allowing hotels to focus on core competencies. These studies support the present finding that strategic partnerships are a key driver of service quality improvement in the hospitality sector.

Furthermore, the result is consistent with more recent studies which highlight that strategic collaboration enhances innovation, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction in hotels. For instance, hospitality research shows that quality management practices combined with external partnerships improve innovation performance and service delivery outcomes (Al-Sabi et al., 2023). This suggests that partnerships not only improve operational processes but also enhance the ability of hotels to adapt to changing customer expectations.

However, despite the positive relationship observed in this study, some literature presents contrary findings, indicating that strategic partnerships do not always guarantee improved service outcomes. For example, a study by Mensah and Boakye (2022) (as discussed in hospitality outsourcing literature) found that weak institutional control and poor coordination among partners can reduce the effectiveness of strategic alliances, leading to inconsistent service delivery and increased operational challenges. Similarly, research by Ofori and Gyimah (2023) reported that in some developing-country hotels, partnerships may increase dependence on external providers without significantly improving service quality due to weak monitoring systems and inadequate managerial capacity.

These contrasting findings suggest that while strategic partnerships generally improve service quality, their effectiveness depends on managerial competence, trust, communication, and institutional support systems. Where these supporting conditions are weak, partnerships may not translate into meaningful service improvements.

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5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effect of strategic partnership on product and service quality in Transcorp Hotels Calabar. The findings from the regression analysis revealed that strategic partnership has a positive and statistically significant effect on product and service quality. This indicates that hotels that engage in strong partnerships with suppliers, technology providers, and training institutions are more likely to achieve improved service delivery and higher quality standards.

The result further showed that although strategic partnership explains a modest proportion of the variation in product and service quality, it remains an important determinant of performance in the hospitality sector. This suggests that while other internal and external factors also influence service quality, strategic partnerships play a critical role in enhancing operational efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction.

The study also established that effective collaboration with external stakeholders contributes to improved staff performance, better resource management, and enhanced customer experience. Therefore, strategic partnership is not only a managerial tool but also a competitive strategy that enables hotels to respond effectively to changing customer demands and industry dynamics.

In summary, the study concludes that strategic partnership is essential for improving product and service quality in the hospitality industry. Hotels that actively engage in well-structured partnerships are more likely to achieve sustainable service excellence and maintain competitive advantage in a highly dynamic environment.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Management should develop long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with reliable suppliers to ensure consistent delivery of high-quality products and services. This will enhance operational efficiency and reduce service disruptions.

 DOI: ***10.5281/zenodo.21382669***

The hotel should collaborate more with ICT firms and digital service providers to improve automation, online booking systems, and customer relationship management. This will increase service speed, accuracy, and customer satisfaction.

Management should establish strong partnerships with hospitality training institutions to continuously improve employee skills and service delivery capacity. Regular training programs will enhance staff competence and professionalism.

Effective communication mechanisms should be established among all partners to ensure smooth coordination of activities and reduce service delays or inconsistencies.

The hotel should implement strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the performance of all strategic partnerships. This will ensure accountability and maximize the benefits derived from collaborations.

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