

WORD OF MOUTH: A PREEMINENT TOOL FOR QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Amaechi Chijioke Juliet* & Anyanwu Bonaventure

Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture,
Umudike, Umuahia, Abia State.

*Corresponding Author: amajuliet222@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33281/JTHS20129.2019.2.8>

Abstract

This study focused on word of mouth: a preeminent tool for quality service delivery in the hospitality industry. The specific objectives are; to identify an official way of communication between people regarding to product or service, to determine the effect of word-of-mouth on quality service delivery, to determine the effect of word of mouth on customers experience and repeat patronage, to examine the negative consequences of word of mouth on hotel image and to proffer solution on effective use of word of mouth for customer satisfaction To achieve the objectives of the study survey research design was adopted. The study adopted primary data using a structured questionnaire. The test the hypotheses, simple regression analysis was used. The findings revealed that Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on quality service delivery. The findings also revealed that Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on customer experience and repeat patronage. The study recommends that Hotels should train the staff on the use of word-of-mouth in carryout their activities in hotel operations. The hospitality industry should ensure that their staff have the characteristics of word-of-mouth such as smile, good eye contact, good posture, speak clearly, hygiene and versatile in knowledge.

Keywords: Word-of-mouth, service quality customer experience, customer repeat purchase.

Introduction

Word of Mouth (WOM)

In the hospitality industry, most especially the hotel, the best word of mouth comes from high service quality and excellent customer experience; this will make the customer talk about the hotel services positively. According to Cvent (2013), word of mouth is a proper way of communication between people regarding a product or service, and it is among the first three sources of information through experiences of friends and relatives. It is a powerful tool that provides inquirer with a long experience about the product or service through friends and relatives; it is tailored to people that have same interests and is not limited by money or any other constraints as social, time, family or physical features. Little (2011) contributed that the social network offers an appealing context to study word of mouth because it provides easy tools for current users to invite others to join the

network and build relationships online. However, according to Litrin (2006), negative word of mouth can have an overwhelming impact upon a hotel image, because dissatisfied visitors spread unflattering comments related to their experience, but positive recommendation boosts sales and hence good performance for the hotel.

Igbojiekwe (2009) defined service as all actions and reactions (deeds) customers perceived they have purchased. The hospitality service environment is highly competitive; hence, the survival of any organization depends to a large extent on the manner and the extent which service providers meet customer expectations. In hospitality establishment, service is performed for the guest by people (a guest is escorted to the room by a bell person, receptionist books a room, and the waiter serves a meal) or by a system such as remote guest check out operated through a hotel's television screen, self-service electronic concierge. You can offer promotion and slash prices to bring in as many new customers as you want, but unless you can get some of those customers to come back, your business will not be profitable for long.

Excellent customer service is all about bringing customers back to become repeat customers. Hotel operators now focus more on the quality standards in order to meet the basic needs and expectations of the customers. Once customers' requirements are identified and understood, hotel operators are more likely to anticipate and fulfil their customers' needs and want (Juwaheer & Ross, 2003). The more satisfied the customers are, the more likely they are to return or prolong their hotel stay (Choi & Chu, 2001).

Objectives of the Study

- i. To identify a proper way of communication between people regarding product or service.
- ii. To determine the effect of word-of-mouth on quality service delivery.
- iii. To ascertain the effect of word of mouth on customers experience and repeat patronage.
- iv. To examine the negative consequences of word of mouth on the hotel image.
- v. To proffer solution on the effective use of word of mouth for customer satisfaction

Research Questions

The following research questions shall guide the study:

- i. What are the proper ways of communication between people in regards to product or service?
- ii. To what extent does word-of-mouth affect quality service delivery?
- iii. How will word of mouth affect customer experience and repeat patronage?
- iv. What are the negative consequences of word of mouth on the hotel image?
- v. How can the solution be proffered on the effective use of word of mouth for customer satisfaction?

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on quality service delivery

H0₂: Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on customer experience and repeats patronage

Literature Review

The hospitality sector is part of a massive group of travel and tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing industries that provide the necessary and desirable goods and services to travellers worldwide. Sriyam (2010) points out that guest satisfaction in the hotel industry is the highest priority for owners and managers competing with hundreds of others because personal services are at the top of the travellers' list of the most important things when considering a hotel to stay. Tailoring of customer service has seen more and more customers switch from one service provider to another, this is seen especially in the hotel sector where guests prefer a high level of service, and individual requirements are therefore much differentiated.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer service has never been as exciting as it is today because customers are more connected and knowledgeable than ever before, the social media, online customer reviews, messages forums and the power of internet search are tipping and shifting the balance of power in their favour. Kevin *et. al.* (2011) observed that hotel websites provide the type of information that customers would like to experience, this has been seen to increase in use of internet services and that global hotel Effective modes of communications have shaped the marketplace enabling consumers to present their preferences and

standards to organizations that are poised to listen and respond (Adele, 2013). As contributed by Schultz (2012), as competition in the hotel industry intensifies, hoteliers have learnt to shift their strategies from customer acquisition to customer retention and loyalty, which is only possible with adequate customer satisfaction. Excellent customer services are the lifeblood of any business.

You can offer promotion and slash prices to bring in as many new customers as you want, but unless you can get some of those customers to come back, your business will not be profitable for long. Excellent customer service is all about bringing customers back. And about sending them away happy – happy enough to pass positive feedback about your business along to others, who may then try the product or service you offer for themselves and in their turn become repeat customers. Hotel operators now focus more on the quality standards in order to meet the basic needs and expectations of the customers. Once customers' requirements are identified and understood, hotel operators are more likely to anticipate and fulfil their customers' needs and want (Juwaheer & Ross, 2003). The more satisfied the customers are, the more likely they are to return or prolong their hotel stay (Choi & Chu, 2001).

Characteristics of Services

- (a) **Services are Intangible:** Service is acts, deeds, performance possessed. Service cannot be displayed, transported, stored, packaged or inspected to point before buying. The value of a service is based on experience and there is no transfer of title. Thus, service is said to be intangible. Service is a performance for the provider, but an experience for the consumer. When hotel guests leave, they have nothing (tangible) to show but the experience, which can be shared with others.

A hotel room is intangible, in that, hotels do not sell the room to customers but the right to use a room for a specific period. Intangible of service causes uncertainty and anxiety in the customers. To reduce uncertainty, Customers look for tangible evidence that will provide some information and confidence about the service. The exterior, the condition of the premise and the overall cleanliness of the establishment are some tangible evidence that provides due to how well the hotel is run. The tangible provide signals as the quality of the intangible service.

- (b) **Service is Perishable:** Service cannot be stored for future sale. Unused capacity cannot be shifted from one period to another. For example, a 120-bed room hotel that only sells 80 rooms on a particular night cannot sell 160 rooms the next night. Revenue loss for not selling the remaining 40 rooms is gone forever; on the other hand, product surpluses in one period cannot be applied against product shortage in another period.
- (c) **Service is Inseparable from the Service Provider:** One cannot separate the quality of any service from the skill and personality of the service provider. The quality of service provided reflects the skill and personality of the service provider and the image of the organization. Hence, it is said that customer-contact employees are part of the product. For example, the food in the restaurant may be good, but if the server (waiter/waitress) has a poor attitude or provides inattentive service, customers may underrate the overall restaurant experience. They will not be satisfied with their experience. The attitude of the server can make or mar a customer's experience in the hotel.

Inseparability also means that customers are part of the product. Their wants to demand and mood can influence how the service is to be provided. A customer in the bar may ask the service personnel to serve beverages from the customer's left-hand side, which runs in conflict with the generally accepted practice. This customer may be disappointed if the service provider insists on serving beverages from the customer's right hand, which is the conventional practice.

For the customers to be satisfied with the hotel service, he/she must understand the service delivery systems. Often, customers demand for service not paid for at the time of check-in. A customer may demand free telephone calls thinking that he had paid for it when he deposited money for accommodation. The customer may get upset if not allowed to make free calls. To avoid this type of situation, customers should be informed at check-in that money deposited covers only accommodation and are required to deposit additional money for other services. The activity of upset customers may upset others. The characteristic of inseparability requires that hotel managers manage both their employees and their customers

- (d) **Service is Variable and Cannot be Standardized:** They may vary in quality over time. It is challenging to standardize most service even if the same operator completes the service.
- (e) **Personal Involvement in the Service Transaction:** The guest and employee are personally involved in the service transaction. If a customer purchases a pair of shoes or refrigerator, he/she takes the finished product away with no concern about who makes it or how. On the other hand, in hospitality, to give one example, lunch is served. The service is produced and consumed at the same time. If the server is grumpy and heavy-handed, likely the guest will be unhappy. A cheerful and efficient server enhance the guest experience.

Note that we used the word 'enhance'. The tangible side (food, drinks, facilities) of the transaction must be acceptable too. All the cheerfulness in the world will not make up for a bad meal or a dirty guest room. At the same time, a good meal can indeed be ruined by a surly server, just as a chaotic front office or poor bell-staff service can ruin a stay in a hotel that is physically in excellent shape. The hospitality product then includes both tangible goods (meals, rooms) and intangible service. Both are essential to success. The server's behaviour is, in effect, a part of the product.

- (f) **Production and Consumption Coincide:** Because of the consumption of the service and its production coincides, there is no inventory. An unused room, as the old saying goes, can never be sold again. A dining room provides not only meals but the capacity of a specific number of seats. While unsold food remains in inventory at the end of the day, unused capacity –an unused table-has no use tomorrow. This puts pressure on hospitality operators to run at as high a level of capacity as possible, offering special rates to quantity purchases. It is better to sell at a slightly reduced rate than not selling at all. Do everything you can, to sell-up.

On the other hand, because of the production of service and its consumption coincide, there is no time or means to correct or shade away poor service. Besides, services happen to somebody; there can be no recall of defective service. It is now a guest' experience. For this reason, there is general agreement that the only acceptable performance standard for a service organization is zero defects.

Service Performance Gap (SPG) means the mismatch between customer' expectation and the actual service received. Customer satisfaction (S) with a product or service is primarily a function of the initial performance expectation (E), and the perceived performance (P). $S=f(E, P)$. The perceived performance level can be above the expected level, below the expected level, or at the expected level.

When a customer says:

It was far better than I expected

The food was better than last time

I thought it was going to be better than that

The service was slower than I expected.

It means that he/she has preconceived ideal service before he/she entered the premises. His/her experience was either of a positive service performance gap (i.e. service turns out to be better than expected) or a negative service performance matches the consumer's expectation (i.e. no SPG), he/she will be satisfied; if service exceed consumer's expectations (i.e. positive SPG) he/she will be dissatisfied if service performance falls short of expectation (i.e. negative SPG) (see diagram below) all the customer care policies are aimed at achieving a positive service performance gap or, at a minimum desired level of performance gap all. When the perceived performance is better than expected but it is below the minimum desire level of performance is the same action, the customer may be not satisfied; the individual is not likely to feel disappointed, but the service level does not reduce the need for consumer to search for a better alternative next time the need arises.

Quality Service/Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance (QA) is the management process that makes every employee think and act like a concierge. Quality assurance is sometimes referred to as guest satisfaction programs. Guest satisfaction programs are the target of management's all-out effort to differentiate products. Management strives to assure each guest a high standard of service. Offering the same level of service on each occasion is the assurance; while the technical and the assistance, personality, skills exhibited by the employees are the quality. (Brandi, 2006). The subjectiveness of what quality is making its definition vague, its evaluation imprecise, and it is delivery inexact. Quality is the measure of how costly the hotel delivers what the guests expect. The guest is the final arbiter of the quality of service delivered. If the guest is pleasantly surprised and enjoys a near visit than expected, the

hotel is perceived as being of high quality. If the visit fails to meet expectations, the hotel is perceived to have offered poor quality service.

Both expectations and perception are subjective. Expectations are a mix of factors, including advertising, previous experience, word-of-mouth recommendations, and price. Guest perceptions are influenced by components that are hard to measure; a rude employee, delayed meal service, food that is not tasty, long wait at checkout. Not all hotels offer the same level of services. Guests are aware of the differences and develop expectations based upon the price, class and reputation of a given hotel. Thus, quality is measured against the expectations of that specific hotel not against competing hotels positioned in different categories. Quality is specific to the particular establishment visited. Quality is an amenity that an establishment promotes when marketing its products.

Checklist for Welcoming Guest



Figure 1: A Receptionist with a Guest

- 1. Smile**
Smile when welcoming guest, it shows warmth and positive manner.
- 2. Good Eye Contact**
Maintaining sound eye contact with the guest because it shows respect to your customer if it is regarded as courteous but be careful not to turn your eye into a stare.
- 3. Posture**
Stand straight and avoid leaning, it shows a sign of respect when you stand straight and upright.
- 4. Hygiene**
Maintain a clean, neat and tidy appearance at all times. Pay attention to your cloth and your hygiene, e.g. cut your hair, iron your cloth, tidy up your hair
- 5. Speak Clearly**

Speak using a pleasant tone that the guest will understand because whatever you say will be impressed by your customer

6. Language

Speak the language your guest will understand.

7. Be Versatile and Knowledgeable

Know everything in your department, try to know alternatives in doing things and try to respond to your customer politely and adequately, especially when they ask a question from you.

Igbojiekwe (2005) highlighted the following measures on how to make excellent customer service

Be a good listener: Take the time to identify customer needs by asking questions and concentrating on what the customer is saying. Listen to their words, tone of voice, body language, and most importantly, how they feel. Beware of making assumptions. Thinking you intuitively know what the customer wants. Do you know what three things are most important to your customer? Active listening and undivided attention are particularly important on the show floor where there is a danger of preoccupation – looking around to see to whom else we could be selling to.

Identify and anticipate needs. Customers do not buy products or services. They buy good feelings and solutions to problems. Most customers, the better you become at anticipating their needs. Communicate regularly so that you are aware of problems or future needs.

Make customers feel important and appreciated: Treat them as individuals. Always use their name and find ways to compliment them, but be sincere. People value sincerity. It creates a good feeling about doing business with you. Customers are susceptible and know whether or not you care about them. Thank them every time you get a chance. On the show floor be sure that your body language conveys sincerity. Your words and actions should be congruent.

Help customers understand your systems: your organization may have the world's best systems for getting things done, but if customers don't understand them, they can get confused, impatient and angry. Take time to explain how your systems work and how they simplify transactions. Be careful that your systems don't reduce the human element of the organization.

Appreciate the power of "yes": always look for ways to help your customers. When they have a request (as long as it is reasonable) tell them that you can do it, figure out how afterwards. Look for ways to

make doing business with you easy. Always do what you say you are going to do.

Know how to apologize: when something goes wrong, apologize. It's easy and customers like it. The customer may not always be right, but the customers must always win. Deal with problems immediately and let customers know what you have done. Make it simple for customers to complain. Value their complaints. As much as we dislike it, it allows us to improve. Even if customers are having a bad day, go out of your way to make them feel comfortable. Give more than expected. Since the future of all companies lies in keeping customers happy, think of ways to elevate yourself above the competition. Consider the following:

What can you give customers that they cannot get elsewhere?

What can you do to follow-up and thank people even when they don't buy?

What can you give to unexpected customers?

Get Regular Feedback: Encourage and welcome suggestions about how you could improve. There are several ways in which you can find out what customers think and feel about your services. Listen carefully to what they say. Check back regularly to see how things are going. Provide a method that invites constructive criticism, comments and suggestions. Treat employees well. Employees are your internal customers and need a regular dose of appreciation. Thank them and find ways to let them know how important they are. Treat your employees with respect and chances are they will have a higher regard for customers. Appreciation stems from the top. Treating customers and employees well is equally important.

Good Salesmanship: If you are a good salesperson, you can sell anything to anyone once. However, it will be your approach to customer service that determines whether or not you will ever be able to sell that person anything else. The essence of excellent customer service is reforming a relationship with customers, a relationship that individual customers feel that he would like to pursue. How do you go about forming such a relationship? By remembering the one real secret of excellent customer service and acting accordingly; "you will be judged by what you do, not what you say."

Deal with Complaints: No one likes hearing complaints, and many of us have developed a reflex shrug, saying "you cannot please all the people all the time". Maybe not, but if you give the complaint your attention, you may be able to please this one person this one time.

And position your business to reap the benefit of excellent customer services.

According to Anderson *et al.* (2002), trust can be developed in customers services known as 6c's in rendering quality service:

1. **Character:** integrity, honesty, responsibility, keep your word and treating others fairly.
2. **Care:** impression, empathy and contribution customers don't care how much you know until how much you care.
3. **Competence:** the ability to display an understanding of the complexity and responsibility of your tasks. You should be able to demonstrate clear understanding and knowledge of your job and work process.
4. **Confidence:** the ability to win the confidence of the customers and to reassure the customer that you can make decisions, even under pressure.
5. **Consistency:** the ability to demonstrate the above characteristics effectively overtime.
6. **Communication:** excellent and fervent communication opens the channels to develop relationships and trust, when communication is open, honest and not sugar coated, it The

Concept of Customer Loyalty, Length of Stay and Retention

Customer loyalty is the degree to which customers experience positive feelings for and exhibit positive behaviour towards a company or brand. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2006), loyalty is won through the delivery of consistent superior customer service, and it means providing them with services that are so good such that there is little chance of not meeting up to their expectations and requirements. Retaining loyal customers for hoteliers is essential and a core factor in keeping the industry in shape and competitive enough to measure itself up to the changing trends of the industry (Schulz, 2012). Achieving the desired results of customer demonstrates respects. Loyalty is frequently a customer action, and that loyal customers do not leave for any attractive offer elsewhere, but instead gives the organization a chance to beat the other offer. Kotler and Armstrong (2006) saw loyalty as a factor of consistent superior customer service; they found out that five percent increase in customer retention yielded seventy-five percent increases in the net present value of a firm. In research contributions, Cvent (2013) found that in today's era of customer-oriented business strategy, the 80/20 rule has proved to be one of the significant business effects; this is

where 80 percent of profitable revenues come from just the 20 percent of the organizations' clients. Findings from Carson Research Consulting (2013) indicate that loyal customers are those who purchase from an organization repeatedly, will do so even in the face of specific challenges, that they are twenty-six to fifty-four percent more likely to refer the organization to others positively. Rousan et al (2010) also found out that loyal customers do not get wayed by price inducement from the competitors, but will continue as loyal customers, research in South Africa fast foods industry showed that customers retention tend to focus on the evaluation of customers management relationships as the dominant strategy for retaining customers.

Kohlmayr (2012) concludes that to inspire long term loyalty among guests; hoteliers must not only identify whom their most valuable guest is, but also put strategies in place to make them feel welcome and most valued.

Repeat Sales and Word of Mouth

Dominici (2010) pointed out that the search for a new location is undoubtedly the most crucial factor for many tourists, that the choice of repeat holiday destination depends on their loyalty which is guided by; desire to reduce risk of making a mistake, chance to meet the same people again, emotional affection to a specific place and to explore the place better. Kapiki (2012) observed that excellent services quality by hoteliers' results in better customer satisfaction and loyalty. Word of mouth according to Cvent (2013) is unofficial way of communication between people regarding a product of service, findings by Natuhwera (2011) showed that a satisfied customer is the one whose expectations are met and that the benefits from positive word of mouth is an essential factor in the hotel industry because with excellent customer satisfaction, customers are more likely to recommend such high services to their friends, relatives and colleagues and this will consequently make the hotel business thrive on credible and positive image. However, according to Litrin (2006), negative word of mouth can have an overwhelming impact upon a hotel image, since dissatisfied visitors spread unflattering comments related to their experience, hence negative sales and performance of the hotel.

Research Design

For this research, the survey method would be used to study selected hotels in Owerri metropolis.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Owerri Metropolis, Imo state. The study focused on word of mouth: a preeminent tool for quality service delivery in the hospitality industry.

Population for the Study

The population of the study is made up of five (5) selected hotels in Owerri Metropolis. This involved the management, staff and selected customers of the five (5) selected hotels. Thus, 75 respondents constitute the population of the study.

Sample/Sampling Technique

The study adopted a simple random sampling sample size of this for this study is determined from the study population using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for sample size determination.

Thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = population of the study which is 75

e = margin of error and in this case,

e = 5% (chosen by the researcher)

1 = constant

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{75}{1 + 75(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{75}{1 + 75(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 63$$

Data Analysis Techniques

Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze respondents' data; while a simple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

The model for simple regression analysis is stated thus;

$$Y = f(X)$$

Where;

Y = dependent variable (customer service delivery)

X = independent variable (word-of-mouth)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Hypothesis One

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.816 ^a	.666	.652	.63913	.504
a. Predictors: (Constant), WORD-OF-MOUTH					
b. Dependent Variable: QUALITY SERVICE					

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.765	1	18.765	45.936	.000 ^b
	Residual	9.395	118	.408		
	Total	28.160	119			
a. Dependent Variable: QUALITY SERVICE						
b. Predictors: (Constant), WORD-OF-MOUTH						

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.512	.594		.862	.398
	WORD-OF-MOUTH	.953	.141	.816	6.778	.000

a. Dependent Variable: QUALITY SERVICE

The regression results show the relationship between word of mouth and quality service delivery in hotels. The coefficient of determination R-square of 0.666 implied that 66.6% of the sample variation in the dependent variable quality service delivery in hotels is explained or caused by the explanatory variable (word of mouth) while 33.4% is unexplained. This remaining 33.4% could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The value of R-square is an indication of a relationship between the dependent variable (quality service delivery in hotels) and the independent variable (word of mouth). The value of the adjusted R² is 0.652. This

shows that the regression line which captures 65.2 per cent of the total variation in quality service delivery in hotels is caused by variation in the explanatory variable specified in the model with less than 34.8 per cent accounted for the stochastic error term. The F-statistic was also used to test the overall significance of the model. The F-value of 45.936 is an indication that the model is statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance at the degree of freedom $df_1 = 1$ and $df_2 = 3$. Finally, the test of autocorrelation using Durbin-Watson shows that the Durbin-Watson value of 0.504 falls outside the specified region of the Durbin-Watson partition curve. Hence, we can clearly say that there exists some degree of autocorrelation.

Test of Hypothesis One

H_{01} : Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on quality service delivery.

To test the hypothesis:

The F statistic test was adopted to test the significance of the model.

Decision rule: If the probability of the F-statistic obtained from the result is at 5% α level of significance, the study would reject the null hypothesis, H_0 and accept the alternative hypothesis, H_1 .

The F statistic with 45.936 has a probability of 0.00% level of significance. Since the probability of the F statistics is below 5% level of significance, we would reject the null hypothesis, H_0 and therefore conclude that word-of-mouth has a significant effect on quality service delivery.

Data Analysis for Hypothesis Two

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.929 ^a	.863	.857	.51058	.990

a. Predictors: (Constant), WORD-OF-MOUTH

b. Dependent Variable: REPEAT PURCHASE

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	37.844	1	37.844	145.169	.000 ^b
Residual	5.996	118	.261		
Total	43.840	119			

a. Dependent Variable: REPEAT PURCHASE

b. Predictors: (Constant), WORD-OF-MOUTH

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.240	.335		.718	.480
WORD-OF-MOUTH	.990	.082	.929	12.049	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Repeat Purchase

The regression results show the relationship between word of mouth and customer experience repeat purchase. The coefficient of determination R-square of 0.863 implied that 86.3% of the sample variation in the dependent variable customer experience repeat purchase is explained or caused by the explanatory variable while 13.7% is unexplained. This remaining 13.7% could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The high value of R-square is an indication of an excellent relationship between the dependent variable (customer experience repeat purchase) and independent variable (word of mouth). The value of the adjusted R² is 0.788. This shows that the regression line which captures 85.7 per cent of the total variation in customer experience repeat purchase is caused by variation in the explanatory variable specified in the model with less than 14.3 per cent accounted for the stochastic error term. The F-statistic was also used to test the overall significance of the model. The F-value of 145.169 is an indication that the model is statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance at the degree of freedom df1= 1 and df2= 3. Finally, the test of autocorrelation using Durbin-Watson shows that the Durbin-Watson value of .990 falls outside the specified region of Durbin-Watson partition curve. Hence, we can clearly say that there exists some degree of autocorrelation.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀₁: Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on customer experience and repeats patronage.

To test the hypothesis:

The F statistic test was adopted to test the significance of the model.

Decision rule: If the probability of the F-statistic obtained from the result is at 5% α level of significance, the study would reject the null hypothesis, H₀ and accept the alternative hypothesis, H₁.

The F statistic with 145.169 has a probability of 0.0% level of significance. Since the probability of the F statistics is below 5% level of significance, we would reject the null hypothesis, H_0 and therefore conclude that Word-of-mouth has no significant effect on customer experience and repeat patronage.

Conclusion

The key performance indicator for hotel business has become by service quality. Service quality has become a great differentiator and the most potent competitive advantage which many leading services. Service of a hotel include restaurants, rooms, clubs, are no longer considered as extravagance facilities. Among many people, these services are the basic element of lifestyle. Achieving competitive advantages have been imperative for success in the hotel industry. When the lodging industry has become more increasing competition, the hotel needs to retain the customers with service quality.

Customer satisfaction has been relevant to the hospitality industry. High service quality and improving customer satisfaction are widely realized as essential factors leading to the success of a hotel. If customers are satisfied, they are more likely to positive word-of-mouth. The relationship between overall satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth has been researched for many years. This study extended that research to examine the antecedent effects of overall satisfaction as well as the effect of service quality on overall satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth, and how it relates to positive word-of-mouth. However, the study concludes that word-of-mouth significantly affects quality service delivery.

Recommendations

- (i) Hotel managers should target perceive communication of service quality if they intend to produce growth in hotel effectively and efficiently.
- (ii) Hotels should train the staff on the use of word-of-mouth in carryout their activities in hotel operations.
- (iii) The hospitality industry should ensure that their staff have the characteristics of word-of-mouth such as smile, good eye contact, good posture, speak clearly, hygiene and versatile in knowledge.

References

- Adele, D. (2013). A model of customer satisfaction and retention for hotels. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 7(3), 1-23.
- Cavent, D. (2013). Guest satisfaction and guest loyalty study for hotel industry: ProQuest.
- Choi, J. J. & Chu, G. T. M. (2001). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioural intentions in service environments. *Journal of Retailing*, 76(2), 193-218.
- Donimici, T. (2010). Service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty: A test of mediator. *International Business Research*, 3(4), 72-80.
- Igbojiekwe, R. L. (2009). Lodging quality index (LQI): Assessing customers' perceptions of quality delivery. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15(2), 94-104.
- Juwaheer, & Ross, S. C. (2003). The relationship between restaurant service quality and consumer loyalty among the elderly. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 25(3), 320-326.
- Kelvin A., Howat, G., Absher, J., Crilley, G., & Milne, I. (2011). Measuring customer service quality in sports and leisure centres. *Managing Leisure*, 1(2), 77-89.
- Kohlmayr Y. (2012). QUESC: An instrument for assessing the service quality of sport centers in Korea. *Journal of Sport Management*, 9(2), 208-220.
- Litrin, F. (2006). LODGSERV: A service quality index for the lodging industry. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 14(2), 277-284.
- Little, D. (2011). The determinants of perceived service quality and its relationship with satisfaction. *Journal of services marketing*, 14(3), 217-231.
- Mohsin, A., & Lockyer, T. (2010). Customer perceptions of service quality in luxury hotels in New Delhi, India: an exploratory study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(2), 160-173.
- Mohsin, A., Hussain, I., & Khan, M. (2011). Exploring service quality in luxury hotels: Case of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Journal of American Academy of Business, Cambridge*, 16(2), 296-303.
- Natuhwere, B. (2011). Breakfast service quality in Restaurant Gui, Hilton Helsinki Airport Hotel. (Bachelor's Degree Thesis.), University of Applied Science.

- Rousan P., Seth, N., Deshmukh, S., & Vrat, P. (2005). Service quality models: A review. *International journal of quality & reliability management*, 22(9), 913-949.
- Schultz, J. (2012). Service quality in Penang hotels: A gap score analysis. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 12, 19-24.
- Sriyam, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis with reading* (Vol. 4th). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L. L. (1990). *Delivering quality service: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations*: Simon and Schuster.