

Effect of Employee Participation on Customer Patronage in Hotel Industry in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State

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***Abstract:** This research work examined the effect of employee participation on customer patronage in hotel industry in Makurdi metropolis, Benue state. The researcher used primary data source from a sample of three hundred and thirty Seven (337) respondents obtained by the use of a structured questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, simple percentage and the relationship between the variables of the models were tested using multiple linear regression analysis. The hypotheses of the study were tested using the probability value of the regression estimates. The result of the regression analysis indicates that employee participation (EMP) has a negative effect [$b_1 = -0.037, t = 0. - 0.156, p = 0.878$] on repeat purchase of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. Also, employee participation (EMP) has a positive effect [$b_2 = 0.254, t = 2.206, p = 0.028$] on customer loyalty (CUL) of Hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State and the effect is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Finding from the third specific objectives of the study indicates that employee participation (EMP) has a positive and significant effect [$b_3 = 0.701, t = 4.188, p = 0.001$] on volume of sales (SVL) of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. It was concluded that employees participation is a positive and significant driver of sales volume and customer loyalty in the study area. It was recommended among others that to improve customer patronage, providing discounts or customer-only promotions is an easy way to incentivize customers to keep coming back.*

***Keywords:** Employee, participation, customer patronage, hotel industry.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Several management strategies have been developed to enable organizations including the hotel industry to attain their objectives, one of which is employee participatory. Adeola (2014) defines participation as the active involvement of subordinates of followers in the making of decisions that directly affect them in the work place. Employee participation at workplace is generally regarded as a sign of enlightened and democratic management. It may be through the giving and receiving of information, suggestion and the sharing of experience among members of an organization. According to Adamu (2019), participation particularly applies to allowing the employees to have a voice in shaping policies, procedures and processes that directly or indirectly affect. It is therefore a process of sharing responsibilities among managers and employees. The use of participation is involved in a wide range of objective setting, problem solving, and decision-making activities of

the organization. Davis and Newstrom (2017) stated that participation is a mental and emotional involvement of persons in group situations that encourage them to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them. It is also defined by Nkwocha (2019) as a mode of organizational operation in which decision as to activities are arrived at by the person, who are to execute those decisions. However, participation from my own point of view, can be defined as a process in which two or more parties influence each other in making decisions. The parties to the decision making process may be in their capacities as individuals or as groups.

According to Nkwocha (2019), over the years, the practice of organizational management demanded that employer/management would expect that workers will do the work that is set before them. While this was a perfectly typical method of getting results through others in the early days of assembly line and scientific management, it is no longer true of today's business. The trend has changed in that management expects more from its workers than doing simply what is put before them. It has also changed in that workers expect that more can be got from them by simply working according to the direction of the boss. However, with the rise of such theories as participative management and with increasing recognition that employees often have something valuable to contribute beyond the accepted units of their normal job duties, the research in employee participation has taken an interestingly new dimension in several organization (Adamu, 2019). Many companies are now actively seeking ways of getting employees to participate more in decision affecting them. The worker on the other hand expects to be asked how he feels about his job, and what his ideas are on how the work can be done more easily, better and faster.

The advantages of employee participation in decision making are that: it increases employee's morale and enhances productivity. It provides employees the opportunity to use their intelligence which will lead to better decisions for the organization (Williamson, 2008), employee participation also contributes to trust and give a sense of control to the employees, such that resources required to monitor them can be minimized thus reducing cost, even as it maximizes view points and give diversity of perspectives to organizational management. The hospitality industry is a key driver in the growth of modern economy as the main focus is on using the long existing and salient industry to make meaningful impact on the country's gross domestic product. It remains one of the largest, if not the largest industry that cuts across businesses such as hotels, restaurants, event planning and management and is anchored on service delivery (Isichei and Damachi, 2015). So a pointer to achieving the goal of ensuring the industry contributes favourably to the countries growth and development is that all stakeholders in the industry must exercise a deep sense of commitment to duty in service delivery. All businesses that engage in service delivery irrespective of technological advancement require a level of human contribution to effectively achieve excellent service delivery (Isichei & Damachi, 2015). This emphasizes the need for a proper management style that incorporates employees in all the business endeavors in the service industry, as they are the contact point to all customers and their attitude will not only leave a lasting impression but could also be a basis for repeat demand. This fact drives the need for employee's participation in business decision making and their active participation in issues that relates to their welfare.

The implementation of the concept employee participation in business organizations can be viewed as slow, but it has increased employees demand for job satisfaction and the need for the recognition of employee's relevance in the structure of an organization, the concept has become a major requirement for first line growth. The desire for economic and industrial freedom believed to be attained when political democracy is achieved is a promoter of the growth of employee participation in business organizations decision making (Rathnakar, 2012). A number of opinion

groups and advocate of industrial democracy were of the view that since the people are free and made to choose the people that forms leadership over them in their country, it is also pertinent that workers of any organization be given the free hand to take active and strategic role in decision making that affects the existence and growth of the organization. A modern forward-looking business does not keep its employees in the dark about vital decisions affecting them as “command and control” is no longer an adequate model. A more open and collaborative framework will exploit the talents of all employees in terms of creativity and behavioral change in new and improved ways, contributing to healthy industrial relations (Singh, 2009; Kingir and Mescib, 2010). Customer patronage within the context of this study will be based on the outcome of employee involvement in decision making. In view of this, four corresponding outcomes of employee participation in decision making will be considered for examination in the hotel industry in Makurdi metropolis.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Employees are the heart and soul of the hotel industry, thus they must be involved in the decision-making process because they deal with clients the most and know what they want and prefer. Involvement in decision making could lead to repeat purchase, increase in sales volume and customer loyalty. This is based on the notion that employees are the most valuable resource in the hotel business, and that the best way to achieve corporate goals of better performance and harmonious employee engagement to work is to include them in the decision-making process. Nonetheless, the hotel industry's performance is woeful, as indicated by the closure of some hotels and the failure of others to break even. This could be due to a lack of employee participation in overall corporate decision-making. There is a dire need for great concern as none of the hotels in the country are among the world class renowned hospitality place in the world, as there are many hotels in the country scouting for the same market but with no special interest on focusing on international customers with the immediate means of adding value to the growth of the Nigerian economy. It is based on these identified problems that this study is set to proffer a structured and accurate investigation that will set to reveal the impact of employee's participation in decision making on customer patronage in hotel industry in Makurdi metropolis.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of employee participation on customer patronage of hotel industry in Makurdi Metropolis. The specific objectives however are to;

- i. Determine the effect of employee participation on repeat purchase of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State.
- ii. Examine the effect of employee participation on volume of sales of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State.
- iii. Assess the effect of employee participation on customer loyalty of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State.

1.4 Significance and Scope of the Study

This study relevant to Government and Policymakers, Hotels, General public, Future researchers among others. The content scope of this study is the examination of the effect of employee participation on customer patronage in hotel industry. The geographic scope is limited to hotels in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State, since there will be not enough time to cover the entire State, the employees and customers of selected hotels in Makurdi metropolis were used in order to have a good sample size so as to get accurate result.. The elements of the study are employees and customers of selected hotels in Makurdi Metropolis. The dimensions of customer patronage as the dependent variable of the study are; repeat purchase, sales volume and customer loyalty. Employee

participation which is the independent variable was not operationalized and hence used as a single variable in the study. The time frame for the study is within five years from 2018 - 2022. This period was chosen because it is sufficient enough to ensure that all the respondents for the study are sufficiently surveyed and data analyzed for research presentation.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the theoretical framework, conceptual literature and reviews of related empirical studies and also presents summary of literature reviewed.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the following theories on Human Relation theory.

2.1.1 Human relation theory

George Elton Mayo (1949) was an Australian born psychologist, industrial researcher, and organizational theorist. He propounded the human relation theory. The human relations theory is a management theory, included in the behavioral school founded by Elton Mayo following the conclusions obtained in several studies performed in several North American companies (Hampton, 1986). From these studies stands out one, accomplished between 1924 and 1932, in a factory of the Western Electric Company in Hawthorne (near Chicago), place which came to give the name to the study: Hawthorne Experiments. The initial goal of these experiments was to determine how the changes in the payment and work conditions (illumination, temperature, rest times, work accidents, fatigue, personnel rotation, etc.) influence people and their work productivity (Holt, 2016). For that is performed the subdivision of a rewinding workshop in two parts: in one are made changes in the schedules, brightness level, rest times, etc., while the other is kept as control group. According to Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (2016), the suppositions that productivity increased with the improvement of the work conditions and quality human were confirmed in their experiments. The great surprise occurred when the investigators observed that productivity also increased when the work conditions were deteriorated. It was, so, concluded that the human relations and the work environment that results from there and the creation of bonds among the workers who felt observed by an administration worried with their well-being are much more important for the increase of productivity than simple physical conditions and work materials. It was, so, given an end to the assumption of “economic men” in which based the Classic School, giving place to the assumption of “social men”.

Human relations theory base principle that men have social needs desires rewarding relationships in the work place and answers more to the peer pressure than to the superiors' authority and administrative control forms its main contribution for management. It is from here that emerges a new type of management more concerned in knowing the workers individual and group needs and seek for efficiency and productivity through leadership, motivation and communication. On the other hand, it is also from the Human Relations Theory that emerges the informal organization concept (Gomez and David, 2012). Hawthorne experiment: Hawthorne works (a western electricity plant) in Chicago was used as a case study of the research to identify factors that would diminish productivity. Two groups of women were selected, the controlled group and experimental group. Physical surroundings of the experimental group were altered and this led to an increase in productivity and yet without altering the physical surroundings of the controlled group, productivity also increased (Holt, 2016). In addition salary was increased for the experimental group but none for the controlled group, yet productivity went up in both the

controlled and experimental groups. They concluded that it was not physical surroundings of financial pay that influenced productivity but perhaps as a result of the social interaction among group members. The Hawthorne experiment established that attainments of organizational goals were often a result of human behavior and that workers cannot be treated as a mere extension of the machinery.

Human Relations theory is the most appropriate for this study. This is because, the human relations theory made relationships between employees and supervisors the most silent aspect of management. It advocates the training of people in behavioral sciences, to emphasize building collaborative and cooperative relationships between supervisors and workers (Gomez-Mejia *et al.*, 2018). This theory is very relevant in contemporary management and therefore calls on and managers to not only focus on the job/task to be performed but also take cognizance of the employees' side of their organizations (Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich, 2017). This they can hopefully achieve through the use of psychology and sociology which are veritable tools for understanding the human behaviour and thus selecting the appropriate motivational tools to get the job/tasks to be done and organizational goal/objectives achieved. The adoption by managers human relation theory in dealing with their subordinates is a critical factor in motivation as it enhances effective performance.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Concept of employee participation in decision making

According to Westhuizen (2010), there are several definitions of employee participation in decision making just as there are authors on the subject. Shelley (2010) defines employee participation in decision making as the process in which two or more parties influence each other in making certain plans, policies or decisions. Nel *et al.*, (2015) add that participation refers to influence in decision making exerted through a process of interaction between employees and managers, and based on information sharing. In the same vein, Rivera-Batiz and Rivera-Batiz (2012) state that participation includes the involvement of people in the process through which decisions are reached in corporate and workplace decision making". Westhuizen (2010) provides a more comprehensive and broad definition of employee participation by defining employee participation in decision making as the totality of forms, that is direct (personal or by the employee themselves) or indirect (through the representatives of the employees) by which individuals, groups, collectives secure their interests or contribute to the decision making process. The importance of this definition lies in the fact that it clearly brings out the two forms of employee participation in decision making, namely direct (by employees themselves), and indirect (through their representatives).

In order to meet its goals, vision and to improve its effectiveness, efficiency and productivity, the management of any organization should engage all stakeholders in the running of a business. A stakeholder refers to any person that has an interest (stake) in a business, or any person who can be affected directly or indirectly by the activities of an organization (Faure and De Villiers, 2014). In this regard, Shelley (2010) adds that a stakeholder is any person or group of persons that have, or claim, ownership, rights, or interests in an organization and its activities. Participation involves individuals or groups in the process. Individual participation techniques are those in which an employee somehow affects the decision making of a manager. Group participation techniques use consultative techniques and democratic techniques. Consultative techniques imply that a manager asks for and receives involvement from employees but maintains the right to handle the decision

while in the democratic form, there's a full participation and the group not the individual heads and makes the final decision by consensus or majority (Luthans *et al.*, 2015).

2.2.2 Dimensions of employee participation in decision making

Participation of workers in decision-making process has resulted in successful value creation in many organizations. Though the extent to which employees should participate in organizational decision making is a matter of debate. However, there are a number of ways through which employees can participate in decision-making process of any organization. According to Nel *et al.*, (2015), two forms of employee participation can generally be identified, namely direct and indirect participation

a) Direct employee participation

According to Keller and Werner (2011), direct participation occurs when employees share in some or all decisions that are made at an enterprise level by them. Direct participation customarily entails that the subordinates participate, speak for themselves about work or matters related to work. In direct employee participation, they is an active participation of employees which is a useful tool implemented through organizational schemes that allow workers to be directly and actively involved, on the one hand, in the processes of innovation and improvement of company performance, with increases in efficiency and productivity, and, on the other, in improving the quality of life and work. It represents a basic ingredient of 'workplace innovation'. Employee active participation refers to the opportunities for employees to take part in decisions that affect their work, either in their immediate job (e.g. task subdivision) or in relation to wider company issues (organisational participation). Employee participation is considered a key element in the successful implementation of new management strategies and plays an important role in determining the degree of job satisfaction. Growth is more likely to be associated with highly innovative workplaces which consult with their employees rather than delegate responsibilities". Active participation has good effect on the company, in many field.

b) Indirect employee participation

According to Nel *et al.*, (2015), the indirect participation of employees in decision making is one whereby employees participate through trade unions. According to Anstey (1997), collective bargaining (CB) is an indirect form of employee participation in decision making, and it is the most common form of employee participation worldwide. Collective bargaining involves a process of consultation and negotiation of terms and conditions of employment between employers and workers, usually through their representatives. It involves a situation where the workers union or representatives meet with the employer or representatives of the employer in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect to deliberate and reach agreement on the demands of workers concerning certain improvements in the terms and conditions of employment. Under Nigerian law, Section 91 of the Labour Act⁷ defines collective bargaining as the process of arriving or attempting to arrive at a collective agreement.

Collective bargaining constitutes an important means by which workers seek to satisfy their economic and social interests. Successful collective bargaining is crucial to the attainment of industrial peace in Nigeria. Nigerian labour law provides for automatic recognition of trade unions for collective bargaining purposes. This means that the employer must recognize registered trade unions in his establishment and bargain with such unions in their bid to safeguard their economic interests in employment. The duty to recognize a trade union is coterminous with the duty to negotiate with it and conclude agreements. Thus, a refusal by an employer to recognize and bargain

with a union or adhere to the agreement arrived at could lead to strikes by the workers to realize such improvements in working conditions.

2.2.3 Concept of customer patronage

According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2008), the word customer or consumer patronage mean a person or thing that eats or uses something or a person who buys goods and services for personal consumption or use. People patronize organizations products/services at one time or the other. In the context of this study, we may use customer patronage and loyalty interchangeably because customer patronage precedes loyalty. There is a strong relationship between patronage and loyalty. Patronage is born out of a desire to be committed to an organization either based on its service quality or perceived service qualities. Hence, the extent to which a customer will patronize the services of a bank depends on how the customer perceives the banks physical environment (servicescape) and how the customer also thinks and feels that the condition of the service environment is consistent with his / her personality.

Consumer patronage is the approval or support provided by customers with respect to a particular brand. Patronage delivers the foundation for an established and growing market share. Kotler (2017) advocates that consumers have unpredictable degree of patronage to particular services, stores and other entities. Consumers can be categorized into four groups which consist of hard core patrons who are consumers of one particular product always; split patrons usually become loyal to either two or three products within a specified period of time; shifting patrons move from one product to another and finally switchers are consumers who are not loyal to any brand at all.

2.2.3 Measures of customer patronage

For this study the researcher is concentrating on non-financial dimension, this is because the whole study is concerned with only non-financial variables that are sub-dimensions of non-financial dimension of performance. These include customer patronage and market share.

a) Repeat purchase

A consumer typically decides to undergo a repeat purchase when he/she is normally satisfied with the brand and is in the last stage of post purchase behaviour of the consumer buying process (Kotler and Armstrong, 2016). The consumer reviews the brand's experience he/she had during the product's or service's use. Therefore, repeat purchase intention actually takes place in the buyer's 'black box' when the consumer has decided whether to purchase the same brand or not. However, Jones and Sasser (2015) argue that consumers should possess both high satisfaction and loyalty towards the brand, in order to become the brand's loyalist or apostle. Therefore, repeat purchase intention can serve as a predictor for the actual purchase behaviour.

b) Sales volume

Sales volume refers to the number of units your company sells during a specific reporting period. This period could be a month, a quarter, or a year depending on what level of sales volume you're seeking to analyze. Investors frequently look at sales volume to assess the health of a growing or contracting company. This is the quantity or number of product sold or services provided by a company in a particular period of time. Sales volume can be seen as the volume of goods sold in number or quantity of units during the normal operation. On its own, sales volume doesn't break down how much revenue is coming in from product sales. However, understanding your sales volume can tell you what products are and aren't selling, which is valuable information for business growth (Farris, Neil, Phillip, David 2010). Even the most successful companies continually want to increase their sales volume. But what are the best ways to go about making that increase happen? And where these strategies should be implemented in your sales pipeline.

c) Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty means customers' willingness to buy a brand frequently over all others. It is both an attitudinal and behavioural experience with one brand that satisfies the customers' needs and desires. If the customers are familiar and satisfied with one product having other options, then it is customer loyalty. It always encourages customers to buy more, spend more and feel positive emotional experience about a shopping. According to Lawton (2016), in the business sector, customer loyalty plays important role to up lift the business as well as it focuses on establishing good relationship between customer and suppliers. The loyal customers are the prime sources of generating profits and bringing more new customers in the business. Customer Loyalty is essential to sustain the business. The business sectors' progress and success depends on their loyal customers. In this 21st century, many companies are getting established to compete with each other. In this competitive environment, if the company gets success to build a solid and loyal customers by providing the excellent services or products with affordable price then it is not far to be a number one company with high volume of customers as well as name and fame (Daikh, 2015).

2.3 Review of Related Empirical Studies

Kofi (2020). Effect of employee participation in decision making on the performance of selected hotels in Upper Volt in Ghana. The study used survey research design as the research design for the study. Primary data was used and it was obtained from the managers of the selected hotels in the study area. Several statistical tool were used for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to present descriptive data such as the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the nexus that exists in the data set. The result of the study indicates that there is a significant relationship between employee participation in decision making on the performance of the selected hotels in Upper Volt in Ghana. It was recommended that managers of the selected hotels in the study area involve the employees in every level of participation so as to have a significant effect on the performance of the hotels in the study area. The limitations of the empirical review are the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation to estimate the variables of the study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is used to estimate the relationship between one variable and another. However, this study is meant to determine the effect of employee participation on organizational performance and regression analysis is the best statistical tool to estimate the effect instead of Pearson Product Moment Correlation as used by the researcher.

Elliot (2019) studied the effect of employee participation on the performance of selected Romanian Hotels. Survey data was obtained using a structured questionnaire from a sample of forty two (42) hotels using purposive sampling. The data generated from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages while the relationship that exists between the variables of the study were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The hypotheses of the study were tested using the standard error of the regression estimates. The result of the empirical study shows that all the variables of employee participation namely; safety culture, decision-making and management practices have statistically significant effect on performance of the selected hotels in Romania. It was recommended that safety culture and management practices should be enhanced by management of the hotels so as to boost the performance of the hotel industry in Romania. The limitations of the empirical review is in the sampling, which might not be representative of the population of all the hotels in Romania.

Adamu (2019) examined the effect of employee participation on the performance of Arewa Textile Company Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design and questionnaire

was used to collate the primary data for study from a population of three hundred and twenty seven (327) respondents of the company under study. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables of the study on the dependent variable of the study. The probability value of the regression estimates were used to test the hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The result of the study indicates that employee participation variables have a significant effect on the performance of Arewa Textile Company Kaduna State, Nigeria. The limitation of the empirical review is the use descriptive research design for the study. Descriptive research design is not meant to be determine causes and effect study as used in this empirical review. Survey research design would have been appropriate for this empirical review.

Isichei and Damachi (2015) evaluated employees' participation in decision making and the hospitality industry in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. To guide the study, research questions and hypotheses were designed. Primary data method was used for the study and the instrument used was a questionnaire survey designed using the Likert scale questionnaire format and administered to sixty respondents. Test of reliability of research instrument showed a result of 0.874 using Cronbach Alpha. Content method was used for validity of the research instrument. Two hypotheses was postulated in line with the objectives and research question to test the significance of the research problems. The study used linear correlation and regression for analysis of data obtained from research instrument, which proved the alternate hypotheses significant in the two hypotheses tested. Findings in the study showed that employee's participation in decision making impacts on the performance of hotels in Nigeria. The study concludes there is a positive relationship between extent of employee's participation in decision making and organizational performance. The study recommends among others that participation of employees' should not just be partial but holistic to give them a sense of belonging. The limitation of this empirical review is the low sample size of 60 respondents from the populations of all the hotels in the study area. The sample is small and as such, the findings will not be representative of the entire population.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is the survey design. Survey research design is appropriate for obtaining large opinion data from human populations that enable authentic analysis. The study area is Makurdi Metropolis in Benue State. The population of the study is made up of one hundred and sixty five registered hotels (165) operating in Makurdi Metropolis. Multistage sampling was adopted in this study with a sample size of 337. Primary data was used to get the required information with semi-structured questionnaire as data collection tool. The validity and reliability index stood at 0.918 and 0.841 respectively.

Guided by the functional relationship between the variables of the study the following implicit and explicit relationship exists between the variables of the study. The implicit relationship is shown as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{REP} &= f(\text{EMP}) && (1) \\ \text{SLV} &= f(\text{EMP}) && (2) \\ \text{CUL} &= f(\text{EMP}) && (3) \end{aligned}$$

Where,

REP = repeat purchase
SLV = volume of sales
CUL = customer loyalty

EMP = employee participation

The explicit relationship between the variables of the study is as shown below:

$$REP = b_0 + b_1EMP + U_t \tag{4}$$

$$SLV = b_0 + b_1EMP + U_t \tag{5}$$

$$CUL = b_0 + b_1EMP + U_t \tag{6}$$

Where,

b_0 = Regression intercept or slope

b_1 = Regression coefficient

U_t = Error or Stochastic Term

The data collected in this study will be analyzed statistically by the use of frequency tables and multiple Regression analysis. The four (4) hypotheses for this study will be tested by the probability values of the estimates. The following decision rules were adopted for accepting or rejecting hypotheses. **Decision Rule:** *If the probability value of b_i [$p(b_i) > \text{critical value}$] we accept the null hypothesis, that is, we accept that the estimate b_i is not statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. If the probability value of b_i [$p(b_i) < \text{critical value}$] we reject the null hypothesis, in other words, that is, we accept that the estimate b_i is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance.*

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of gender, age, educational qualification, and years in service were presented using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Construct	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex of respondents		
Male	216	64.09
Female	121	35.90
Total	337	100.0
Age of respondents		
Below 25 years	77	22.85
26-35	96	28.49
36-45	106	31.45
46 years and above	58	17.21
Total	337	100.0
Marital Status		
Married	228	67.66
Single	109	32.34
Total	337	100.0
Education status of respondents		
WAEC/WASC/NABTEC	83	24.63
ND/NCE	119	35.31
B.Sc./HND	97	28.78
Postgraduate	38	11.28

Total	337	100.0
Years of work of respondents		
Less than 1 year	59	17.51
1-5 years	87	25.82
5-10 years	98	29.08
10-15 years	56	16.62
16 years and above	37	10.98
Total	337	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 6 above shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents, it shows that majority of the respondents (64.09%) are male while female respondents constitute (35.90%). This result implies that males are considered more in relation to hospitality industries than their female counterpart probably because of the high cases of sexual abuse in these industries. Looking at the age bracket of the respondents majority of the respondents (31.45%) are between the ages of 36-45 years, followed by (28.49%) of the respondents was between the ages of 26-35 years, also (22.85%) was constituted by respondents who were below 25 years, respondents that constituted (17.21%) were between the ages of 46 years and above, this shows that there are more matured and responsible people that know the nitty-gritty of hospitality industry and also give the valid answer for the questions thrown to them in the questionnaire. Marital status of our respondents indicates that majorities 67.66% are married, 32.34% are single. This is expected because single employees are more likely to be constantly learning and growing, and it also suggest that they are in touch with who they are, bringing a less cluttered mind to the workplace ad have more openness to whatever comes than their married counterpart. Looking at the educational qualification of the respondents, majority of them (35.31%) had ND/NCE as their highest qualification. 24.63% had WAEC/WASC/NABTEC as their highest educational qualification, the respondents that have B.Sc./HND as their highest qualification constituted (28.78%) while the lowest percentage of the respondents who constituted 11.28% had postgraduate certificates as their highest educational qualification. This means that most of the respondents in the study areas are highly literate in respect to giving the required answer to the questions in the questionnaires and are competent in their area of specializations. Also years of work status of the respondents showed that majority of the respondents (28.24%) have worked in the industry for 5-10 years, 25.07% of the respondents specified that they have worked in the industry for 1-5 years, the respondents that constituted 19.88% have worked in the industry for less than 1 years, 16.14% of the respondents also specified that they have worked in the industry for 10-15 years, while those that have worked in the industry for more than 16 years constituted the lowest percentage which 10.66%. This result implies that most of the respondents have sufficient experience that is needed to provide valid information to the study.

4.2 Presentation of result based on specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were presented using the four point scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. This is presented using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages as depicted in Table 7 to 10.

Table 7: Employee Participation

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Certain management practices foster active participation of employees in affairs of the organization.		
Strongly Agree	124	36.78%
Agree	107	31.75%
Disagree	62	18.40%
Strongly Disagree	44	13.06%
Total	337	100.0%
To achieve the organizational goals and objectives, management must involve employees.		
Strongly Agree	146	43.32%
Agree	137	40.65%
Disagree	31	9.20%
Strongly disagree	23	6.82%
Total	337	100.0%
Sound management practices lies in identifying employees who can handle certain jobs and giving them the opportunity to handle it.		
Strongly Agree	112	33.23%
Agree	102	30.27%
Disagree	72	21.36%
Strongly Disagree	51	15.13%
Total	337	100.0%
Some management practices hinder effective participation and should hence not be used in an organization.		
Strongly Agree	103	30.56%
Agree	82	24.33%
Disagree	83	24.63%
Strongly disagree	69	20.47%
Total	337	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (36.78%) strongly agreed that, certain management practices foster active participation of employees in affairs of the organization, 31.75% agreed, 18.40% disagreed and 13.06 % strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents, 43.32% strongly agreed that, to achieve the organizational goals and objectives, management must involve employees, 40.65% agreed, 9.20% disagreed and 6.82 % strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents, 33.23% strongly agreed that, sound management practices lies in identifying employees who can handle certain jobs and giving them the opportunity to handle it, 30.27% agreed, 21.36% disagreed and 15.13 % strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents 30.56 % strongly agreed that, some management practices hinder effective participation and should hence

not be used in an organization, 24.33% agreed, 24.63 % disagreed and 20.47 % strongly disagreed. From the above result, it is obvious that employee participation brings about better hospitality services which makes guests visit again and again. But more than that, we can see that it connects employees to the higher purpose of the company.

Customer Patronage Measures

Table 8: Repeat purchase

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
When employees are involved in decision making, it creates an atmosphere of confidence in customer to come back again.		
Strongly Agree	129	38.28%
Agree	118	35.01%
Disagree	54	16.02%
Strongly Disagree	36	10.68%
Total	337	100.0%
Employees employed into various positions have the responsibility to ensure repeat purchase of customers.		
Strongly Agree	112	33.23%
Agree	93	27.60%
Disagree	81	24.04%
Strongly Disagree	51	15.13%
Total	337	100.0%
Employees can make customers happy about the hotel which will enable them to come back for more experience.		
Strongly Agree	111	32.94%
Agree	97	28.78%
Disagree	76	22.55%
Strongly disagree	53	15.73%
Total	337	100.0%
Employees' attitude is a key to loyal customers and encouraging repeat purchase.		
Strongly Agree	141	41.84%
Agree	113	33.53%
Disagree	57	16.91%
Strongly Disagree	26	7.72%
Total	337	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 8 shows that majority of the respondents 38.28 % strongly agreed that, when employees are involved in decision making, it creates an atmosphere of confidence in customer to come back again, 35.01% agreed, 16.02 % disagreed and 10.68 % strongly disagreed to the statement above. Majority of the respondents 33.23 % strongly agreed that, employees employed into various

positions have the responsibility to ensure repeat purchase of customers, 27.60% agreed, 24.04 % of the respondents disagreed and 15.13% strongly disagreed to the statement. Most of the respondents (32.94 %) strongly agreed that, employees can make customers happy about the hotel which will enable them to come back for more experience, 28.78% agreed, 22.55 % disagreed and 15.73 % strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents (41.84%) strongly agreed that, employees’ attitude is a key to loyal customers and encouraging repeat purchase, 33.53% agreed, 16.91% disagreed and 7.72% strongly disagreed. From the analysis of the above result it is seen that employee participation triggers better customer service, because engaged employees are more invested and, therefore willing to take their time with each client and personalize their experience.

Table 9: Sales Volume

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
The level of sales volume is improved by employee participation.		
Strongly Agree	121	35.91%
Agree	102	30.27%
Disagree	73	21.66%
Strongly Disagree	41	7.12%
Total	337	100.0%
Sales volume is increased by good reputation of the hotel.		
Strongly Agree	136	40.36%
Agree	128	37.98%
Disagree	49	14.54%
Strongly Disagree	24	7.12%
Total	337	100.0%
With effective participation, sales volumes are ensured.		
Strongly Agree	106	31.45%
Agree	87	25.82%
Disagree	81	24.04%
Strongly disagree	63	18.64%
Total	337	100.0%
A good marketing strategy is what is needed to increase the sales volume of the hotel.		
Strongly Agree	131	38.87%
Agree	113	33.53%
Disagree	62	18.40%
Strongly Disagree	31	9.20%
Total	337	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 9 shows that, most of the respondent 35.91% strongly agreed that, the level of sales volume is improved by employee participation, 30.27% agreed, 21.66% disagreed and 7.12 % strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents 40.36% strongly agreed that, sales volume is increased by good reputation of the hotel, 37.98 % agreed, 14.54% disagreed and 7.12 % strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents 31.45 % strongly agreed that, with effective participation, sales volumes are ensured, 25.82% agreed, 24.04% disagreed while 18.64% strongly disagreed to the statement. Majority of the respondent 38.87 % strongly agreed that, a good marketing strategy is what is needed to increase the sales volume of the hotel, 33.53% agreed, 18.40% disagreed and 9.20 % strongly disagreed to the statement above. From the analysis above we agree that every business organization`s success depends on the satisfaction of the customers which was brought about by employee participation. Whenever a business is about to start, customers always come “first” and then the profit because it is impossible for a business organization to grow if the company ignores or disregards the needs of customers.

Table 10: Customer Loyalty

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Customers are loyal to our brand.		
Strongly Agree	112	33.23%
Agree	101	29.97%
Disagree	73	21.66%
Strongly Disagree	51	15.13%
Total	337	100.0%
Because of the quality of our service, are customers are loyal to our brand.		
Strongly Agree	106	31.45%
Agree	82	24.33%
Disagree	78	23.15%
Strongly Disagree	71	21.07%
Total	337	100.0%
Our customers have high trust level.		
Strongly Agree	124	36.80%
Agree	117	34.72%
Disagree	58	17.21%
Strongly disagree	38	11.28%
Total	337	100.0
We offer the best price in the industry and that is why our customers are loyal to the brand.		
Strongly Agree	121	35.91%
Agree	109	32.34%
Disagree	64	18.99%

Strongly Disagree	43	12.76%
Total	337	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 10 shows that majority of the respondents 33.23% strongly agreed that, customers are loyal to our brand, 29.97% agreed, 21.66% disagreed and 15.13 % strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents 36.80% strongly agreed that, because of the quality of our service, are customers are loyal to our brand, 34.72% agreed, 23.15% disagreed and 21.07% strongly disagreed to the statement. Most of the statement 38.62% strongly agreed that, our customers have high trust level, 33.72% disagreed, 17.21% disagreed and 11.28% strongly disagreed. Majority of the 35.91% strongly agreed that, we offer the best price in the industry and that is why our customers are loyal to the brand, 32.34% respondents agreed, 18.99% disagreed and 12.76 % strongly disagreed. From the above result, it is deduced that customer loyalty is the strength of the relationship between an individual’s relative attitude and re-patronage because customer loyalty is not gained by an accident but by trust, it is constructed through the sourcing and design decisions. Designing for customer loyalty requires customer-centered approaches that recognize the want and interest of service receiver.

4.3 Regression Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents the results and interpretation of the regression analysis and the hypothesis of the study. The missing value pattern and the regression standardized residuals for models I, II and III were presented in the in Figures 1 and 2.

Table 11: Statistical Significance

		ANOVA ^a				
Model I		Sum of Sqr	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.437	1	1.437	.024	.878 ^b
	Residual	1067.113	18	59.284		
	Total	1068.550	19			
Model II						
2	Regression	73.988	1	73.988	3.783	.020 ^b
	Residual	1072.012	18	19.556		
	Total	1146.000	19			
Model III						
3	Regression	66.322	1	66.322	5.348	.001 ^b
	Residual	1193.798	18	12.402		
	Total	1206.200	19			

a. Dependent Variable: REP, SLV, CUL

b. Predictors: (Constant), EMP

Source: SPSS Result Output, 2023

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table above tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that for model I, the independent variable did not significantly predicts the dependent variable $F(1, 18) = 0.024, p > 0.878^b$ (i.e., the regression model is not a good fit of the data). For the second and the third model of the study, $F(1, 18) = 0.024$, and $3.783; p > .020^b$ and $.001^b$, indicating that since the probability values of the model II and III are statistically significant, the regression model are good fit of the data. This implies that the explanatory variable has been able to explain the behaviour of the dependent variables of sales volume and customer loyalty.

Table 12: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
I	.704 ^a	.495	.254	7.69961
II	.954 ^a	.910	.813	7.71727
III	.861 ^a	.741	.545	8.14384

a. Predictors: (Constant), EMP

b. Dependent Variable: REP, SLV, CUL

Source: SPSS Result Output, 2023

For the first model of the study, the coefficient of determination R^2 is 0.495 or 49.5%. This indicates that 49.5% of the variations in the model can be explained by the explanatory variable of the model while 50.5% of the variation can be attributed to unexplained variation captured by the stochastic term. For the second and the third model of the study, the coefficients of determination R^2 are 0.910 and 0.741. This indicates that 91.0% and 74.1% of the variations in the model can be explained by the explanatory variable of the model while 9.0% and 25.9% of the variation can be attributed to unexplained variation captured by the stochastic term respectively.

Table 13: Regression Coefficients

Models		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
I	(Constant)	32.917	7.067		4.658	.000		
	EMP	-.031	.201	-.037	-.156	.878	1.000	1.000
II	(Constant)	23.343	7.084		3.295	.004		
	EMP	.225	.102	.254	2.206	.028	1.000	1.000
III	(Constant)	30.165	7.475		4.035	.001		
	EMP	.892	.213	.701	4.188	.001	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: CUL, SVL, REP

Source: SPSS Result Output, 2023

4.2 Testing of the Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

H₀₁: Employee participation has no significant effect on repeat purchase of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State.

Using the probability value of b_1 [$p(b_1) > \text{critical value of } b_1$]; $0.878 > 0.05$ critical value. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_1 is not statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. This implies that employee participation has no significant effect on repeat purchase of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. The result of the first specific objectives of the study shows that employee participation has a negative effect on repeat purchase of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State and the effect is not statistically significant and not in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increase in employee participation will result to a corresponding decrease in repeat purchase of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State by a margin of 3.7%. Using the probability value of the estimate, we accept the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_1 is not statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. This implies that employee participation has no significant effect on repeat purchase of hotels in

Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. This finding is contrary to those of Adamu (2019), Isichei and Damachi (2015), Kuye and Sulaiman (2011) who examined employee participation and firm performance nexus and found positive and significant effect. The negative effect of employee performance in the current study could have occurred due to the several factors that affected employee participation in the study area.

H₀₂: Employee participation has no significant effect on sales volume of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State.

Using the probability value of b_2 [$p(b_2) < \text{critical value of } b_2$], $0.028 < 0.05$ critical value. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_2 is statistically significant at the 5 % level of significance. This implies that employee participation has a significant effect on sales volume of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. The result of the second specific objectives of the study indicates that employee participation has a positive effect on customer loyalty of Hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State and the effect is statistically significant and in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increases in employee participation will result to a corresponding increase in customer loyalty of Hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State by a margin of 25.4%. The result of the second hypothesis of the study indicates that we reject the null hypothesis and accept that at 5% level of significance, employee participation has a significant effect on sales volume of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. This finding is in tandem with that of Kofi (2020). Effect of employee participation in decision making on the performance of selected hotels in Upper Volt in Ghana and found a significant relationship between employee participation in decision making on the performance of the selected hotels in Upper Volt in Ghana. This finding is also similar to those of Adamu (2019), Kuye and Sulaiman (2011), Rehman, Khalid and Khan (2012) who found a positive and significant effect between employee participation and enterprise performance.

H₀₃: Employee participation has no significant effect on customer loyalty of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State

Using the probability value of b_3 [$p(b_3) < \text{critical value of } b_3$], $0.001 < 0.05$ critical value. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_3 is statistically significant at the 5 % level of significance. This implies that employee participation has a significant effect on customer loyalty of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. Finally, findings shows that employee participation (EMP) has a positive effect on volume of sales (SVL) of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State and the effect is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and in line with *a priori* expectation. This means that a unit increases in employee participation (EMP) will result to a corresponding increase in volume of sales (SVL) of Hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State by a margin of 70.1%. Using the probability value of b_3 [$p(b_3) < \text{critical value of } b_3$], $0.001 < 0.05$ critical value. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that the estimate b_3 is statistically significant at the 5 % level of significance. This implies that employee participation has a significant effect on customer loyalty of hotels in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. This finding is in line with that of those of Elliot (2019), Adamu (2019), Isichei and Godwin (2015) who studied the effect of employee participation on the performance of hotel industries. The finding shows that employee participation has effect on the performance of hotel industries.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study examined the effect of employee participation on customer patronage of hotel industry in Makurdi Metropolis. Employee participation has been found to have favourable effects on customer patronage in the hotel industry. Thus, participative management should be seen as an inevitable tool in any organization both public and private. However, before this could be done or undertaken, a thorough examination of the organization policy should be looked into and amended to effect this. The study also shows that when employees are made to participate in decision making, it makes them feel more responsible for their actions and see themselves as stakeholders of their firms or organizations and it will lead to performance of the company as shown in the positive effect of employee participation on sales volume and customer loyalty. Participation in decision making leads to harmony in the organization. It also improves staff moral and support. Empowering employees and employee participation increases employee satisfaction, motivation, innovation and decreases inefficiency. The study has shown that employee participation has brought a positive and significant effect on sales volume and customer loyalty. Thus, giving employees decision making power to participate in the day to day running of the hotel boosts their moral and commitment to the organization, which improves increase customer patronage of the hotels. Employees who participate in the decisions of an organization feel like they are part of a team with a common goal, and find their sense of self-esteem and creative fulfillment heightened.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for this study:

- i. It is recommended that to improve customer patronage, Offer loyalty programs: Implement a loyalty program that rewards repeat customers with exclusive benefits, such as discounts, complimentary upgrades, or special perks. Make sure the program is easy to understand and offers genuine value to customers. These programs also give hotels the means to gather useful data, such as identifying the most valuable customers. When this is done, it will have a significant positive effect on employee participation.
- ii. It is recommended that sales volume can be improved if the hotels in the study area make their customers' needs a top priority. When this is done, some strategy such as: group bookings, direct bookings, destination marketing, cross promotional sales, guest rewards strategies, revenue management strategies can be adopted to improve the volume of sales.
- iii. Management of the hotels in the study area can implement some of the most important customer loyalty factors such as guest benefits, value discounts, and enhanced customer experience for loyal customer. This will entice prospective customers to be loyal to the brand thereby improving customer loyalty.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

i. Representation of reality: a model to be modified has the limitation that it is only an abstraction or representation of reality. This limitation will be minimized by relying on primary data from the study area.

ii. Non availability of research material: The researcher has the limitation of scarce and unavailability of research materials which slowed down the work.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Study

We suggest that other dimensions of proxies for measuring employee participation should be expanded in the future study to see how the various dimensions of employee participation affects the different proxies of the dependent variables. It is also suggested that control variables used in future study. Control variables enhance the internal validity of a study by limiting the influence of confounding and other extraneous variables.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The study revealed that employee participation as a measure of the independent variable with a Beta coefficients of 0.701 has positively contributed the most to customer patronage of hotel industry in Makurdi Metropolis proxied by customer loyalty as against its contributions to other measures of customer patronage such as sales volume and repeat purchase with Beta coefficients of 0.254 and - 0.037 respectively.

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