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## Emotional Intelligence and its Application to Real Estate Service Quality: A Knowledge Gap Analysis

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### Abstract

Real estate professional bodies have a significant concern for the quality of service among practising real estate firms to achieve customer satisfaction. However, customers' satisfaction is influenced by their emotional needs in decision making. As such, this study develops a conceptualised model for measuring service quality among practising real estate firms with the application of emotional intelligence. To assess customers' satisfaction levels, the knowledge gap between real estate firms' perception of customers and the actual customers' expected service in the Lagos property market in Nigeria was analysed. A random selection of 100 members of the Nigerian Estate Surveyors and Valuers with 400 real estate customers was done and a structured questionnaire administered on the sampled population. However, only 85 real estate firms and a total of 362 real estate customers responded and their responses utilised. A knowledge gap analysis model with a weighted mean score was employed for data analysis. Findings depicted that real estate firms have a basic knowledge barrier on the adoption of emotional intelligence (such as self-awareness and social skills) as an instrument of real estate service quality to satisfy customers' emotional needs in the service delivery. Therefore, practitioners in real estate firms need to improve their knowledge of emotional intelligence as an instrument of real estate service quality to enhance customer satisfaction with emotional needs.

### Keywords

customer satisfaction, emotional intelligence, knowledge gap model, service quality, real estate

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## 1. Introduction

Service quality (SERVQUAL) is the gap between the perceived service and the anticipated delivery service. Customers' judgements about levels of service quality received depend on their perception of actual service performance in light of what was expected (Preko *et al.*, 2013). When customers' expectations exceed the performance, the perceived service quality is below satisfactory, resulting in customers' dissatisfaction (Baffour-Awuah, 2018). Customers' dissatisfaction is one of the basic knowledge barriers for firms in meeting expected needs in service delivery. To achieve customers' satisfaction, the service quality knowledge gap model can be referred to as the difference between how firms perceive customers' expected service and actual customers' expected service in delivery (Shahin & Samea, 2010). Bridging the knowledge gap requires understanding customers' behaviour in service delivery. During transactions, various factors influence customers' behaviour in decision-making. These factors could be attributable to their feelings, emotions and other functional needs in decision making.

The need to recognise feelings and emotions is crucial in understanding customers' behaviour in service delivery. The ability of an individual to acknowledge his feelings understand customers' emotional needs and their behaviour in service delivery is known as "Emotional Intelligence (E.I.). According to Ahangar (2012), emotional intelligence can predict service quality performance. Considering real estate as a service industry, emotional intelligence adoption in service delivery cannot be underestimated for predicting practitioners' work performance. However, improved work performances among practising real estate firms demand the management of clients' emotions and interpersonal interactions in real estate transactions to achieve maximum satisfaction. Therefore, linking emotional intelligence to service quality performance can provide real estate firms with a benchmark for evaluating real estate practitioners' level of competency (Akinwamide, 2019; Akinwamide & Bello, 2019b). In light of this, enhancing practitioners' emotional intelligence competencies in real estate service would enable them the ability and skills to perform effectively in a real estate transaction.

Several studies have supported the claim that those who possess a high level of E.I. tend to achieve a higher level of performance at work (Sy *et al.*, 2006; Rode *et al.*, 2007). Lopes, Cote and Salovey (2006) expressed that all the processes derived from the link between E.I. and one's aptitude have the likelihood of improving performance at work. Ignacio, Miguel & Edmundo (2013) reviewed the importance of professional competencies in the development of emotional intelligence and noted that professionals' emotions might influence their performance at work. Zainal, Zawawi, Aziz and Ali (2017) employed Pearson correlation coefficient analysis to examine the correlation between emotional intelligence and employees' job performance in service delivery. It was found that a strong significant correlation exists between emotional intelligence and employees' performance of the job in service delivery. Using descriptive statistics, the study of Lopes *et al.* (2006) indicated that E.I. plays a vital role in job performance. Other factors (such as personality traits) also reflect an individual's performance ability. Akinwamide and Idris (2019) employed descriptive statistics for an exploratory study to assess E.I. relevance among practising real estate firms. Findings depicted that most practitioners agreed that conducting training on emotional intelligence is needed in real estate practice. Therefore, using a knowledge gap analysis model, it is pertinent to assess emotional intelligence and its application to real estate service quality within practising real estate firms in the Lagos property market in Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

According to Conte (2005), the ability of an individual to understand the feelings and emotions of oneself and others and to harness them to decision making during interaction is referred to as "Emotional Intelligence". However, McEvoy (2008) is of the view that E.I. is connected with abilities and traits to influence one's aptitude in interaction, communication, negotiation, stress management, conflict resolution within a working environment to achieve a positive organisational culture. The result from the study of McEvoy (2008), using multiple regression analysis, depicted that a positive correlation exists between E.I., individual job performance and career advancement. It was concluded that E.I. has a limited influence on career advancement than Intelligent Quotient as hypothesised.

Among the models developed for measuring emotional intelligence competencies, a mixed model was the most widely adopted and preferred model because it combines the ability and traits model in measurement (Schutle *et al.*, 2004). The mixed model concept in assessing competencies integrates the adoption of various features such as E.I., personality, traits, ability and cognitive ability. The study by Yaya *et al.* (2016) highlighted the determinants of E.I. as self-awareness and regulation, self-management, motivation, management of customers relationship, and social skills for effective service delivery. A cross-sectional study was conducted by Hajibabae *et al.* (2018) to examine the correlation between empathy and overall E.I. The results depicted a strong positive correlation between empathy and overall emotional intelligence. At the same time, age had a significant inverse correlation with E.I. Therefore, the adoption of emotional intelligence competencies is needed in service delivery to enhance customers' satisfaction with the demand for emotional needs.

Several empirical studies noted the positive impact of E.I. on the performance of leadership style (Kerr, Garvin, Heaton, & Boyle, 2006; McCleskey, 2014); work performance (Khokhar & Kush, 2009); team performance (Naseer, Chishti, Rahman & Jumani, 2011); employees' performance (Jorfi, Jorfi & Moghadam, 2010); digital marketing performance (Akinwamide & Bello, 2019a); academic performance (Oyewunmi, Osibanjo & Adeniji, 2016); sales performance (Bagozzi, 2006); service quality (Miao *et al.*, 2019) and customers' satisfaction (Singh & Singhal, 2015).

Akinwamide and Idris (2019) employed descriptive statistics to analyse the importance of E.I. among practising real estate firms. It was established that emotional intelligence is most relevant in property marketing, consultancy service, and arbitration in real estate service delivery. Therefore, the relevance of E.I. plays a vital role in real estate service delivery to enhance customers' satisfaction.

Kathungu (2010) employed the Pearson correlation analysis to examine the significant correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance. Findings depicted that E.I.'s social skills and motivation determinants have a substantial correlation with job performance. However, an E.I. determinant such as empathy significantly correlates with teamwork within a job. Mount (2006) employed descriptive statistics to assess the role of E.I. in the capacity development of international business. The result showed that cognitive ability only accounted for 19% of overall work performance, emotional intelligence competencies accounted for 44%, and skills and knowledge accounted for 38%. The research by Jorfi *et al.* (2006) employed Kendal's coefficient to examine the impact of E.I. on the performance of employees. Findings showed a significant positive association between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in service delivery. The research of Rode *et al.* (2007) employed Pearson correlation analysis; findings showed that emotional intelligence and conscientiousness

established a strong positive relationship with individual performance while E.I. alone has a limited prediction of individual performance. The results of this study are in line with Kathungu (2010) that emotional intelligence has a significant influence on job performance in delivering service to customers.

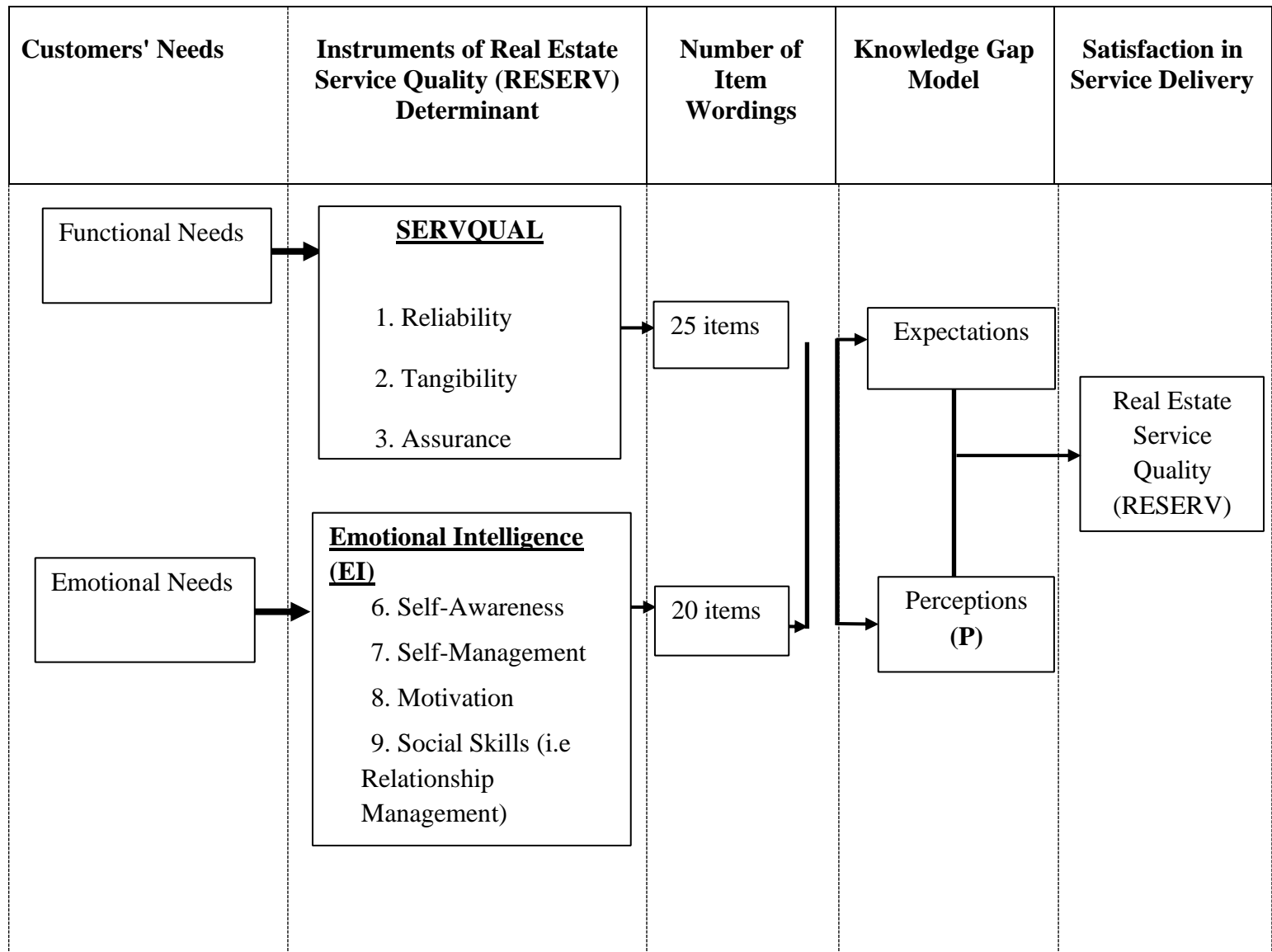
The study of Blocker (2010) reported on the value creation in an agent-client relationship through the interaction of E.I. in communication. The study revealed that effective management of clients' relationships depends on agents' emotional awareness when interacting with clients. However, deterioration of the relationship might occur depending on the party's level of E.I. in interaction.

Given this, Shahzad *et al.* (2011) employed Pearson correlation analysis to examine the impact of E.I. on employees' performance at a telecom company. Findings depicted a moderately significant correlation between E.I. and organisational citizenship behaviour. Based on E.I. scores, the job performance of employees could be predicted. Chaudhry and Usman (2011) employed the Pearson correlation analysis to analyse employees' E.I. and job performance. Findings depicted a significant positive correlation between the performance of employees and determinants of E.I., such as self-awareness and management of customers relationship.

Furthermore, findings showed that E.I. competencies are needed to predict employees' performance in the telecom industry. Various studies have extensively discussed the adoption of E.I. in service industries. However, studies on the application of emotional intelligence in the real estate industry are limited in service delivery to achieve customer satisfaction. Therefore, this study must examine emotional intelligence and its application to real estate service quality in Nigeria.

## **2.1 Conceptualized Model Framed for this study**

The conceptualised model framed for this study considers customers' needs as both functional and emotional in real estate service delivery. However, SERVQUAL and E.I. were considered the instruments for the determinants of Real Estate Service Quality (RESERV) in service delivery. A total of forty-five (45) item wordings were adopted to assess real estate service quality determinants based on the literature reviewed in the appendix (Table 1 & 2). In this study, the knowledge gap model was employed to assess satisfaction in service delivery. This is shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Real Estate Service Quality**

**2.2 Conceptualized Gap Model for Real Estate Service Quality**

Five significant gaps were recognised to analyse service quality to achieve maximum satisfaction (Zeithmal et al., 1985). The gap model can be expressed as the gap between the perceived service and the expected service in delivery. Figure 2 shows the five gap models conceptualised for real estate service quality for this study. These are expressed as follows:

**GAP 1:** This is referred to as the "Knowledge gap in the real estate service quality model" (Shahin & Samea, 2010; Baffour-Awuah, 2018). The knowledge gap model was adopted for this study to analyse the gap between real estate firms' perception of customers (P) and the actual customers' expected service (E) in property transactions. This gap analysis is the basic knowledge barrier, or lack of real estate firms' strategy in meeting expected customers' needs in real estate service quality, expressed in Figure 1.

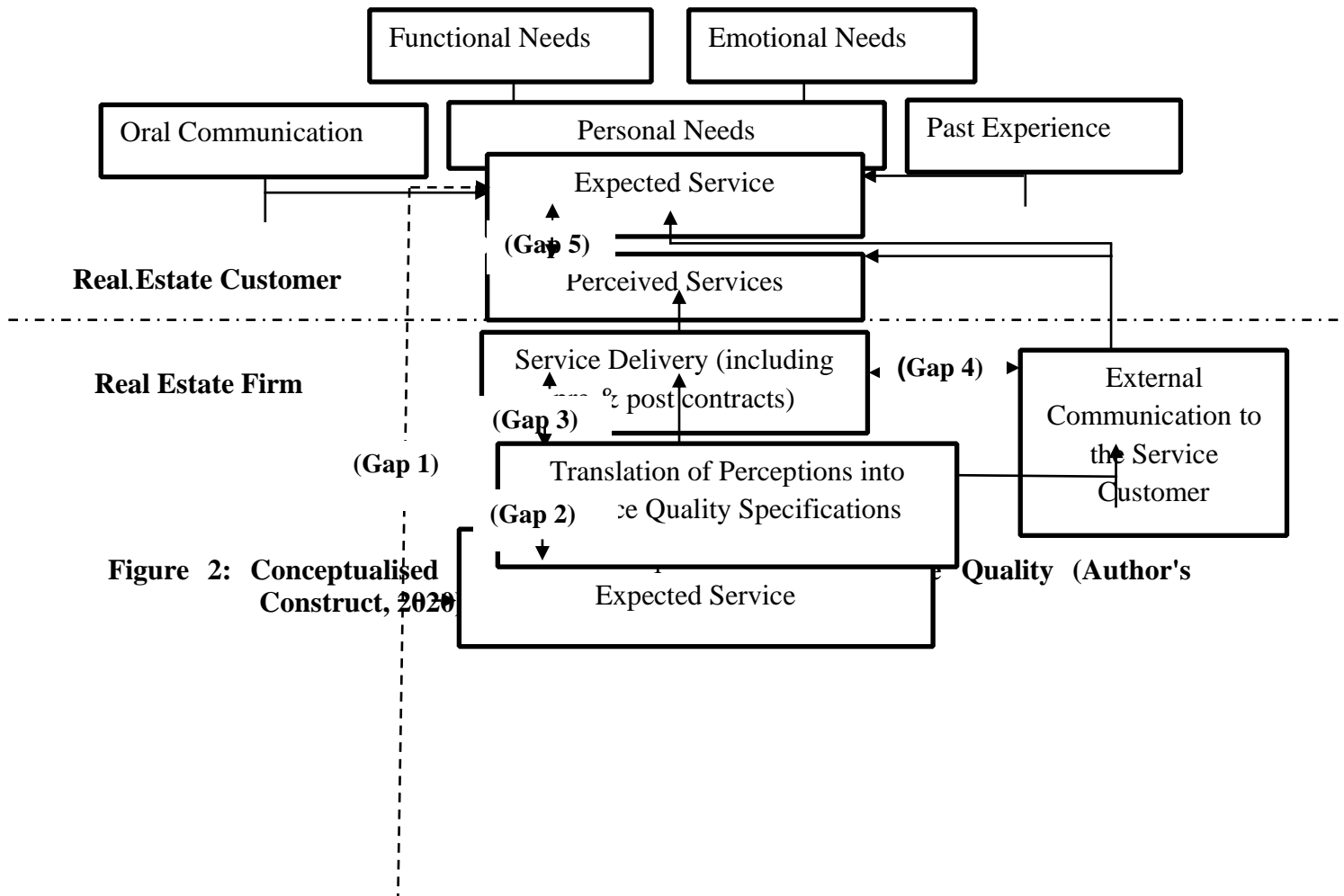
**GAP 2:** The "Standard Gap" in the real estate service quality model is known as the "Standard Gap" (Baffour-Awuah, 2018). This gap emanates from inappropriate real estate service quality

standards adopted among practising firms. It is the difference between the perception of real estate firms on expectations of customers and the specification of service quality in real estate service.

**GAP 3:** This is known as the "Service Performance Gap model" in real estate service quality (Shahin & Samea, 2010). It is the difference between service quality specification and actual service delivery in real estate transactions. This gap emanates as a result of a poor working environment among practising real estate firms.

**GAP 4:** This is known as the "Service Delivered – External Communication Gap model" in real estate service quality (Shahin & Samea, 2010). This model shows the discrepancies between the service delivered by real estate firms and the communicated services to customers in real estate transactions. This gap emanates as a result of promised services externally communicated to customers in public and the actual services delivered in real estate practice.

**GAP 5:** This is referred to as "Customers' Satisfaction" in real estate service quality. This is the gap between real estate customers' perceived service and the service expected in real estate transactions.



### 3. Methodology

This study's target population was the practicing real estate firms and their customers in Lagos. The rationale for adopting Lagos lies in the view that the real estate business is highly active

and has shown consistent development. Such requires the quality of real estate practitioners' services to achieve customer satisfaction. Due to Lagos's large volume of economic activities, most practising firms in real estate have their main offices located in Lagos Metropolis. Registered estate surveying and valuation firms in Nigeria are the qualified practicing real estate firms authorised by the Estate Surveying and Valuation Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) to execute real estate jobs, having undergone training with the necessary skills and competencies. In the study area, real estate customers are property owners, buyers, and tenants patronising firms on real estate transactions (such as sales, letting, etc.).

A total of 100 registered estate surveying and valuation firms well-known for agency service were randomly selected; and then for each selected firm, four customers were purposely selected. Questions were asked on the nine RESERV determinants adopted to assess practising real estate firms' perceived customers' expected service and actual customers' desired service on the 7-point Likert scale of "Strongly Disagree = 1" to "Strongly Agree = 7".

A knowledge gap analysis model with a weighted mean score was employed for data analysis in this study. However, 85 retrieved questionnaires from registered estate surveying and valuation firms and a total of 362 retrieved questionnaires from real estate customers were utilised for analysing the study data. According to the conceptual framework for this study, the knowledge gap model for analysing service quality in real estate service is the difference between the actual customers' expected service (E) and how the real estate firm's perceived customers' expected service (P) in a transaction (see Figure 2.). Therefore, the model is expressed as:

$$\text{RESERV} = \sum_{b=1}^k (E_{ab} - P_{ab}) \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where:

RESERV = Real Estate Service Quality; k = numbers of attributes.

P = How Real Estate Firm's perceived customers' expected service of stimulus *a* with respect to attribute *b*.

E = The actual customers' expected service in real estate transactions for attribute *b* is the relevant norm for stimulus *a*.

**Decision rule:**

**Rule 1:** when a real estate firm's perception of customers' expected service is greater than the actual customers' expected service (i.e.,  $P > E$ ), it could be said that the service rendered by the firms are delighted by their service customer in a property transaction (i.e.  $\text{RESERV} < 0$ ).

**Rule 2:** when the real estate firm's perception of customers' expected service is equal to the actual customers' expected service (i.e.,  $P = E$ ), it could be said that customers experience satisfaction in real estate service quality (i.e.,  $\text{RESERV} = 0$ ).

**Rule 3:** when the real estate firm's perception of customers' expected service is lesser than the actual customers' expected service (i.e.,  $P < E$ ), it could be said that customers experience dissatisfaction with real estate service quality (i.e.,  $\text{RESERV} > 0$ ).

**4. Result and Discussions**

Analysis of respondents' questionnaires shows the reliability of the data collected for the knowledge gap analysis. Table 3 below presents data in this regard.

**Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval**

	<b>Questionnaire</b>	
	<b>Distribution</b>	<b>Retrieval</b>
Registered Estate Surveying and Valuation firms	100	85 (85%)
Real Estate Customers	400	362 (91%)

*Source: Author's Field Survey, (2019)*

Table 1 showed that the majority of questionnaires administered to registered estate surveying and valuation firms and real estate customers were retrieved. This implied that the percentage of questionnaires retrieved from the respondents is statistically adequate to represent the whole population from which inference can be made for this study; hence the results of the findings can be relied on.

#### **4.1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Average Respondent**

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents are essential for expressing and getting a response to the research questions. Table 4 presents this data.

**Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of Real Estate Firms**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
1-5 years	17	20
6-10 years	46	54
11-15 years	18	21
15 years and Above	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Professional Qualification</b>		
ANIVS/RSV	80	94
FNIVS	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Data Analysis, (2019)*

Table 2 above indicates that practitioners have sufficient professional qualifications and experience to execute real estate transactions within the Lagos Metropolis. Data on the professional qualification of respondents in the real estate practice indicate that 94% of respondents are holders of Associate Member of NIESV (ANIVS). In comparison, 6% of respondents are holders of Fellow Member of NIESV (FNIVS) with a registered real estate firm. The majority (80%) of the practitioners in real estate firms have over five (5) years of experience in real estate service. Thus, this shows that the respondents had the required working experience with adequate knowledge of research on real estate practice that could make the information provided reliable.



**Table 3: Socio-economic Characteristics of Real Estate Customers**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	195	53.87
Female	167	46.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20 years	14	3.88
20 – 30 years	98	27.07
31 – 40 years	123	33.98
41 – 50 years	104	28.73
Above 50 years	23	6.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Years of patronising real estate firms</b>		
Below 5 years	91	25.14
6-10 years	138	38.12
11-15 years	98	27.07
16 – 20 years	23	6.35
Above 20 years	12	3.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Educational Background</b>		
NCE	6	1.66
ND	12	3.31
HND	95	26.24
B.Tech/ BSc.	129	35.64
M.Tech/ MSc.	95	26.24
PhD	25	6.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Data Analysis, (2019)

Table 3 above shows the results of the socio-economic background of real estate customers in the study area. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents are male. It was found

that the majority of real estate customers within the age group of 31-50 years actively engaged in real estate transactions. Considering the respondents' academic qualifications, the majority are graduates of tertiary institutions (i.e., holders of Higher National Diploma (HND), BSc./B.Tech, MSc./M.Tech and PhD). It's noteworthy that most real estate customers had studied up to postgraduate level (including MSc./M.Tech and PhD). Findings also indicated that all respondents had an adequate experience of patronising real estate firms, while most real estate customers' years of patronage fall within 1 - 15 years. This implies that real estate customers have sufficient academic background and adequate knowledge of service quality in real estate service delivery.

#### 4.2. *Examination of Real Estate Firms' Perception and Customers' Actual Expectations in Service Delivery*

Satisfaction in real estate service delivery can be determined by how real estate firms' perceived customers expected service and actual customers' expectations in the transaction. Customers' behaviour includes their emotional reaction to meeting real estate service delivery needs. Their behaviour determines customers' expectations during the property transaction. Table 4 in the appendix shows the mean item score of real estate firms' perception and customers' actual service delivery expectations for each item wording of RESERV determinants. The overall Cronbach Alpha values for real estate firms' perception was retained at 0.789, while customers' actual expectation was retained at 0.788. This implies that the data has excellent internal consistency and reliability for the study.

**Table 5. Ranking Order of Real Estate Service Quality (RESERV) Determinants**

RESERV Determinants	Firms' Perception (P)		Customers' Expectation (E)	
	Average MIS	Ranking	Average MIS	Ranking
Reliability	6.380	1 <sup>st</sup>	6.200	5 <sup>th</sup>
Empathy	6.300*	2 <sup>nd</sup>	6.314	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Self-Awareness	6.248*	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6.406	1 <sup>st</sup>
Motivation	6.186*	4 <sup>th</sup>	6.036	8 <sup>th</sup>
Responsiveness	6.162*	5 <sup>th</sup>	6.066	7 <sup>th</sup>
Tangible	6.110*	6 <sup>th</sup>	6.210	4 <sup>th</sup>
Self-Management	6.028	7 <sup>th</sup>	6.102	6 <sup>th</sup>
Assurance	5.934	8 <sup>th</sup>	5.740	9 <sup>th</sup>
Social Skills	5.676	9 <sup>th</sup>	6.246	3 <sup>rd</sup>

*Source: Data Analysis, (2019)*

Table 5 above shows the ranking order of (RESERV) determinants. The result of real estate firms' perception indicated that service reliability, empathy and Self-awareness of real estate practitioners were the most perceived determinants of real estate service quality with the highest mean score ranking. While practitioners' self-management, service assurance and social skills were the least perceived determinants of real estate service quality with the lowest ranking. This implies that practising real estate firms perceived customers' expectations in RESERV based on the ranking of the determinants to achieve satisfaction in the Lagos property

market. Considering real estate customers' actual expectations, it was found that practitioners' self-awareness, service empathy and social skills were the highest-ranked determinants of real estate customers' expected service in a property transaction. While service responsiveness, motivation, and service assurance were the least ranked determinants of real estate customers' expected service in a property transaction. This implies that customers expect practising real estate firms to focus on real estate service quality based on their determinants ranking to achieve customers' satisfaction in real estate practice.

#### 4.3. Knowledge Gap Analysis and Customers' Satisfaction Level in Property Transaction

The knowledge gap model measured RESERV by comparing the real estate firms' perception of customers' expected service and the actual customers' desired service in property transactions, as shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Knowledge Gap Analysis on RESERV determinants in Property Transaction**

Customers' Needs	RESERV Determinants	Average Mean item Score		Gap Analysis (RESERV) (E – P)	Decision Rule
		Firms' Perception (P)	Customers' Expectation (E)		
Functional Needs	Reliability	6.380	6.200	-0.180	Delighted
	Empathy	6.300*	6.314	0.014	Satisfied
	Responsiveness	6.162*	6.066	-0.096	Delighted
	Tangible	6.110*	6.210	0.100	Dissatisfied
	Assurance	5.934	5.740	-0.194	Delighted
			<b>Average Gap Score</b>		<b>-0.356</b>
Emotional Needs	Self-Awareness	6.248*	6.406	0.158	Dissatisfied
	Motivation	6.186*	6.036	-0.150	Delighted
	Self-Management	6.028	6.102	0.074	Satisfied
	Social Skills	5.676	6.246	0.570	Dissatisfied
			<b>Average Gap Score</b>		<b>0.652</b>

Source: Data Analysis, (2019)

Table 6 above reveals the knowledge gap analysis of RESERV determinants through the mean item score gap between practising real estate firms' perception of customers' expected service and the actual customers' expected service in property transactions. Findings show that service empathy, tangibility, practitioners' self-awareness, practitioners' self-management and social skills have a positive mean item score. However, the decision rule indicated that customers experience dissatisfaction with service tangibility, self-awareness, and social skills determinants because RESERV is greater than 0. In contrast, customers are satisfied with service empathy because RESERV is equal to 0. This implies that real estate firms have a basic knowledge barrier on service tangibility, self-awareness, and social skills in meeting customer expectations in property transactions. RESERV determinants such as service reliability, responsiveness to service, assurance and motivation of real estate practice has a negative mean item score. It was depicted from the decision rule that customers are delighted in those

determinants (such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and motivation) whose RESERV is lesser than 0. This implies that real estate firms have adequate knowledge of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and motivation to meet customers' expectations in real estate service delivery.

**Table 7: Customers' Satisfaction with RESERV needs in Service Delivery**

Service Delivery Needs	Real Estate Service Quality Instruments	Average Gap Score (RESERV)	Decision Rule
Functional Needs	SERVQUAL	-0.356	Delighted
Emotional Needs	EI	0.652	Dissatisfied

*Source: Data Analysis, (2019)*

Table 7 above shows customers' satisfaction levels with RESERV in property transactions through the average gap score of SERVQUAL and E.I. It was found that SERVQUAL has a negative average gap score. In contrast, E.I. has a positive average gap score. However, the decision rule indicated that customers are dissatisfied with real estate firms' E.I. because RESERV is greater than 0. In contrast, customers are delighted with real estate firms' SERVQUAL because RESERV is lesser than 0. This implies that real estate firms have a basic knowledge barrier on the adoption of emotional intelligence as an instrument of real estate service quality to satisfy customers' emotional needs in property transactions. However, findings also depicted that real estate firms have adequate knowledge of SERVQUAL to satisfy customers' functional needs in service delivery.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

It's noteworthy that practicing real estate firms perceived customers' expectations in RESERV based on reliability, empathy, and self-awareness determinants to achieve satisfaction in the Lagos property market. This result agrees with Akinwamide's (2019) study that the performance of a professional's emotional intelligence skills in real estate consultancy service is influenced by factors such as empathy skills, self-awareness and management skills, social and motivational skills. However, customers expect firms to focus on self-awareness, service empathy and social skills to achieve customer satisfaction in real estate practice. This finding concurs with Mangeli's (2013) study that satisfaction is more related to a judgment of how the services emotionally affect real estate customers' experiences.

Furthermore, real estate firms have a basic knowledge barrier on the adoption of emotional intelligence to satisfy customers' emotional needs in property transactions. This finding confirmed the submission of Karunasena, Vijerathne and Muthmala (2018) on the identified impacts of customers' dissatisfaction as negative impression, damage to the tenant and management relationship, and a loss of competitive edge. The results from the analysis also indicated that real estate firms have adequate knowledge of SERVQUAL (such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and motivation) in meeting customers' functional expectations in real estate service delivery. These findings agree with Akinwamide (2019) and Akinwamide and Bello (2019b) that estate agents have a considerably good level of service empathy and motivation to execute real estate agency service. These findings also affirmed the submission of Araloyin and Olatoye (2011) that despite real estate professionals' attempts to improve their service delivery in customers' satisfaction, their conduct in their first impression with

customers has a long way to go in affecting real estate customers' opinion about them. Therefore, the adoption of emotional intelligence determinants to enhance service quality would help real estate firms to improve customers' satisfaction with the demand for emotional needs.

## **6. Conclusion**

A knowledge gap model approach has been adopted in this study to assess emotional intelligence and its application to real estate service quality in the Lagos property market. Based on ranking order of determinants of real estate service quality, real estate firms perceived customers' expectations in service reliability, empathy, and self-awareness as the significant determinants in service delivery. At the same time, the actual real estate customers' expected service identified practitioners' self-awareness, service empathy and social skills as the major real estate service quality determinants in property transactions. Considering the knowledge gap analysis, findings depicted that real estate firms have a basic knowledge barrier on the adoption of emotional intelligence (with more emphasis on self-awareness and social skills determinants) as an instrument of real estate service quality to satisfy customers' emotional needs in service delivery. However, it was also found that real estate firms have adequate knowledge of SERVQUAL to satisfy customers' functional needs in property transactions. Therefore, this study concludes that practitioners in real estate firms improve their knowledge of emotional intelligence as an instrument of real estate service quality to enhance customers' satisfaction with emotional needs.

The result of this study has provided useful information for real estate practitioners to help them make positive changes in real estate service quality by incorporating customers' emotional needs in service delivery. The study has been able to recommend emotional intelligence as a measuring tool for real estate service quality in real estate practice. The result of this study is beneficial to real estate customers by providing the knowledge that the real estate industry is interested in their opinions and improving the service offered to them. This study has been able to fill the knowledge gap in real estate service quality between real estate customers' expectations and real estate practitioners' perceptions of service delivery.

The outbreak of COVID 19 has led to a school shutdown. However, this would have a detrimental effect on the mental health of both students and educators. Therefore, further research on the adoption of emotional intelligence in real estate education may be carried out for school-based cognitive behavioural therapy and mental health literacy programmes to prevent anxiety and depression among students in tertiary institutions. In-depth research can also be carried out in other areas of specialisation, such as facilities management, arbitration, consultancy service, land administration, and conflict resolution in the acquisition and compensation of properties.

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## Appendix

### **Forty-five (45) item wordings for the determinants of RESERV**

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#### **RESERV Attributes (Items)**

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##### **Service Tangibility**

- Practising real estate firms should have the latest office equipment.
- Practising real estate firms' facilities should appeal attractive.
- Practitioners in real estate firms should possess the professional qualifications necessary for service delivery.
- Practitioners in real estate firms should neatly appear all time.
- Practising real estate firms should be affiliated with other professional bodies in built environments.

##### **Service Reliability**

- Practising real estate firms should always render services at the appointed time
- Practising real estate firms should maintain an accurate record of every transaction made.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should advise on the best searching methods in property transactions (i.e. purchase and sales).
- Practising real estate firms should provide a reliable and dependable service.
- Practising real estate firms should ensure a satisfactory office size and location

##### **Service Responsiveness**

- Practitioners in firms' real estate should inform customers on the scheduled date of the transaction in service delivery.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should inform customers of the terms and conditions in transactions.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should show the willingness to achieve customers' expectations transactions.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should be responsive in requests to customers' needs.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should ensure frequent communication with customers.

##### **Service Assurance**

- Practitioners' behaviour in firms' real estate should give customers confidence in the transaction.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should ensure a safe real estate transaction in service delivery.
- Practitioners in firms' real estate should be consistently courteous in transaction
- Practising real estate firms should be knowledgeable about assuring quality response to customers in service delivery
- Practising real estate firms should maintain excellent integrity in service delivery.

##### **Service Empathy**

- Practising real estate firms should provide personal attention to customers.



Practising firms' real estate operating hours should be convenient for customers  
Practising real estate firms should ensure that customers' best interest is considered first in service delivery.

Practising real estate firms should be able to discern customers' specific needs in real estate transactions.

Practising real estate firms should update customers on information about matters of significant concern to them.

#### **Practitioner's Self-Awareness**

Practitioners in firms' real estate should know their internal preferences to evaluate the strength and weaknesses of customers appropriately.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should align their intuition to the established values in service delivery.

Practitioners in real estate firms should display an excellent self-esteem and worth in real estate transactions.

Practitioners in real estate firms should understand organisational politics to achieve customer satisfaction in service delivery.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should be self-conscious of customers' emotions and perspectives in decision making.

#### **Practitioner's Self-Management**

Practitioners in real estate firms should always manage stress maintain personal hygiene and mental wellness in service delivery.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should be flexible in prioritising tasks to ensure flawless customer experience in the property transaction.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should be able to exercise self-control when dealing with disruptive tasks and impulses in the transaction.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should be flexible in adjusting to the working environment when needed to reach self-designated checkpoints.

Practitioners in real estate firms should manage internal preferences on their career paths to achieve excellent service delivery.

#### **Motivation**

Practitioners in real estate firms should execute transactions with a compelling vision.

Practitioners in real estate firms should possess a wide array of persuasive tactics to execute a transaction in real estate service.

Real estate practitioners should be readily motivated to enhance customer loyalty and service delivery retention.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should display intellectual curiosity with necessary interpersonal skills in service delivery.

Practitioner's efforts in real estate firms should be appreciated and recognised when seizing opportunities to achieve customers' satisfaction in the transaction.

#### **Social Skills**

Practitioners in firms' real estate should have detailed information and understanding of customers' values, religion, social groups and political beliefs.

Practising real estate firms should maintain excellent customers relationship leading to customers retention and recommendation.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should treat customers equally with honesty and transparency no matter the financial significance of the contract.

Practitioners in firms' real estate should be a good empathetic listeners when interacting with customers to ensure adequate coordination of service activities. Real Estate practitioners' relationship with customers should be desirable with an updated understanding of customers' behaviour.

### Summary of Literature Review for RESERV Determinants

Authors	Variableness	Tangibility	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Motivation	Social Skills
Preko, Agbanu, and Feglo (2013)	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Ehiemere, Ogbuefi and Awum (2016)	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Seiler (2004)	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Ahangar (2012)						X	X	X	X	X
Akinwamide (2019)						X	X	X	X	X
Akinwamide and Bello (2019a)						X	X	X	X	X
Akinwamide and Bello (2019b)						X	X	X	X	X
Akinwamide and Idris (2019)						X	X	X	X	X
Baffour-Awuah (2018)	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Hajibabae, Farahani, Ameri and Salehi (2018)						X	X	X	X	X
Ignacio, Miguel and Edmundo (2013)						X	X	X	X	X
McCleskey (2014)						X	X	X	X	X
Oyewunmi, Osibanjo and Adeniji (2016)						X	X	X	X	X

Preko, Agbanu and Feglo (2014)	X	X	X	X	X				
Shahin and Samea (2010)	X	X	X	X	X				
Shahzad, Sarmad, Abbas and Khan (2011)					X	X	X	X	X
Singh and Singhal (2015)					X	X	X	X	X
Yaya, Akintayo and Uzohue (2016)					X	X	X	X	X
Zainal, Zawawi, Aziz and Ali (2017)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 4. Real Estate Firms' Perception and Customers' Actual Expectations in Service Delivery**

<b>RESERV Attributes (Items)</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Item</b>
	<b>P</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Service Tangibility</b>		
Practising real estate firms should have the latest office equipment.	5.75	6.23
Practising real estate firms' facilities should appeal attractive.	5.69	6.00
In firms, real estate practitioners should possess the professional qualifications necessary for service delivery.	6.38	5.92
Practitioners in real estate firms should neatly appear all time.	6.23	6.35
Practising real estate firms should be affiliated with other professional bodies in built environments.	6.50	6.55
<b>Average Mean score</b>	<b>6.11</b>	<b>6.210</b>
<b>Service Reliability</b>		
Practising real estate firms should always render services at the appointed time	6.46	6.00
Practising real estate firms should maintain an accurate record of every transaction made.	6.60	6.05
Practitioners in-state firms should advise on the best searching methods in property transactions (i.e. purchase and sales).	6.47	6.34
Practising real estate firms should provide a reliable and dependable service.	6.23	6.26
Practising real estate firms should ensure a satisfactory office size and location	6.14	6.35
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>6.38</b>	<b>6.200</b>
<b>Service Responsiveness</b>		
Practitioners in firms' real estate should inform customers on the scheduled date of transaction in service delivery.	5.84	5.85
Practitioners in firms' real estate should inform customers of the terms and conditions in transactions.	6.26	6.25
Practitioners in firms' real estate should show the willingness to achieve customers' expectations in the transactions.	6.23	6.06

Practitioners in firms' real estate should be responsive in requests to customers' needs.	6.20	6.34
Practitioners in firms' real estate should ensure frequent communication with customers.	6.28	5.83
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>6.16</b>	<b>6.066</b>
	<b>2</b>	
<b>Service Assurance</b>		
Practitioners' behaviour in firms' real estate should give customers confidence in the transaction.	5.85	5.80
Practitioners in the realms of real estate firms should ensure a safe real estate transaction in service delivery.	5.46	5.75
Practitioners in firms' real estate should be consistently courteous in transaction	5.83	6.00
Practising real estate firms should be knowledgeable about assuring quality response to customers in service delivery	6.20	6.40
Practising real estate firms should maintain excellent integrity in service delivery.	6.33	4.75
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>5.93</b>	<b>5.740</b>
	<b>4</b>	
<b>Service Empathy</b>		
Practising real estate firms should provide personal attention to customers.	5.87	6.10
Practising real estate firms operating hours should be convenient for customers	6.58	6.68
Practising real estate firms should ensure that customers' best interest is considered first in service delivery.	6.45	6.31
Practising real estate firms should discern customers' specific needs in real estate transactions.	6.44	6.19
Practising real estate firms should update customers on information about matters of significant concern to them.	6.16	6.29
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>6.30</b>	<b>6.314</b>
	<b>0</b>	
<b>Practitioner's Self-Awareness</b>		
Practitioners in real estate firms should know their internal preferences to evaluate the strength and weaknesses of customers appropriately.	6.26	6.11
Practitioners in real estate firms should be able to align their intuition to the established values in service delivery.	6.21	6.45
Practitioners in real estate firms should display an excellent self-esteem and worth in real estate transactions.	6.27	6.50
Practitioners in real estate firms should understand organisational politics to achieve customers' satisfaction in service delivery.	6.35	6.38
Practitioners in real estate firms should be self-conscious of customers' emotions and perspectives in decision making.	6.15	6.59
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>6.24</b>	<b>6.406</b>
	<b>8</b>	
<b>Practitioner's Self-Management</b>		
Practitioners in real estate firms should always manage stress maintain personal hygiene and mental wellness in service delivery.	6.10	5.99
Practitioners in real estate firms should be flexible in prioritising tasks to ensure flawless customer experience in the property transaction.	5.95	6.09
Practitioners in real estate firms should be able to exercise self-control when dealing with disruptive tasks and impulses in transactions.	5.83	6.26
Practitioners in real estate firms should be flexible in adjusting to the working environment when needed to reach self-designated checkpoints.	6.13	6.16

Practitioners in real estate firms should manage internal preferences on their career paths to achieve excellent service delivery.	6.13	6.01
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>6.028</b>	<b>6.102</b>
<b>Motivation</b>		
Practitioners in real estate firms should execute transactions with a compelling vision.	6.16	5.75
Practitioners in real estate firms should possess a wide array of persuasive tactics to execute a transaction in real estate service.	6.25	6.25
Practitioners in real estate firms should be readily motivated to enhance customers' loyalty and retention in service delivery.	6.18	6.06
Practitioners in real estate firms should display intellectual curiosity with necessary interpersonal skills in service delivery.	6.13	6.34
Practitioner's efforts in real estate firms should be appreciated and recognised when seizing opportunities to achieve customers' satisfaction in transactions.	6.21	5.78
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>6.186</b>	<b>6.036</b>
<b>Social Skills</b>		
Practitioners in real estate firms should have detailed information and understanding of customers' values, religion, social groups and political beliefs.	6.30	6.23
Practising real estate firms should maintain excellent customers relationship leading to customers retention and recommendation.	5.47	6.29
Practitioners in real estate firms should treat customers equally with honesty and transparency no matter the financial significance of the contract.	6.30	6.35
Practitioners in real estate firms should be a good empathetic listeners when interacting with customers to ensure adequate coordination of service activities.	5.85	6.06
Real Estate practitioners' relationship with customers should be desirable with an updated understanding of customers' behaviour.	4.46	6.30
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>5.676</b>	<b>6.246</b>

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**Note:** Real estate firms' perception (P); Actual real estate customers' expectation (E)