The Influence of Marketing Strategies on Hotel Consumer`S Behaviours

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviours, focusing on Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda. The research methodology involves survey questionnaires distributed to the hotel's guests, with a high response rate across various hotels in Kigali. Chapter four of the study presents the findings, with a detailed analysis of the data collected from the respondents. The chapter is structured into two main sections: the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the presentation of findings based on the research objectives. The results of this study aim to provide insights into the impact of marketing strategies on consumer behaviours in the hotel industry, specifically within the context of Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda. The study on the influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviours, specifically focusing on Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda, is a valuable contribution to the understanding of consumer preferences and behaviours in the hospitality industry. By utilizing survey questionnaires with a high response rate across various hotels in Kigali, the research findings are likely to offer significant insights into the effectiveness of marketing strategies in influencing consumer choices. Chapter four of the study, which presents the research findings, is structured in a well-organized manner with a focus on the demographic characteristics of the respondents and a detailed analysis of the data collected. This division allows for a comprehensive understanding of the consumer base and provides a solid foundation for interpreting the results based on the research objectives. The detailed analysis and presentation of findings in chapter four are essential for deriving meaningful conclusions regarding the impact of marketing strategies on consumer behaviours within the context of the hospitality industry, particularly at Kigali Serena Hotel. By examining the data collected from the survey questionnaires, the study is well-positioned to offer valuable insights that could potentially inform marketing decisions and strategies in the future. Overall, the study holds promise in contributing to the existing knowledge base on consumer behaviours in the hotel industry and has the potential to offer practical implications for marketing professionals and hotel managers, especially those operating in the Rwandan hospitality sector.

Keywords: Marketing strategies, Consumer behaviours, Hotel industry, Kigali Serena Hotel

I.   Introduction and Background of the Study

The study on recruitment strategies and brand performance in the Rwandan hotel industry is situated within a broader global context of the hospitality industry's increasing competitiveness and the critical role that effective recruitment plays in enhancing brand performance. According to a report by Deloitte on global hospitality industry trends, talent acquisition and retention are key challenges faced by the industry worldwide (Deloitte, 2019). This highlights the relevance of studying recruitment strategies in the context of brand performance not only in Rwanda but also in a global perspective.

On a continental level, the African hospitality industry is experiencing significant growth, with countries like Rwanda emerging as key players in the region. The African Development Bank (AfDB) reports that the hospitality sector in Africa is a significant contributor to economic development and job creation (AfDB, 2018). Understanding the relationship between recruitment strategies and brand performance in Rwanda's hotel industry can provide insights that are valuable not only at a national level but also within the broader African context.

At a regional level, East Africa, where Rwanda is located, is witnessing a rise in tourism and hospitality investments. The East African Community (EAC) Secretariat emphasizes the importance of skilled workforce development in the hospitality sector to support sustainable economic growth in the region (EAC, 2017). This underscores the regional significance of exploring how recruitment strategies impact brand performance in Rwandan hotels.

On a national level, Rwanda has positioned itself as a hub for tourism and hospitality in East Africa. The Rwanda Development Board (RDB) highlights the government's efforts to promote the hospitality sector through initiatives that attract both local and international visitors (RDB, 2020). Studying the specific context of Rwanda provides a microcosm for understanding the interplay between recruitment strategies and brand performance in a rapidly evolving national hospitality industry.

At a local level, individual hotels in Rwanda are constantly striving to differentiate themselves and enhance their brand reputation to attract customers in a competitive market. Research by local scholars such as Nyirahabimana (2018) emphasizes the need for effective human resource management practices in Rwandan hotels to ensure sustainable business success. This local perspective underscores the importance of examining recruitment strategies within the specific context of Rwandan hotels to contribute to both local industry practices and the broader global discourse on talent management in the hospitality sector.

The hotel industry is a significant contributor to the global economy, with an estimated 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals in 2018 (World Tourism Organization, 2019). In the regional context, Africa is experiencing a growth in tourism, with an increase of 8% in international tourist arrivals in 2018 compared to the previous year (World Tourism Organization, 2019).

In the national context, Rwanda has seen a significant development in its tourism sector in recent years. The country has positioned itself as a premier tourist destination in East Africa,

attracting visitors with its wildlife, natural beauty, and cultural heritage (Rwanda Development Board, 2019). The government of Rwanda has made tourism a priority and has implemented various strategies to promote the sector, including investing in infrastructure, improving visa processes, and marketing the country internationally (Rwanda Development Board, 2019).

The Kigali Serena Hotel is one of the leading luxury hotels in Rwanda, offering high-quality accommodation, dining, and conference facilities. The hotel targets both business and leisure travellers and aims to provide a memorable and unique experience to its guests. As the hotel industry in Rwanda continues to grow, it is important for hotels like Kigali Serena to understand the factors that influence consumer behaviour and to develop effective marketing strategies to attract and retain customers.

1.1 Problem Statement

Problem Statement: The influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviour is a critical area of research in the hospitality industry. However, there is limited research that specifically examines this relationship in the context of Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda.

According to a study by Nyamwenge et al. (2018), the success of a hotel largely depends on its ability to attract and retain customers through effective marketing strategies. Understanding the impact of these strategies on

consumer behaviour is crucial for hotel managers to develop targeted marketing campaigns and enhance customer satisfaction.

While there is a growing body of literature on marketing strategies and consumer behaviour in the hotel industry, most studies have focused on developed tourism destinations (Kim & Kim, 2018). There is a need for research that investigates this relationship in emerging tourism destinations like Rwanda, where the hospitality industry is rapidly growing.

Furthermore, Kigali Serena Hotel is an important case study due to its reputation as one of the leading luxury hotels in Rwanda. However, there is a lack of empirical research that specifically analyses the influence of marketing strategies on consumer behaviour at this hotel.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to fill this research gap by examining the influence of marketing strategies on consumer behaviour at Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda. By understanding the impact of marketing strategies on consumer behaviour in this specific context, hotel managers can develop effective marketing campaigns to attract and retain customers, ultimately leading to improved business performance.

1.2 Research objectives

1.2.1 General objective

The study's general objective was to investigate the relationship between influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer`s behaviours.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The research objectives for this study could include:

1. To examine the marketing strategies implemented by Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda.

2. To analyse the impact of these marketing strategies on consumer behaviour.

3. To identify the factors that influence consumers' decision-making process when choosing a hotel in Kigali, Rwanda, and how marketing strategies play a role in this process.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do marketing strategies implemented by Kigali Serena Hotel influence consumer behaviour?

2. What specific marketing tactics or channels are most effective in attracting and retaining customers for Kigali Serena Hotel?

3. How do consumer perceptions of Kigali Serena Hotel's marketing efforts impact their decision-making process when choosing a hotel in Rwanda?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the impact of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviour, particularly in the case of Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda. By examining this specific context, the study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and implications of marketing strategies within the hotel industry.

Firstly, the study sheds light on the importance of marketing in attracting and retaining hotel consumers. It explores the various strategies employed by Kigali Serena Hotel and evaluates their effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour. Understanding which marketing strategies are successful can help other hotels in Rwanda and beyond to develop effective marketing campaigns to attract and satisfy their target consumers.

Secondly, the study adds to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer behaviour. By analysing the specific case of Kigali Serena Hotel, it provides empirical evidence of how marketing efforts can shape consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making processes. This knowledge can be applied not only in the hotel industry but also in other sectors where marketing plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour.

Furthermore, the study has practical implications for hotel managers and marketers. It provides insights into the factors that influence consumer choices and preferences, allowing hotel managers to tailor their marketing strategies accordingly. By understanding the specific needs and preferences of their target consumers, hotels can develop targeted marketing campaigns that effectively communicate their unique value proposition and attract the desired clientele.

Lastly, the study contributes to the promotion of the hotel industry in Rwanda. By showcasing the success and impact of marketing strategies at Kigali Serena Hotel, the study highlights the potential of the Rwandan hotel industry and its ability to cater to the needs and preferences of both domestic and international tourists. This can encourage investment in the sector, leading to further growth and development of the country's tourism industry.

II.   Review of Related Literature

In this study's chapter, deal with the review of related literature that is made by the theoretical review.

The empirical review evolves from the previous empirical research that is related to the specific objectives of the study. The critical review and research gap identification analysis analyses and finds research gaps in prior research that are connected to the stated objectives. The theoretical framework concentrates on the theories that guide this research. The conceptual framework demonstrates the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer behaviours.

2.1 Theoretical review

2.1.1 Hotel Consumer Behaviours

Hotel consumer behaviour refers to the actions, motivations, and decision-making processes of individuals or groups who choose to stay in hotels (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Understanding consumer behaviour is crucial for hotels to develop effective marketing strategies that can attract and retain customers (Kandampully, 2000).

Numerous factors influence hotel consumer behaviour, including personal factors (e.g., demographics, personality traits), social factors (e.g., family, friends, reference groups), psychological factors (e.g., needs, motivations, attitudes), and situational factors (e.g., trip purpose, time constraints) (Huang & Hsu, 2009). These factors interact to shape consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchase decisions in the hotel industry (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2014).

Marketing strategies play a pivotal role in influencing hotel consumer behaviour. Effective marketing strategies can enhance customers' awareness, perception, and evaluation of hotels, ultimately leading to their choice and satisfaction (Kandampully, 2000). In the context of Kigali Serena Hotel, a luxury hotel in Rwanda, understanding the influence of marketing strategies on consumer behaviour is essential for optimizing its business performance.

Kigali Serena Hotel has implemented several successful marketing strategies that have contributed to its strong market position. Firstly, the hotel has established a strong online presence through its website and online booking platforms. This allows potential customers to easily access information about the hotel and make reservations, leading to increased bookings and revenue (Ridderstaat, 2017).

Secondly, Kigali Serena Hotel actively engages with customers through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. By regularly posting updates, sharing customer reviews, and responding to

inquiries, the hotel fosters a sense of community and builds relationships with its target audience (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

Lastly, Kigali Serena Hotel employs personalized marketing techniques to create tailored experiences for its guests. By understanding individual preferences and needs, the hotel can provide personalized recommendations, services, and promotions, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Choi & Chu, 2001).

Despite the success of Kigali Serena Hotel's marketing strategies, there is a research gap in understanding the specific influence of these strategies on consumer behavior. This gap is particularly relevant in emerging tourism destinations like Rwanda, where the hotel industry is growing rapidly (Ridderstaat, 2017). Therefore, this research proposal aims to investigate the influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviors at Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda.

2.1.2 Factors influencing hotel consumer behaviours

Factors influencing hotel consumer behaviour can include a variety of factors such as personal characteristics, social influences, and marketing strategies. According to Kim and Ma (2008), personal characteristics such as age, gender, income, and travel experience can significantly influence hotel consumer behaviour. For example, younger travellers may be more inclined to seek out budget accommodations, while older travellers may prioritize luxury and comfort.

Social influences also play a significant role in hotel consumer behaviour. According to Wang, Li, and Zhou (2016), social factors such as family, friends, and colleagues can influence hotel choice and satisfaction. For instance, positive word-of-mouth recommendations from friends or family members can increase the likelihood of a consumer choosing a particular hotel.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research proposal will be based on the theories and concepts related to marketing strategies and consumer behaviour in the hotel industry. The following theories will be considered:

2.2.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviours

This theory suggests that an individual's behaviour is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of this study, it can be applied to understand how marketing strategies can influence consumer behaviour at Kigali Serena Hotel. For example, if consumers have positive attitudes towards the hotel's marketing efforts, perceive them as socially acceptable, and feel that they have control over their decision to book a stay at the hotel, they are more likely to exhibit favourable consumer behaviour.

2.2.2 The Technology Acceptance Model

This model explores how individuals perceive and adopt new technologies. In the context of this study, it can be applied to understand how consumers perceive and respond to the hotel's online presence and social media engagement. For example, if consumers perceive the hotel's online platforms as easy to use, useful, and enjoyable, they are more likely to engage with them and make bookings.

2.2.3 The Consumer Decision-Making Process

This framework outlines the various stages that consumers go through when making purchasing decisions. It includes problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. In the context of this study, it can be used to understand how marketing strategies influence each stage of the consumer decision-making process at Kigali Serena Hotel.
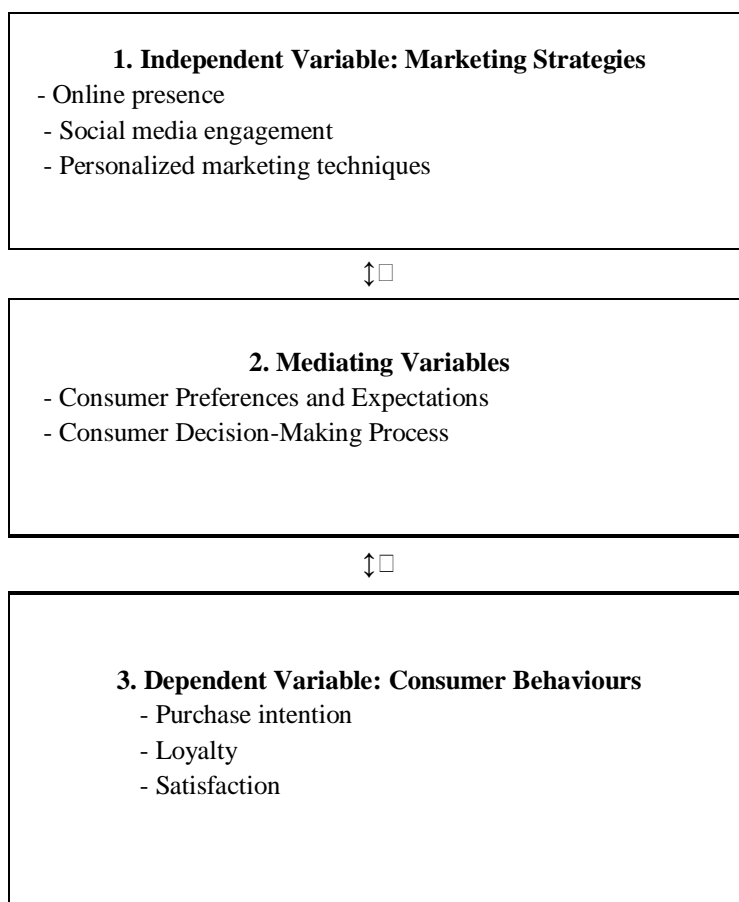
2.2.4 The Relationship Marketing Theory

This theory emphasizes the importance of building long-term relationships with customers. In the context of this study, it can be applied to understand how personalized marketing techniques, such as loyalty programs and personalized offers, influence consumer behaviour at Kigali Serena Hotel. For example, if consumers feel valued and appreciated through personalized marketing efforts, they are more likely to develop a sense of loyalty towards the hotel and exhibit favourable consumer behaviour.

By utilizing these theories and concepts, this research proposal aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviour at Kigali Serena Hotel.

2.3 Conceptual framework

Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework

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1. Independent Variable: Marketing Strategies
 - Online presence
  - Social media engagement
  - Personalized marketing techniques

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2. Mediating Variables
 - Consumer Preferences and Expectations
 - Consumer Decision-Making Process

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3. Dependent Variable: Consumer Behaviours
  - Purchase intention
  - Loyalty
  - Satisfaction

Source: Primary data (2023)

III.　　Research Methodology

This section of the research consists of the following components: research design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, instrument reliability and validity, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this study will be a case study approach. A case study allows for an in-depth investigation of a specific phenomenon or situation, in this case, the influence of marketing strategies on

consumer behaviour at Kigali Serena Hotel. This design is appropriate as it will provide detailed insights into the specific context and dynamics of the hotel, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The research proposal outlines the data collection methods to be used in the study. The primary data collection method will be through surveys administered to hotel guests at Kigali Serena Hotel. The surveys will be designed to gather information about guests' perceptions of the hotel's marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behavior.

Secondary data will also be collected from sources such as academic journals, industry reports, and the hotel's marketing materials. This secondary data will provide background information on marketing strategies in the hotel industry and help contextualize the findings from the primary data collection.

Overall, the data collection methods in this study aim to gather comprehensive and valid data on guests' perceptions of marketing strategies and their influence on consumer behavior at Kigali Serena Hotel.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis techniques used in this research proposal will depend on the nature of the data collected. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques may be employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviours at Kigali Serena Hotel.

For quantitative data analysis, statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression analysis can be used. Descriptive statistics will help in summarizing and presenting the data collected, such as calculating means, frequencies, and percentages. Inferential statistics, such as t-tests or analysis of variance (ANOVA), can be used to determine if there are significant differences in consumer behaviours based on different marketing strategies. Regression analysis can be used to identify the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer behaviours, controlling for other relevant factors.

Qualitative data analysis techniques, such as thematic analysis, can be used to analyse the qualitative data collected from interviews or open-ended survey questions. Thematic analysis involves identifying recurring themes or patterns in the data, coding the data, and organizing the codes into categories or themes. This will help in understanding the underlying factors and motivations influencing consumer behaviours.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques will provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of marketing strategies on hotel consumer behaviours. It will allow for triangulation of findings and help in drawing meaningful conclusions from the data collected.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research, several ethical considerations will be taken into account to ensure the protection and well-being of the participants and the integrity of the study. The following ethical considerations will be followed:

Informed Consent: Prior to data collection, participants will be provided with detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights as participants. They will be given the opportunity to ask questions and provide voluntary consent to participate in the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: All participant information, including personal details and responses, will be kept strictly confidential. Participants will be assigned unique identifiers to maintain anonymity. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data, and all data will be stored securely.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study will be strictly voluntary, and participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. No coercion or pressure will be applied to ensure participants' willingness to participate.

Minimization of Harm: Measures will be taken to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants. The research will not involve any invasive or risky procedures. Participants will be informed about any potential risks associated with the study, and steps will be taken to mitigate these risks.

These ethical considerations will be adhered to throughout the research process to ensure the rights and well-being of the participants and the ethical integrity of the study.

IV. Research Findings and Discussion

Presentation of Findings

As part of the research study, hotel supervisors were interviewed to collect the necessary data on employee retention management and brand performance in the hotel industry in Rwanda.

Methods of recruitment that the hotel uses during employee recruitment and selection

The researcher sought to examine the methods of recruitment the hotel uses during employee recruitment and selection in the hotel industry of Rwanda. The findings are displayed in Table 4.13, below.

Table 1.2: **The methods of recruitment that the hotel uses during employee recruitment and selection**

Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
What are the methods of recruitment that the hotel uses?	Internal recruitment	22	55
	External recruitment	18	45
	Total	**40**	**100**

Source: Primary data (2023)

As regards the methods of recruitment the hotel uses during employee recruitment and selection in the hotel industry of Rwanda, the findings in Table 4.13 revealed that the majority (55% of the respondents) indicated that internal recruitment was very highly used in the hotel and mentioned examples like promotions and transfers, among others. However, 45% were of the view that external recruitment is one of the methods the hotel uses during employee recruitment and selection. The majority (55% of the respondents) who indicated that internal recruitment was very highly used in the hotel sighted examples of internal recruitment that were mostly used in hotels, such as promotions and transfers, which they thought were highly contributing to the uprising of excellent talents of different experts from within the existing employees of the hotel via promotions.

Discussions on the methods of recruitment that the hotel uses during employee recruitment and selection

Hoteliers utilize a range of recruitment techniques. A strong hotel brand must incorporate these strategies in order to retain employees. The objective was to analyze the impact of various hiring practices on brand success. This component of the survey examined hoteliers' perceptions of the importance of recruitment practices for the growth of their brands. Respondents identified the general strategies with the biggest impact on the performance of the hotel industry's brands as internal and external recruitment. Additional justification was given by respondents, who claimed that if a hotel's brand becomes more successful, employers will use recruitment methods more frequently. In comparison to external recruitment, which was mentioned by only 44% of respondents, internal recruitment was cited by 55% of respondents as having a substantial impact on brand performance. Respondents, who indicated that the use of external recruitment strategies like job advertisements, outsourcing, and referrals was very low, cited the high costs of conducting assessments, screenings, and job interviews, as well as the drawn-out process involved in conducting employee selection.

V.   Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

The hotel industry in Rwanda should endeavor to increase brand performance through succession planning activities because this study problem is noticeable in the hotel industry.

The hotel management should also endeavor to annually carry out recruitment, either internal or external, where the absorption of excellent talents of different expertise from both within the existing employees via promotions and externally highly contribute to brand performance as well as avoid labor shortage.

Last but not least, tight policies and regulations must be put in place to govern all the recruitment activities and make sure that they align with the trade union goals of the employees to be able to end nepotism and favoritism, which highly affect the recruitment of capable and elite employees who can contribute to brand performance to a very high extent.

Conclusions

There were several employee retention management activities done in the hotels. These activities are mainly recruitment and training, professional career development, the offering of incentives and benefits, promotions, and succession planning. The implication of these employee retention management activities on brand performance was assessed in this study. The study revealed that the implication of these employee retention management activities on brand performance is now a success in the hotel industry and has been implemented to a very high extent by most hoteliers countrywide. This is so because, based on the findings to do with the extent to which training in the hotel industry has brought about improved brand performance, it's evident that training in the hotels has significantly contributed to improved brand performance at a very high level. This can be attributed to the fact that trainings in the hotel are still ongoing; it is a continuous process.

The general challenge is that brand performance in the hotels, due to succession planning, is still at a low level. The only place where succession planning is noticeable is in the 5-star hotels, where there is career advancement and training to help employees assume new roles within the hotel.

Concerning the extent to which recruitment in the hotels has contributed to brand performance, it was very high, as stated by the majority. However, much of it is attributed to both internal and external recruitment, where the absorption of excellent talents with different expertise from both within the existing employees via promotions and externally highly contributes to brand performance.

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