EVALUATION OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT ON PERFORMANCE OF HOTEL INDUSTRY IN ERA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract
The advent of COVID-19 pandemic has brought about restrictions, confinement and devastation, on every industry, especially the hotel industry. The study evaluates the customer relationship management on performance of hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A total of 320 respondents (managers and front desk officers) drawn from 160 registered hotels in Enugu metropolis, represent the sample for the study due to its manageability. Enugu metropolis was used because it is the capital and most of the major hotels are located in the State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Customer Relationship Management on Performance of Hotel Industry in COVID-19 Questionnaire" (CRMPHICQ) and was validated by three experts from Department of Business Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained through Cronbach Alpha technique which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers through the help of six research assistants. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using T- test statistics. The study provided valuable information for hotel managers on how to manage their customers during this period of COVID– 19. The study also revealed how hoteliers should always gear up to counter any crisis and handle future distress. Due to intensity of the disease, the study recommends that management of hotel industry should develop diplomatic protocols and procedures in handling their customers for better service.

Key Words: Customer relationship Management, Customer service, Hotel, Performance, COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

Organizations in almost every sector have faced restrictions, imposition of partial lock downs, and financial crises which led many businesses lose their customers.

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The state of affairs on ground which has led to incomparable abnormality is generally a good reason for reduction in business flow, turnover rate and profit margin as well as possible alternatives especially in the hotel industry.

Hotel business is among the world's fastest growing unit in hospitality industry which generates substantial economic benefits, employment and encourages investments and innovation in the host countries especially in Nigeria. Hotel can be defined as a place that offers accommodation, food and beverages at a cost that enable it to make profit (Raghubalan & Raghubalan, 2015). A hotel, according to Tarmoezi and Manurung (2007), is a building that provides rooms with the supporting facilities such as the accommodation, food and beverage, laundry services, swimming pool and event planning among others. Hotel business aims at satisfying their customers and providing specific experiences for them. Hotel business in Nigeria is very lucrative and its revenue base and customer loyalty are not only influenced by the standards of services rendered but also by some geographical factors which include proximity to local and international airports, and other service centres (Okpala, 2015). This implies that, hotel industry is a business organisation that provides product and services to customers. Hotel industry, because of its nature of being service oriented, makes customer relationship management very important and sensitive since proper awareness of customers' needs and etiquette are required in developing stronger relationships with them.

Customer relationship management (CRM) is a broadly recognized, widely-implemented strategy for managing and nurturing company's interactions with customers, clients and sales prospects. It involves using technology to organize, automate and synchronize business processes, principally sales activities, marketing, customer service, and technical support (Zamil, 2011). According to Alshibly and Alokeli (2014), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the process of identifying, accepting and building appropriate mutually beneficial relationships with each customer and employee. The major goals of CRM is to locate, attract, and conquer new clients, foster and maintain a positive relationship with those the company already has, lure former clients back into the fold and reduce the costs of marketing and client service. Customer relationship management denotes a companywide business strategy embracing all client-facing departments and even beyond (Zamil, 2011). When an effective customer relationship management plan is developed; people, processes, and technology collaborate to increase profitability and reduce operational costs.

Scholars, practitioners and researchers have all shared various perspectives on what customer relationship management entails. Padmavathy (2012) also defined CRM as a set of customer-oriented activities supported by organizational strategy and technology, and is designed to improve customer interaction in order to build customer loyalty and increase profits over time. CRM as a modern marketing strategy came to the attention of hotel managers' in the early 1990s because of its focus on gathering customers' information and increasing the likelihood of customer satisfaction and retention (Sigala, 2005; Wu and Lu, 2012; Rahimi, 2017). Since then, it has been intensely adopted by different hotels to enhance their relationship with customers and increase the business's profits (Rahimi, 2017; Wu and Chen, 2012).

CRM solutions in hotels aim to seek, gather and store the right guests' information towards identifying and retaining the most profitable customers and improving the profitability of less profitable customers and developing the quality of the services (Rahimi and Gunlu, 2016; Rahimi and Kozak, 2016; Sigala and Connolly, 2004). Customer relationship management (CRM) is a successful marketing strategy, which has been proven to aid business performance, customer satisfaction and customer retention (Abu Kasim and Minai, 2009; Mohammed and Rashid, 2012). In the same vein, Mohammed (2012) sees "Customer relationship management (CRM) as a business strategy to select and manage the most valuable customer relationships. Successfully implemented CRM strategies in hotels not only increase customer lifetime values but also have significant and positive effects on business performance and customer satisfaction (Wu and Chen, 2012). These views and many others entails making proper customer service plan.

A customer service plan deeply examines customers' perceptions and expectations of a company, and guides the company through the process of bringing its customer service activities in line with customers' needs (Ingram, 2020), which is the major objective of customer relationship management. The service strategy is a distinctive approach employed by a firm to deliver valuable services and to create satisfaction to its customers (Kinoti, 2012 cited in Wanjiku & Mbugua, 2018). Organizations that implement the CRM concept in any of its forms reap its substantial benefits. CRM helps businesses to gain insight into the behaviour of their customers and modify their business operations to ensure that customers are served in the best possible way (Mohammed, 2012). Based on the intrinsic characteristics of the production and consumption of service organizations, it is necessary for organizations to build relationships with customers especially in

hotel industry (Gronroos, 2004). Today, many organizations are faced with significant challenges in the area of customer service and service delivery, both internally and externally (Wanjiku & Mbugua, 2018). The intensity of these challenges is higher in this era COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Agusi et.al (2020), COVID-19 is an infectious disease that causes respiratory illness with symptoms of cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty in breathing. COVID-19 patient presents with symptoms of severe pneumonia, including fever, fatigue, dry cough, and respiratory distress with fever and cough being the most common affecting almost 90 and 70% of infected subjects, respectively (World Health Organization, 2020)

In the recent time, this global health pandemic COVID-19, has drastically caused a lot of harm to people and businesses. The management of hotel industry is experiencing an unpredicted trend in its customer relationship management procedures, with new methods, tactics, targeted testing and tracing, health precautions, and an entirely projected different customer behavioural pattern, all geared towards creating a comfortable environment for their customers. COVID-19 also known as corona-virus has affected every industry across the country, and the hotel industry is among the most hit. Generally, it is agreed that the virus is easily transmissible and that the fatality rate is low when compared to previous pandemics such as SARS, Ebola and the bubonic plague (Gopalakrishnan, Peters & Vanzetti, 2020).

The effects of COVID-19 could be felt in every aspect of people's daily life such as: social distancing, restriction of movement, closing of all hospitality sectors, universities and schools, working from home and forcing the cancellation of events. These also have a huge dramatic impact on the hotel industry. In reality, the COVID-19 crisis has practically changed meeting, conferences and workshops etc in hotels into virtual sessions, this new normal across the world, bringing colleagues working distantly together with the use of zoom, video conferences for different business practices. This has led to the inability of hotels to host business meetings and events, resulting to less profit which has brought about low performance in every sector of the hotel industry. Considering hotels key performance indicators like occupancy rates, Average Daily Rate (ADR), and revenue per available room continues to reduce globally due to restriction of movement (Zhang, Cui, Xu, & Wang, 2020). In support of this, Jang and Wen (2020) noted that as events across the globe continue to be cancelled or postponed

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and hotel occupancy rates plummet, the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted severe blows on hoteliers worldwide.

According to Waikar and Hegde Desai (2015), fear and fancy, sensation and novelty, lure tourist to move out of home and explore. Moreover, as the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences have led to fears, worries and anxiety among travellers, it is especially important to show empathy and understanding in hotel services and to delight customers (Jiang, 2019) within this period of crises. Those whose occupation thrives on travelling and those who also have the resources for pleasure desperately want to lodge in hotels, but fear of the COVID-19 remains real. Now, as lockdown bans are been relieved, the shell-shocked are emerging. Meanwhile, hotel industry is resuming its activities, people are beginning to lodge when they travel with caution, hosting business meeting, wedding etc with regards to COVID-19 prevention procedures and guidelines that are been observed across all country. As the demand for service of the hotel industry is gradually picking, consumer behaviour in hotel has also transformed. In the views of Wanjiku and Mbugua (2018), consumer change in behaviour patterns and attitudes highly influences business growth and changes in the performance of the business.

There are lots of challenges and difficulties caused by COVID -19 in the hotel industry in Enugu state with respect to response and delivery towards an effective customer service to guests; such difficulties are aggravated by sanctions, health guidelines and protocols stipulated by the government and contagious nature of the virus. However, for hotels to understand the changing needs and distress of their customers, they need to know the best measures to adopt in order to maintain their customers and partners during this time of COVID-19. Notwithstanding these challenges, the hotel industry are coming up with new technologies to handle most of these health guidelines and protocols in staying safe from the virus such as: observing working guidelines like avoiding door handles, greetings and handshakes, Keeping a distance of at least 1.5 meters from other workers and individuals, use of masks and visors, flushing with the lid closed and washing utensils with dishwasher programed at 60°C. These and many others are guideline the hotel industry are very kin on implementing, but adhering to all the protocols without inconveniencing customers are the most important duty of sectors in the hotel industry. A technology like electronic check-in is a trending technology welcomed by the industry. In the words of Chan et al. (2020), COVID-19 is highly contagious via person-to-person transmission and people have been urged to

decrease personal contact and increase physical distance (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak can thus be expected to accelerate the penetration of Artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics technology into the hotel industry (Jian & Wen, 2020).

However, many businesses in the industry are finding the transformation challenging. Hotel managers have to opt for these strategies to improve on customer services during this period of COVID- 19. They need to redesign their CRM structure to fit in their organizational style and culture (Kotorov, 2002). In a statement made by Jian & Wen, (2020), due to the COVID-19 outbreak, customers will likely patronize hotels that offer reassuring lodging services and accommodation products in terms of hygiene and cleanliness. To this end, the authors suggest that hotels should implement regular hygiene surveillance at facilities via manual (i.e., staff rounds) and automated (e.g., robot-based) practices. Therefore, management of hotel industry that adhere to all these procedures and protocols are likely to improve. Also, in addition to staff training and motivation and establishment of appropriate reward systems should be determinant in staffs' involvement in implementing CRM (Osarenkhoe and Bennani, 2007) in this era to improve on performance.

Statement of the Problem

Like other industries around the world, Nigeria hotel industry has been heavily stormed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Hotel owners have found themselves with empty hotels, depleted cash reserves, as a result of restrictions in gathering, maintaining social distancing and additional cost of enhanced sanitization and safety protocols. The cancellation of flights, conferences, events and hotel reservations has left the industry services in sharp decline. With these myriad of challenges, the hotel industry still strives to give their customers outstanding services so as to maintain their loyalty and confidence. One useful way the management of hotel industry can achieve this is by recognizing and enhancing relationship with their customers through efficient and effective customer relationship management (CRM). This is because of its inherent ability of not only attracting but sustaining customer's loyalty and patronage. Effective CRM requires practices that ensure safety in line with COVID - 19 protocols.

Maintaining and serving customers during this era of global pandemic has been challenging and exhausting on hotel businesses in Enugu, getting the needed technologies, skilled personnel, and developing an effective and efficient

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customer relation system seem elusive and problematic. Hence, the need for creative and enhanced customer service that can tackle the challenges of today as well as provide future guidelines. Generally, the study sought to evaluate the customer relationship management on performance of hotel industry in the era of Covid- 19 pandemic in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to

1. Examine the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State
2. Find out CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State.
3. Find out the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID- I9 in Enugu State.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State?
2. What are CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State?
3. What is the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu?

Hypothesis

Ho$_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State

Ho$_2$: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State

Ho$_3$: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu State

Materials and Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design and was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research as described by Nworgu (2015) seeks to collect data and describe them in a systematic manner showing the characteristics features or facts about a given population. Therefore descriptive survey design was found suitable for this study as data collected from the

respondents in the hotel industry is described in a systematic manner without manoeuvring. The population for the study comprised managers and front desk officers of 160 hotels within Enugu metropolis as obtained from Enugu State Tourism Board (ESTB). A total of 160 managers and 160 front desk officers from the hotel industry making it a total of 320 respondents represent the sample for the study due to its manageability. The instrument used for data collection was (40) items structured questionnaire titled "Customer Relationship Management on Performance of Hotel Industry in COVID-19 Questionnaire" (CRMPHICQ) developed by the researcher. The instrument was divided into two parts (I and II). Part 1 solicited personal information while part 11 had three sections (A, B and C) each corresponding to purpose 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Section A which was designed to elicit information on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State are structured on a four-point response scales ranges from Very much aware (VMA=4); Much aware (MA=3); Somewhat aware (SA=2); Not aware (NA=1). Section B was designed to find out the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State are structured on a four-point response scales ranges from Strongly Agree (SA=4); Agree` (A=3); Disagree (D=2); Strongly Disagree (SD=1). Section C was also designed to find out the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu State are structured on a four-point response scales ranges from Very Often (VO=4); Often (O=3); Sometimes (S=2); Never (N=1). Three experts from Department of Business Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, validated the instrument. Their corrections and suggestions were used to produce the final copy of the questionnaire. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument through the administration of the questionnaire to 10 respondents; 8 managers and 2 front desk officers from hotel business in Nsukka; the analyses of the data yield 0.81. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers through the help of six research assistants. Out of 320 copies of questionnaire administered, 298 copies were returned representing about 93 percent rate of return. The data collected was analyzed using weighted mean to answer the research questions based on the same values of real limit numbers as follows: 4.00 – 3.50, 3.00 - 2.50, 2.00 -1.50 and 1.49 – 1.00 while standard deviation was used to determine the spread of the responses around the mean. To determine the items that were agreed on the customer relationship management on performance of hotel industry in the era of COVID- 19 pandemic, any item with mean of 2.50 (the real limit of 2.50) and above was accepted while any item with mean rating of less than 2.50 was considered

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not acceptable on customer relationship management on performance of hotel industry in the era of COVID- 19 pandemic. T-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis of no significant difference at P≤ 0.05 level of significance. Any item with a value of P ≥ 0.05 is accepted while the reverse is true for any item with a value of P ≤ 0.05 level of significant is rejected.

Results

Research Question One: What is the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State

S/N	Awareness on measures for controlling COVID-19:	$\bar{X}$	Std. dev.	Remark
1.	Introduction of mobile guest services through adverts	2.64	1.16	Accept
2.	Online check-in and check-out to avoid physical interaction with front-desk staff	2.85	0.79	Accept
3.	Encouraging customers to **share a post about their experiences on social media platforms**	2.70	0.90	Accept
4.	C**reating brand awareness through online adverts**	2.85	0.79	Accept
5.	**Advocate** these measures on own website to avoid uncertainties.	3.10	0.83	Accept
6.	Extensive protocols and procedures should be made with signage explaining the needs	3.11	0.89	Accept
7.	Advertising through goggle adverts and booking website	3.15	0.80	Accept
8.	Through the use of social media platforms	3.10	0.77	Accept
9.	Through the use E-mail to existing customers	3.05	0.81	Accept
10.	Covid -19 awareness training for the employees on how to handle crisis	3.40	0.74	Accept

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11. Generation of pamphlets or in room notes that outline the protocols and procedures	3.05	0.74	Accept
12. Ready to share verified information to customers from trusted source about Covid- 19	2.90	0.89	Accept
13. Advertising positive signals to the community	3.15	0.85	Accept
Grand Mean and Standard deviation	**3.00**	**0.52**	**Accept**

Key: $\bar{X}$ –Mean, Std. dev**.** –Standard Deviation

Result in the above Table 1 shows that managers and front desk officers of hotels are much aware on all the presented measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State with a mean range of 2.64 to 3.40. They are very much aware of COVID -19 awareness training for the employees on how to handle crisis and somewhat aware of Introduction of mobile guest services through adverts.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.74 to 1.16 which showed that the respondents, managers and front desk officers of hotels were not far from each other in their response with level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State.

Research question Two: What are the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the responses of managers and front desk officers on the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State

S/N	CRM strategies towards COVID-19 spread :	$\bar{X}$	Std. dev.	Remark
14.	Curiosity to use technology if any	3.40	0.49	Accept
15.	Immediate feedback from the staff	2.95	0.67	Accept
16.	Online interactive approach	3.00	0.71	Accept

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17.	Enthusiasms towards the procedures and protocols	3.15	0.66	Accept
18.	Assuring stability of the protocols and procedures	3.25	0.70	Accept
19.	Preparing a standard unforeseen event plans	2.40	0.67	Reject
20.	Establishing an emergency control	3.05	0.74	Accept
21.	Rearrangement of the food & beverages areas from logistics to preparation, delivery, consumption and payment methods	2.80	0.93	Accept
22.	Provision of special PPE equipment for employees, including masks, gloves, Plexiglas screens and hand-sanitizing gels	3.24	1.00	Accept
23.	Receptive offers to meet the needs of customers	3.05	0.74	Accept
24.	Redesigning spaces with signage delineating areas to avoid crowds and ensure a minimum distance as required by local regulations	2.80	0.93	Accept
	Grand Mean and Standard deviation	**3.00**	**0.44**	**Accept**

Key: $\bar{X}$ –Mean, Std. dev**.** –Standard Deviation

Result in the above Table 2 shows that managers and front desk officers of hotels agreed that 10 of the presented strategies with a mean range of 2.80 to 3.40 are the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State. However they disagreed that item 19 (Preparing a standard unforeseen event plans) is a CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.44 to 1.00 which showed that the respondents, managers and front desk officers of hotels were not far from each other in their response with the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State.

Research Question Three: What is the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on the responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu

S/N	Adoption of CRM:	$\bar{X}$	Std. dev.	Remark
25	Offering of free hand sanitizer to guests	3.70	0.64	Accept
26	Building up customer satisfaction related to hygiene and safety standards	3.60	0.49	Accept
27	Provision of face mask if guest is not wearing anyone	2.70	1.19	Accept
28	Cleaning the delivery counter in regular intervals	3.30	0.90	Accept
29	Ensure markings on the floor at reception to maintain social distancing	3.15	0.86	Accept
30	Installation of hand sanitizer dispensers at the entrance of the building	3.45	0.87	Accept
31	Luggage's are to be sanitise using a fogger machine	2.16	0.96	Reject
32	Doormat should be changed regularly and cleaned with authorized disinfectants.	3.30	0.78	Accept
33	Collecting detailed information of the Guest from the time of reservation	3.50	0.74	Accept
34	Upgraded cleaning and sanitising of all key areas with hospitals grade disinfection	3.10	0.89	Accept
35	Supervisions of guest by staff to observe if they are adhering to those protocols	2.94	1.25	Accept
36	Temperature check points on guests before entering the hotel premise	3.00	1.10	Accept

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37	Allow guests to order room service, access the hotel's information and services and chat live with a member of the guest services team	2.45	0.86	Reject
38	A dedicated health and safety manager, responsible for introducing the new measures and training staff.	2.85	0.97	Accept
39	Regular review of the entire process of cleaning bedding and linens	3.65	0.48	Accept
40	Increased control of water disinfection and purification systems	3.45	0.67	Accept
	Grand Mean and Standard deviation	**3.14**	**0.40**	**Accept**

Key: $\bar{X}$ –Mean, Std. dev**.** –Standard Deviation

Result in the above Table 3 shows that managers and front desk officers of hotels often adopt 14 out of 16 presented items on CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu. The mean ranged from 2.70 to 3.70. However they sometimes adopt items 31 and 37 with a mean of 2.16 and 2.45 respectively as CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.48 to 1.25 which showed that the respondents, managers and front desk officers of hotels were not far from each other in their response with respect to the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State.

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Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis on the difference between the mean scores of the managers and front desk on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean diff.	Calc. t-value	Critical t-value	Sig. Level	Decision
Front Desk Officer	149	2.9164	.55986	296	-.17501	0.004	-.2.921	0.05	Reject
Manager	149	3.0914	.47066						

The Table 4 above showed that there was a significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State.

The calculated p-value (0.004) is less than the level of significant (0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypotheses which state that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State.

Hypotheses Two: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis on the difference between the mean scores of managers and front desk officers on the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean diff.	Calc. t-value	Critical t-value	Sig. Level	Decision
Front Desk Officer	149	3.0531	.30356	296	0.05491	0.282	1.078	0.05	Accept

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Manager	149	2.9982	.54253

The Table 5 above showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State.

The calculated p-value (0.282) is greater than the level of significant (0.05). This leads to the acceptance of the null hypotheses which state that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State.

Hypotheses Three: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis on the difference between the mean scores of managers and front desk officers on the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean diff.	Calc. t-value	Critical t-value	Sig. Level	Decision
Front Desk Officer	149	3.1858	.28204	296	-0.02936	0.528	-0.632	0.05	Accept
Manager	149	3.2152	.49209						

The Table 6 above showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers on the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu.

The calculated p-value (0.528) is greater than the level of significant (0.05). This leads to the acceptance of the null hypotheses which state that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of managers and front desk officers the level of adoption of CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the level of awareness of hotel industry on measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State such as: introduction of mobile guest services through adverts, online check-in and check-out to avoid physical interaction with front-desk staff, encouraging customers to **share a post about their experiences on social media platforms, creating brand awareness through online adverts, advocate** these measures on own website to avoid uncertainties, among others shows that managers and front desk officers of hotels are much aware on all the presented measures for controlling COVID-19 in Enugu State with a mean range of 2.64 to 3.40. They are very much aware of COVID -19 awareness training for the employees on how to handle crisis and somewhat aware of Introduction of mobile guest services through adverts. This study is in line with the view of Chen, (2020) who found that the hotel industry should embrace reforms to facilitate multi-business and multi-channel platforms for their businesses. It is also in collaboration with Valle, (2020); Tripathi (2020) who found that hotels should endeavor to update channels to contact, attract, and sell to customers and a growing need for the adoption of innovative local strategies to improve awareness in general population related to COVID-19 and its preventive practices.

The findings from research question two revealed that, the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State such as: Curiosity to use technology if any, online interactive approach, rearrangement of the food & beverages areas from logistics to preparation, delivery, consumption and payment methods, Enthusiasms towards the procedures and protocols among others shows that managers and front desk officers of hotels agreed that 10 of the presented strategies with a mean range of 2.80 to 3.40 are the CRM strategies of hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State. However they disagreed that item 19 (Preparing a standard unforeseen event plans) is a CRM strategies of the hotel industry towards the control of COVID- I9 spread in Enugu State. This is in line with Sharma, Adhkary & Borah (2020), who observed that the innovative and creative approaches undertaken to rethink operations and vulnerabilities in the supply chain alongside harnessing technology to enable delivery of products, highlights the different measures and the complexity in responding to the effects of COVID-19. The findings are also in accordance with Eggers's (2020) suggestions that through proactive and innovative postures, firms can also create market opportunities at times of crises.

The findings from research question three also revealed that the level of adoption of CRM in the hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu state such as: Offering of free hand sanitizer to guests, building up customer satisfaction related to hygiene and safety standards, provision of face mask if guest is not wearing anyone, ensure markings on the floor at reception to maintain social distancing, installation of hand sanitizer dispensers at the entrance of the building, among others shows that managers and front desk officers of hotels often adopt 14 out of 16 presented items on CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu. The mean ranged from 2.70 to 3.70. However they sometimes adopt items 31 and 37 with a mean of 2.16 and 2.45 respectively as CRM in hotel industry in the era of COVID-19 in Enugu. Guest expects hoteliers to put into practice more rigorous safety/cleaning procedures; some of them are willing to pay for those supplementary safety measures. The above findings agreed with the views of Gursoy and Chi, (2020), Jiang and Wen (2020), Park et al.(2019) who reported that visible sanitizing efforts (such as hand sanitizers at the entry, staff wearing masks and gloves), implementing social distancing, limiting the number of customers served, more rigorous and frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces in common areas, and also employee training of health and safety protocols are the most important safety precautions customers expect from a restaurant and a hotel.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has definitely posed challenges to hotel industry with regard to CRM such that the way people live their life changed by the day. Hoteliers needs to discover what their customers want in terms of product and service, how best they can offer those products and services in this era of COVID-19. Hoteliers urgently need to incorporate all these measures in other to minimize the spread of the outbreak corona virus. Hotel management should be better trained so as to make innovative and effective decisions in any crisis situations or circumstances.

Recommendations

1. The management of hotel industry should continue with the hygiene and preventive measures until life recommence to its business as usual.
2. Hoteliers should also invest on automated transformation initiatives to enable them manage their customers effectively.
3. Hotel managements should conduct sensitization/ awareness programmes for staff on upgraded hygiene standards

4. Hotels should also make effort on how to update channels to contact, attract, and sell their products to customers.

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