EFFECT OF IN-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT ON GUESTS' PATRONAGE EXPERIENCE IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY (A CASE STUDY OF TWO HOTELS IN IKORUDU, LAGOS)

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess the effect of in-room entertainment on guests' patronage experiences in two hospitality industries in Ikorudu, Lagos. The study was carried out at Sheriffyt Royal Hotel and Suites and Jamadex Kings Hotel in Ikorudu, Lagos, Nigeria. An Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of management staff, members of Board of Directors, the Managing Director, functional managers, supervisors, and other workers of the two aforementioned hotels. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 35 respondents from the two hotels, and this gave a sample size of 70 respondents, which was used for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "In-Room Entertainment on Quest Patronage Questionnaire" (IEQPQ). A letter of introduction was written by the researcher to the management of the two hotels for permission to conduct the research in their organisation and for assistance and understanding. When permission was granted, the questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher for data collection, was administered to the respondents, and retrieved six days later from each respondent in the two selected hotels in Ikorudu, Lagos. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques, such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, for testing the hypotheses. The test for significance was done at a 0.05 alpha level and at 68 degree of freedom. Based on the findings of the study, it is observed that almost all segments of hotel guests, particularly upscale guests, think wireless internet is the most important amenity among items such as complimentary breakfast, bedding and pillow choices, pillow top mattress, and free parking. The study concluded that there is significant relationship between personalised welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage. There is significant relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage. One of the recommendations was that hotel managers are advised to understand their guests' needs in order to keep current customers and attract new customers' patronage to the hotel.

KEYWORDS: In-Room Entertainment, Guests' Patronage, Sheriffyt Royal Hotel & Suites, Jamadex Kings Hotel and Lagos State

Introduction

The hospitality industry has witnessed remarkable technological changes from the late 1980's to today. In-room entertainment technology amenities offer a "home away from home" comfort in guestrooms. Historically, hotel guests would experience new technologies in hotels before they were available in the mainstream of society (Beldona & Cobanoglu, 2007). Due to the rapid advances in technological innovation and the shortening of time for these innovations to come to the mass market, hotels are now challenged to supply an experience as good as or better than guests have available in their homes. Travelers have many choices among hotels. In this highly competitive environment for travelers, hotel managers should understand their guests' needs in order to keep current customers and attract new ones (Ananth, DeMicco, Howey, & Moreo, 1992; Howell, Moreo, & DeMicco, 1993; Sammons, Moreo, Benson, & DeMicco, 1999). Many hotels use technology as a value-added service to their guests.

When deploying technology as a value-added service, hotels can create differentiation, enhance guest satisfaction, and build lasting loyalty among customers (Cobanoglu, Ryan, & Beck, 1999). Since the expectations of hotel guests have changed radically in recent years, having a comfortable place to stay is no longer a problem. Contemporary travellers demand technology applications and amenities before, during, and after their stay in hotels (Collins & Cobanoglu, 2008). Today, the digitally-connected traveller wants a hotel room that lets them stay connected from the moment they arrive, while also enjoying the same technology they use at home. The term "in-room entertainment" doesn't capture the essence of the space a hotel guest enjoys, nor is it even a true reflection of that guest's needs. Entertainment provided by pay-per-view television or Blu-ray equipment is disconnected from the customer. Today, guests, technology, and entertainment are blended, coming together at the swipe of a fingertip.

In-room entertainment technology amenities include personalised welcoming messages on HD televisions, video on demand, high-speed wireless Internet, interactive TV systems, video games, in-room fitness, and many more. Hoteliers are beginning to invest in in-room entertainment-technology amenities in an effort to gain market share (Beldona & Cobanoglu, 2007). Given that technology is integral to a hotel stay, this study seeks to evaluate the importance and performance of in-room entertainment-technology amenities. Olsen, Connolly, and Allegro (2000) suggested that information technology is the single greatest force driving change in the hospitality industry and will continue to alter the way the industry conducts business in the future, regardless of property size, segment, or geographic location. In this regard, it has become important to continue to identify the amenities, services, and technology applications that guests demand from hotels. Such investigations enable managers to offer a meaningful set of guestroom technology applications to guests. Technology evolution has been significant, and these developments are coming at ever increasing speeds. Thus, there is a plethora of multimedia entertainment products for home, work, and on the go. Since customers have options when choosing a hotel, they may be increasingly expecting a wider variety of choices for entertainment in their hotel rooms. However, most hotels are indecisive about offering the latest technology to their customers (Deeb & Murray, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Since the expectations of hotel guests have changed radically in recent years, having a comfortable place to stay is no longer enough. Contemporary travellers demand technology applications and amenities before, during, and after their stay in hotels. However, due to the rapid advances in technological innovation and the shortening of time for these innovations to come to the mass market, hotels are now challenged to supply an experience as good as or better than what guests have available in their homes. Given that technology is integral to a hotel stay, this study will evaluate the importance and performance of in-room entertainment-technology amenities.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of in-room entertainment on guests' patronage experience in hospitality industry. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To examine the relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage.

2. To assess the relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered**:**

1. What is the relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage?

2. What is the relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage.

2. There is no significant relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Welcoming Messages on HD TV

High-end hotels welcome guests by displaying their names on the TV screen in the room. According to Eddy (2020), humans have used visual communication since prehistoric times. Visual communication is the use of visual elements to convey ideas and information, which include, but are not limited to, signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, industrial design, advertising, animation, and electronic resources. The encoding of a message is the production of the message. It is a system of coded meanings, and in order to create it, the sender needs to understand how the world is comprehensible to the members of

the audience. According to Bankovic (2013), in the process of encoding, the sender (i.e., encoder) uses verbal (e.g., words, signs, images, videos) and non-verbal (e.g., body language, hand gestures, facial expressions) symbols for which he or she believes the receiver (that is, the decoder) will understand. The symbols can be words and numbers, images, facial expressions, signals, and/or actions. It is very important how a message will be encoded; it partially depends on the purpose of the message.

Concept of High-Speed Wireless Internet

A wireless Internet service provider (WISP) is an Internet service provider with a network based on wireless networking. According to the Federal Communications Commission (2008), technology may include commonplace Wi-Fi wireless mesh networking or proprietary equipment designed to operate over open 900 MHz, 2.4 GHz, 4.9, 5, 24, and 60 GHz bands or licenced frequencies in the UHF band (including the MMDS frequency band), LMDS, and other bands from 6 GHz to 80 GHz. Initially, WISPs were only found in rural areas not covered by cable television or DSL. WISPs often offer additional services like location-based content, virtual private networking, and voice over IP. Isolated municipal ISPs and larger statewide initiatives alike are tightly focused on wireless networking. Further, WISPs have a large market share in rural environments where cable and digital subscriber lines are not available. With technology available, they can meet or beat the speeds of legacy cable and telephone systems. In urban environments, gigabit wireless links are common and provide levels of bandwidth previously only available through expensive fibre optic connections. Typically, the way that a WISP operates is by ordering a fibre circuit to the centre of the area they wish to serve. From there, the WISP will start building backhauls (gigabit wireless or fiber) to elevated points in the region, such as radio towers, tall buildings, grain silos, or water towers. Those locations will have access points to provide service to individual customers or backhaul to other towers where they have more equipment. The WISP may also use gigabit wireless links to connect a PoP (Point of Presence) to several towers, reducing the need to pay for fibre optic circuits to the tower.

Personalized Welcoming Messages on HD TV and Customer's Patronage

A new guestroom TV (interactive TV) is much more than a way to simply watch television; it is a device with a lot of functions and applications. Aside from entertainment, it can transform the way hotels communicate with their guests and can also personalise the experience (Bartelds, 2014). With this new TV system, upon entering the room, guests can see a personalised welcome message on the screen with the best suggestions. Hotels can begin anticipating every need with some suggestions on TV screens based on the information that hotels have in their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system about each guest, such as personal preferences, the purpose of travel, and services normally requested (Hopkins, 2014). For example, an offer to reserve a meeting room or a favourite drink may appear. It is also possible to transform the television into a digital concierge where guests and hotel staff can communicate directly, providing superior and customised service for every guest (Bartelds, 2014). With this system, guests can watch their favourite movie or show when it is most convenient for them. Some of the services they can access through the TV include viewing restaurant menus and wine lists in real time and booking a table, looking up directions, booking a massage, booking airport transfers and taxi services, ordering room service, booking an excursion, or checking out. The TV can also provide Wi-Fi, transforming it into a full-service computer (Bartelds, 2014).

High Speed Wireless Internet and Customer's Patronage

The Internet is one of the most important amenities for guests in a hotel (Karadag & Dumanoglu, 2009). A study of 1.2 million guests concluded that 71% of guests consider the speed of their Internet connection a key factor in their choice of hotel. In another survey with 1,800 hotel guests, 89.6% said that in-room internet is very important and 66.5% stated that in-room internet affects their decision when choosing a hotel (Hotel Internet Services, 2010). For almost all segments of hotel guests, but particularly for upscale guests, wireless Internet is the most important amenity among items such as complimentary breakfast, bedding and pillow choices, pillow top mattress and free parking. What hotel guests really want is fast Internet like they have at home for free. Although most hotels offer free Wi-Fi for their guests and it is considered a basic service, an increasing number of hotels are adopting a tiered pricing program. This is a plan hotels use to cover the expensive costs where customers have to pay for access to faster Internet and connecting more than one device (Horner, 2013). However, the 2012 North American Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Study suggests that charging guests for Internet use can have a negative impact on customer satisfaction (J.D. Power & Associates, 2012). Hotel employees focus on understanding the real needs of their guests in order to make their experience more personal and seamless (Hospitality Technology, 2014). One of the ways to meet the high expectations of tech-savvy customers is to upgrade their Wi-Fi networks. Some hotels decide to do it to improve the experience for mobile device users during their stay. One example is the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York, which has seen an 85% decrease in Internet-related complaints after the upgrade.

Methods

The study adopted an Ex-post facto research design. The study was carried out at Sheriffyt Royal Hotel and Suites and Jamadex Kings Hotel in Ikorudu, Lagos, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of management staff, members of Board of Directors, the Managing Director, functional managers, supervisors, and other workers of the two aforementioned hotels. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 35 respondents from the two hotels, and this gave a sample size of 70 respondents, which was used for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "In-Room Entertainment on Quest Patronage Questionnaire" (IEQPQ). A letter of introduction was written by the researcher to the management of the two hotels for permission to conduct the research in their organisation and for assistance and understanding. When permission was granted, the questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher for data collection, was administered to the respondents, and retrieved six days later from each respondent in the two selected hotels in Ikorudu, Lagos. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques, such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, for testing the hypotheses. The test for significance was done at a 0.05 alpha level and at 68 degree of freedom.

Results

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage. In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyse the data (see table 1).

TABLE 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Welcoming Messages (X)	961	13501		
			17198	0.99*
Customer's Patronage (Y)	1236	22028		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 68; N = 70; Critical R-value = 0.254

The above table 1 presents the obtained R-value of (0.99). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical R-value (0.254) at 0.05 level with 68 degree of freedom. The obtained R-value (0.99) was greater than the critical R–value (0.254). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage. In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data (see table 2).

TABLE 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
High-Speed Wireless Internet (X)	831	10127		
			14876	0.97*
Customer's Patronage (Y)	1236	22028		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 68; N = 70; Critical R-value = 0.254

The above table 2 presents the obtained R-value of (0.97). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical R-value (0.254) at 0.05 level with 68 degree of freedom. The obtained R-value (0.97) was greater than the critical R–value (0.254). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 1 was significant due to the fact that the obtained R-value (0.99) was greater than the critical R-value (0.254) at 0.05 level with 68 degree of freedom. This result implies that the result therefore means there is significant relationship between personalized welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage. The result is in agreement with the research findings of (Hopkins, 2014). The finding showed that Hotels can begin anticipating every need with some suggestions on TV screen based on the information that hotels have in their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system about each guest, such as personal preferences, the purpose of travel and services normally

requested. The result of the analysis caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was retained.

The result of the data analysis in table 2 was significant due to the fact that the obtained R-value (0.97) was greater than the critical R-value (0.254) at 0.05 level with 68 degree of freedom. This result implies that the result therefore means there is significant relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage. The result is in agreement with the research findings of (Horner, 2013). Finding showed that a plan hotels use to cover the expensive costs where customers have to pay for access to faster Internet and to connect more than one device. The result of the analysis caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was retained

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is observed that almost all segments of hotel guests, particularly upscale guests, think wireless internet is the most important amenity among items such as complimentary breakfast, bedding and pillow choices, pillow top mattress, and free parking. Therefore, it was revealed that there is significant relationship between personalised welcoming messages on HD TV and customer's patronage. There is significant relationship between high-speed wireless internet and customer's patronage.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1.	Hotel managers are advised to understand their guests' needs in order to keep current customers and attract new customers' patronage to the hotel.

2.	Since the expectations of hotel guests has changed radically in recent years. Guest no longer demands only a comfortable place to stay. Contemporary travelers demand technology applications and amenities that let them stay connected from the moment they arrive, while also enjoying the same technology they use at home. Therefore, mangers should see to the availability of these amenities.

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