

Guests' Perception of Hotel's Image in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria: The Role of Employees' Performance

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Abstract

Of the several factors that contribute to guests' perception of hotel's image, employees' performance is rarely discussed. On this premise, this study explored guest perception regarding the impact of employees' performance on the image of hotels in Ilorin metropolis. It adopted a descriptive research design, and data were collected through objective and structured procedures. The accessible population were guests in 3 major hotels in Ilorin metropolis. Due to the infinite population size, 120 questionnaires were distributed (40 per hotel) using simple random sampling. Data were analysed through relative frequency analysis. The findings of this study indicate that employees' performance in hotel could control the hotel's image and aid its marketing. Employees' performance can equally improve the patronage of the hotel as it reflects hotel value thereby enhancing customer loyalty. The paper draws conclusions and identify the guest perception on the influence of employees' performance on hotel image and gives signal to the human resource management of the hospitality industry to take remedial actions on the overall practice of performance on marketing of hotel image in order to minimize those factors leading to negative perception of guests. This study recommended that the management of hotels should put in good efforts in the recruitment of qualified employees, as this will influence the effective performance and productivity of the employee, and the hotel at large.

Keywords: Staff Behaviour, Guest Perception, Hotel Image, Professionalism, Reputation

1.0 Introduction

In the hospitality industry, an organization desire effective employee performance in other to aid the marketing of its image system. This can also be used to attain customer loyalty, and promote repeat business with them. In this world of competition as organizations effort is to remain competitive and sustainable, human resource (HR) professionals and strategic planners should collaborate strongly in designing strategies, which are more productive and useful. Based on many research, the most winning organizations in the 21st century will be those who focus on integrated HR processes and systems. On the influence of employee's performance and organisation's image, hotel businesses are not left out. So the role of human resource becomes more and more vital which includes personnel related areas such as job design, resource planning, performance on marketing of hotel image system, recruitment, selection, compensations and employee relations. Among these functions, the most critical one that bring global success is performance on marketing of hotel image. (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020)

Prior studies reveal that employee perception of fairness of performance on marketing of hotel image is a significant factor in employee acceptance and satisfaction of performance on marketing of hotel image. A good perception will create a positive working environment in the organization, while a negative perception will affect the company performance (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2018). These perceptions depend on the manager or supervisor's actions and behaviors toward the employee. If performance on marketing of hotel images is perceived as unfair, therefore, the benefits can diminish rather than enhance employee's positive attitudes and performance.

Specifically, the perceptions of procedural unfairness can adversely affect employee's organizational commitment, job satisfaction, trust in management performance, as well as their work related stress, organization citizenship behavior, theft, and inclination to litigate against their employer. During the last ten years, the number of studies which examined the effect of performance on marketing of hotel image system on employee had increased. In another study by Alsheikh *et al.*, (2018), revealed that there was a direct relationship between performance on marketing of hotel image satisfaction and employee outcomes, which is mostly job satisfaction among employees.

Moreover, a number of studies have provided support for the argument that performance on marketing of hotel image has remained a problem which is vague and perhaps unsolvable in human resource management. Besides the study conducted by Bhaskar & Khera (2013), revealed that very little is known about the relationship between performance on marketing of hotel image quality and employee out comes, especially in identifying the effect of performance on marketing of hotel image quality towards the job satisfaction. However, this study attempts to examine the guest perceptions on the influence of employee's performance on marketing of hotels image in Ilorin metropolis.

Performance on marketing of hotel image helps the success of the organization in realizing strategic purpose and increasing of effective working process through continuous improvement of individuals' performance and process along with focusing on weak improvable points (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004). With due attention to the fact that performance on marketing of hotel image is one of the main parts of organizational life and could consist of several organizational processes such as measuring of work performance, establishing of purpose and reward management. In comparison with the numerous benefits attained from implementing performance on marketing of hotel image system, as research findings, many scholars indicated that, performance on marketing of hotel image practice generally suffer from so many problems in relation to the subjective nature of the performance on marketing of hotel image criteria, the irrelevant of the criteria used to appraise the performance of the employees, like: shortage of skills and knowledge of the raters, the subjectivity, favoritism and biasness of the raters, lack of continuous documentation and inability to provide on time feedback are some of the problems most employees raise (Alsheikh *et al.*, 2018).

As a result, employees' perception towards the performance appraisal system is adversely affected. Such situations also significantly influenced the overall job dissatisfaction of employees' and decrease the expected work outcomes in the form of work performance, affective commitment and turnover intention as well. Whereas, if employees are satisfied with the implementation of hotel operating procedure, they will be

perceived well and exert every possible effort to carry out their responsibilities and duties assigned to them efficiently and effectively.

Thus, the organization to which they belong will be more productive and successful. For instance, in order to positively influence employees' behavior & future development it has been frequently argued that, employee must experience positive reactions in the practice of performance on marketing of hotel image; if not any appraisal system will be doomed to failure. Having these differences in perceptions of employee about the existing performance on marketing of hotel image practice based on their perception of fairness is a big question in Hotels to the hotel manager. This study therefore, seeks to evaluate the guest perceptions on the influence of employee's performance on marketing of hotels image in Ilorin metropolis.

This study is guided by two main objectives: to assess guests' perception on the importance of employees' performance in marketing of hotel image; and to examine the guest perception on the role of employees' performance in customer satisfaction and customer retention.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Perception of Performance on Marketing of Hotel Image in Organizations

Performance on hotel image gives a positive or a negative impact to the employees. It shows whether the employees get motivated to perform better, if they receive a good feedback, or if they get de-motivated and loose interest in their job. So far, we have come across the purpose and use of performance on marketing of hotel image in the organization, but the perception i.e. the understanding of performance on hotel image is not taken into consideration in most cases which is important for the employee as well as the organization. If the employees don't recognize this, they would suffer unnecessarily in the organization. Reason being that, an employee has a certain level of expectation from his company when he joins it; he expects some kind of growth from it, also the organization expects a lot from him. But, a negative feedback of performance would largely hamper him mentally and make him loose his interest in his job. There would be change in his attitude, which would be problematic for him as well as the organization. He would be demotivated to achieve the organizational objectives. Many employees have a view that, their promotion or salary increments largely depends on their performance. Employees therefore are in a dilemma and consider this situation as 'survival of the fittest' (Ahmed *et al.*, 2011).

They know for a fact that, their performance is only taken into consideration at the end of the day, and in order to grow in the company they need to be proactive towards their work. The feedback the employee receives from his superior, may simply describe the level of performance achieved Alsheikh *et al.*, (2018). Hence, it is important for the managers to conduct the appraisal process properly. Employees can only accept criticism if it is useful and relevant to them. Managers should know how to provide information regarding improvement in performance and how to present criticism as well. Managers feel that whenever they have to provide a negative feedback, the employee is most likely dejected and de-motivated. Employees who believes that the appraisal system is under any kind of bias and misunderstanding between them and the managers are, most likely dissatisfied by their work and may decide to leave their jobs (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020).

The Essence of Performance on Marketing of Hotel Image

Appraisal is the analysis of the success and failures of an employee and the assessment of their suitability for training and promotion in the future. According to Cooke (2000), appraisal is a key component of performance management of employees. When effective, the appraisal process reinforces the individual's sense of personal worth and assists in developing his/her aspirations. Accurate appraisals are crucial for the evaluation of recruitment, selection and training procedures. It can also increase employee motivation through the feedback process and may provide an evaluation of working conditions and it can improve employee productivity by encouraging the strong areas and modifying the weak ones. Furthermore, employee evaluation can improve managerial effectiveness by making supervisors more interested in and observant of individual employees.

Outcomes of Effective Performance on Marketing of Hotel Image

Common outcomes of an effective performance on hotel image process are employees' learning about themselves, employees' knowledge about how they are doing, employees' learning about 'what management values' (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). According to Ahmed *et al.*, (2011), outcomes of effective performance on marketing of hotel image are improvement in the accuracy of employee performance and establishing relationship between performance on tasks and a clear potential for reward. Alfandi (2020), told five outcomes i.e. use of evaluations as feedback to improve performance, reduced employee turnover, increased motivation, existence of feelings of equity among employees, linkage between performance and rewards. Fernandez & Moldogaziev (2013), found outcomes like reduced employee stress, review of overall progress, linkage between current performance and employee's goals, and development of specific action plans for future.

Problems in Performance on Marketing of Hotel Image

Ideally, rating supervisors should be completely objective in their appraisals of employees. Each appraisal should directly reflect an employee's performance, not any biases of a supervisor. Of course, this is impossible to do perfectly as most raters either intentionally or unintentionally commit errors. Raters need to be aware of these biases, so that their effect on the appraisals can be limited or eliminated. According to Alfandi (2020) some of these errors are:

- a. **Unclear standards:** Different supervisors would probably define good performance, fair performance, and so on, differently. The same is true of such traits as quality of work or creativity. There are several ways to rectify this problem; the best way is to develop and include descriptive phrases that define each trait, for example, by specifying on the evaluation form what is meant by such things as outstanding, superior, and good quality of work. This specificity results in appraisals that are more consistent and more easily explained Ahmed *et al.*, (2011).
- b. **Lack of Objectivity:** A potential weakness of traditional performance on marketing of hotel image method is that they lack objectivity. In the rating scale method, for example, commonly used factors such as attitudes, loyalty, and personality are difficult to measure. In addition, these factors may have little to do with an employees' job performance. Some subjectivity will always exist in appraisal methods. However, employee appraisal based primarily on personal characteristics may place the evaluator and the organization in untenable positions with the employee and equal

employment opportunity guidelines. The firm may be hard pressed to show that these factors are job-related (Tuffaha, 2020).

- c. **Bias:** Rater bias occurs when a rater's value or prejudices distort the rating. Rater bias may be unconscious or quite intentional. If a manager has strong dislike of certain ethnic group, this bias is likely to result in distorted appraisal information for some people. Halo error occurs when a manager generalizes one positive performance features or incident to all aspects of employee performance resulting in a higher rating (Alfandi, 2020).
- d. **Leniency/Strictness:** Giving undeserved high rating is referred to as leniency. The behavior is often motivated by a desire to avoid controversy over the appraisal. Some managers may rate their subordinates very high either because they want to show that the work under their responsibilities is proceeding very well or because they do not have the ability to convince their subordinates that their performances deserve this rating. Another problem which is closely connected to leniency is strictness. Strictness is rating subordinates on the lower level of the rating system. Some managers went to show the chief or head of the organization that they care for the organization that they work at. In addition, it is also a good excuse before the higher level management that the subordinates under their supervision are not performing their tasks as well as they should thus, the overall performance of the department is unsatisfactory due to the existence of these subordinates (Tuffaha, 2020)
- e. **Central tendency:** Central tendency is a common error that occurs when employees are incorrectly rated near the average or middle of the scale. This practice may be encouraged by some rating scale systems that require the evaluator to justify in writing extremely high and extremely low rating .with such system; the rater may avoid possible criticism by giving only average ratings. However, since these ratings tend to cluster in the fully satisfactory range, employees do not often complain about this (Tuffaha, 2020).
- f. **Recent Behavior Bias:** When rating is not based on the entire appraisal period and just on the last month of the appraisal this is called recent behavior bias. The performances of the subordinate may be outstanding during the year (if the appraisal is done annually) and on the last month the performance of the subordinate worsen. The rater evaluates the subordinate based on the last month and forgets the eleven –month outstanding performance. It is only natural for a rater to remember recent behavior more clearly than action from the more distant past. However, formal performance on marketing of hotel images generally cover a specified time, and an individual's performance over the entire period should be considered. Maintaining records of performance throughout the appraisal period helps avoid this problem (Tuffaha, 2020).
- g. **Personal Bias:** This pitfall occurs when supervisors allow individuals differences such as age, religion, seniority, sex, appearance or other arbitrary classification to affect the rating they give to appraise. If the performance on marketing of hotel image is examined by higher level managers, this problem will be overcome. This pitfall is not only detrimental to employee morale, but it is also blatantly illegal and can result in costly litigation. In conducting performance on marketing of hotel images, managers must be careful to avoid making rating errors. Four of the more common rating errors are strictness or leniency, central tendency, halo effect and recency of events (Elnaga & Imran, 2013).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Based on the above conceptual literature reviewed the graphical relationship of the independent and dependent variables e represented as the conceptual framework of this study as follows:

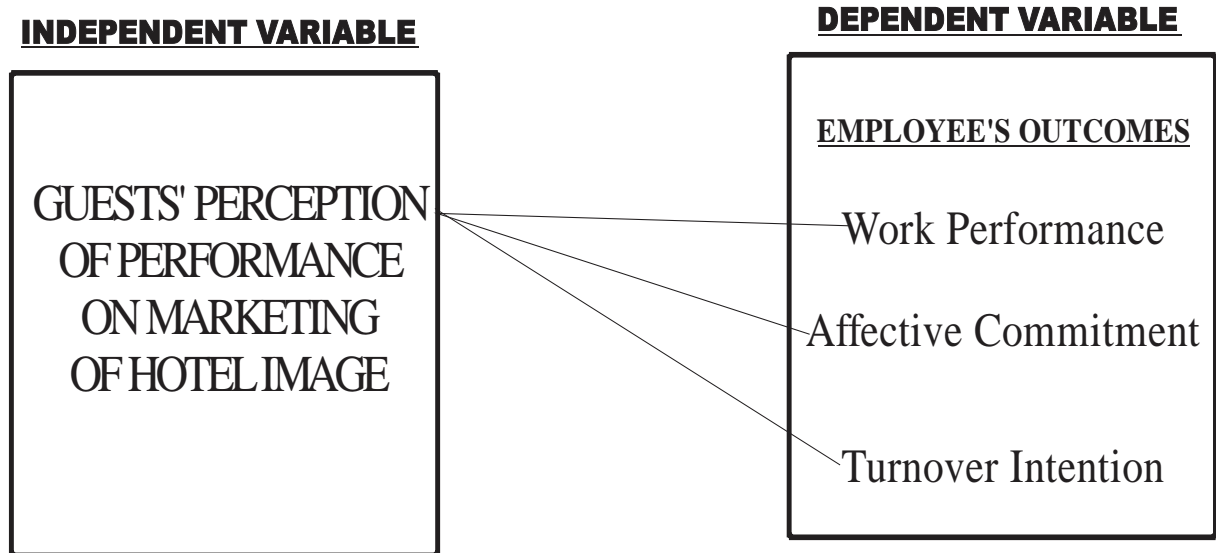


Fig.1: Showing the independent and dependent variables of the study

Source: Authors' design (2024)

3.0 Methodology

The research adopted a survey and descriptive design to ensure relevance to research questions and collected information through objective and economical procedures. The accessible population was guests in selected hotels in Ilorin metropolis, with a study population comprising guests in the lobby of three selected hotels. Three major hotels were sampled; the selection was based on perceived level of patronage and proximity to business area. Due to the infinite population size and a limited time frame, 120 questionnaires were distributed (40 per hotel) using simple random sampling. A carefully formulated questionnaire, validated with the help of the supervisor, served as the major instrument. The data collection involved a face-to-face method, with a high return rate within the agreed timeframe. Description analysis using simple percentage/frequency tables was employed to analyze the data, aligning with the study objectives.

4.0 Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Section A: Bio-Data of the Respondents

	<i>Biodata</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1.	Sex		
	Male	64	53.3%
	Female	56	46.7%
	Total	120	100%
2.	Marital Status		
	Married	43	35.8%
	Singled	67	55.8%
	Divorce	10	8.4%
	Total	120	100%
3.	Age		
	Less than 20	02	1.7%
	21-30	36	30.0%
	31-40	64	53.3%
	41-50	11	9.2%
	51 and above	07	5.8%
	Total	120	100%
4.	Level of Education		
	ND/NCE	16	13.3%

	HND/B.Sc.	47	39.2%
	M.Sc./MBA	34	28.3%
	Others	23	19.2%
	Total	120	100%
5	Employment Status of the Respondent		
	Unemployment	15	12.5%
	Self-employed	24	20%
	Employed (Government Sector)	34	28.3%
	Employed (Private Sector)	47	39.2%
	Total	120	100%

Source: Authors' compilation (2024)

From the table above, evidence shows that 53.3% of the respondents were male while 46.7% were female. From the above illustration, male responded to the questions more compare to the female.

From the table above, it is observed that 35.8% respondents were married, 55.8% were single while 8.4% respondents were divorced. Equally, 1.7% respondents were less than or equal to 20, 30% respondents were between 21-30 years, 53.3% respondents were between 31-40 years, 9.2% respondents were between 41-50 years and finally, 5.8% respondents were 51 and Above.

The above table proves that 13.3% of the respondents from the field survey were ND/NCE holder, 39.2% respondents were HND/BSc certificate holder, (28.3%) have MSc/MBA and (19.2%) of the respondents had higher qualifications. The table also reveals that (12.5%) of the respondents are unemployment, (20%) of the respondents are Self-employed, (28.3%) of the respondents are employed (government sector), while (39.2%) of the respondents employed (private sector)

4.2 Section B: The Importance of Employees’ Performance in Marketing of Hotel Image.

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA		A		U		D		SD		TOTAL	
		FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%
1	Employees’ performance in hotel could control the hotel image.	64	53.3	44	36.7	6	5	3	2.5	3	2.5	120	100
2	Employees’ performance aids hotel marketing.	78	65	30	25	8	6.6	2	1.7	2	1.7	120	100
3	Employees’ performance can improve the patronage of the hotel.	89	73.4	27	22.5	1	0.8	3	2.5	1	0.8	120	100
4.	Employees’ performance reflects hotel value.	62	51.7	41	34.1	12	10	3	2.5	2	1.7	120	100
5.	Employees’ performance translates to customer loyalty for hotels.	68	56.7	40	33.3	3	2.5	4	3.3	5	4.2	120	100

Source: Authors’ compilation (2024)

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Evidence shows that 53.3% of the respondents were male while 46.7% were female, it is observed that 35.8% respondents were married, 55.8% were single while 8.4% respondents were divorced. 1.7% respondents were

less than or equal to 20, 30% respondents were between 21-30 years, 53.3% respondents were between 31-40 years, 9.2% respondents were between 41-50 years and finally, 5.8% respondents were 51 and Above. 13.3% of the respondents from the field survey were ND/NCE holder, 39.2% respondents were HND/BSc certificate holder, (28.3%) have MSc/MBA and (19.2%) of the respondents had higher qualifications. (12.5%) of the respondents are unemployment, (20%) of the respondents are Self-employed, (28.3%) of the respondents are employed (government sector), while (39.2%) of the respondents employed (private sector).

Majority (53.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that Employees' performance in hotel could control the hotel image while (2.5%) strongly disagree with this notion. Also, (1.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree that Employees' performance aids hotel marketing, while (65%) strongly agree that Employees' performance aids hotel marketing. (73.4%) of the respondents strongly agree that employees' performance can improve the patronage of the hotel, while (2.5%) of the respondents disagree that that employees' performance can improve the patronage of the hotel. Also from the data (2.5%) of the respondents disagree to the notion that employees' performance reflects hotel value., while (51.7%) of the respondents agree that employees' performance reflects hotel value. (4.7%) of the respondents disagree to the notion that Employees' performance translates to customer loyalty for hotels, while (56.7%) of the respondents agree that Employees' performance translates to customer loyalty for hotels.

Majority (75%) strongly agree that employees' performance determines customer level of satisfaction while (3.3%) disagree with this notion. Also, (4.2%) of the respondents disagree that Employees' performance is an indicator of service quality, while (65%) strongly agree that Employees' performance is an indicator of service quality. Moreover, (56.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that Employees' performance is a very important variable that can influence the overall evaluation of the hotel performance, while (8.3 %) of the respondents strongly disagree that the Employees' performance is a very important variable that can influence the overall evaluation of the hotel performance. Also From the data (6.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree with the notion that Employees' performance has a crucial role in the selection of hotel by guest/customer, while (46.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that Employees' performance has a crucial role in the selection of hotel by guest/customer. (4.2%) of the respondents disagree with the notion that Employees' performance determines the overall guest experience of the hotel., while (60.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that Employees' performance determine the overall guest experience of the hotel.

Basically, the data presented in the table highlights the perceptions regarding the impact of employees' performance on various aspects of a hotel's operations. Here is an analysis of the findings based on the provided information:

Control of Hotel Image: 53.3% of respondents believe that employees' performance directly influences the image of a hotel. This indicates a strong correlation between staff performance and how the hotel is perceived by guests and the public.

Aiding Hotel Marketing: 65% of respondents acknowledge that employees' performance plays a crucial role in supporting hotel marketing efforts. This suggests that satisfied guests, resulting from excellent employee performance, can act as brand ambassadors and attract new customers.

Improving Patronage: 73.4% of respondents agree that employees' performance can enhance the patronage of a hotel. This underscores the importance of staff behavior and service quality in attracting and retaining customers.

Reflecting Hotel Value: 51.7% of respondents associate employees' performance with reflecting the value of a hotel. This implies that guests perceive the quality and value of a hotel based on interactions with its staff.

Customer Loyalty: 56.7% of respondents believe that employees' performance directly translates to customer loyalty for hotels. This emphasizes the role of staff in building long-term relationships with guests.

In relation to the above findings, a study conducted by Alsheikh *et al.*, (2018), employee performance significantly impacts guest satisfaction and overall hotel reputation. Equally, a report by Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration as stated by Tuffaha (2020), highlighted the link between employee engagement and improved customer experiences in hotels. Similarly, research published in the International Journal of Business and Management by Ahmed *et al.*, (2020) emphasized the importance of employee training and development in enhancing hotel service quality. This substantiates the findings of this work, emphasizing the need to examine the guest perceptions on the influence of employee's performance on marketing of hotels image in Ilorin metropolis. These findings underscore the critical role that employees play in shaping various aspects of a hotel's operations, from its image and marketing to customer loyalty. Investing in employee training, engagement, and satisfaction can yield substantial benefits for hotels seeking to enhance their competitiveness and reputation in the hospitality industry.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

It has been established that the employees' performance has a great influence on the hotel image, it aids marketing of hotels, it promotes customer retention, it yields customer satisfaction, it reflects quality service and it also determine the overall value and performance of hotels. This study tends to find out the influence of employee performance on hotel image in Ilorin metropolis. Accordingly, the study found out that employees' performance has a great influence on the hotel image and it aids the marketing of it products and services. Employees' performance also determines the level of customer satisfaction and can also facilitate retention of customer.

This study also revealed that employee performance promotes repeat business such as re-patronizing the hotel because of the level of satisfaction they get from the hotel, this will go a long way to improve the patronage of hotels as guest tend to visit places where their need is satisfied. In order to actualize every benefit of a good employee performance the management of hotels must put in good effort in the recruitment of staff and the training of staffs. It is important for the employees' to have a good affective organizational commitment and they must be a well monitored and controlled turnover of employees. The management of hotels should also put together some mouthwatering benefit in form of bonus, incentives and awards of excellence for outstanding staff. This will go a long way to gear the staffs to function effectively and efficiently which will be beneficial to the organization in the long run.

5.2 Recommendations

This study recommends that the management of hotels should put in good efforts in the recruitment of qualified employees, as this will influence the effective performance of the employees and the hotel at large. The management of hotels should have a good structure to monitor the performance of the employees as this will help to present a good image of the hotel to the customers and will help them to achieve highest level of performance. This will consequently aid the marketing of the hotel image, as the management of hotels can use employees' performance as a tool to gain customer loyalty.

Equally, employee performance should be efficient and effective because it determines the customer level of satisfaction. To achieve this, the management of hotels should monitor and control labour turnover, so as to achieve a stable level of performance. The management of hotels can mandate the training of staff as this will influence their efficient and effective performance. Hotel management should introduce some benefit and incentives for employees in order to motivate them to perform effectively.

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