



Influence of employer-employee relationships on service quality in the hospitality industry in Nakuru County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the backbone of the hospitality industry, and the people in service are inseparable from the service they provide. This research investigated the influence of employer-employee relationships on service quality in the hospitality industry in Nakuru County, Kenya. Descriptive design was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of questionnaires and interview guide as the key informants. The target population was 73 respondents comprising of 55 employees' operational employees and 18 supervisors at Nuru Palace and the Legacy Hotel in Nakuru County. The findings also reveal that coaching and mentorship as well as mutual trust between employees and their superiors affect service quality positively. The study recommends that hospitality establishments should facilitate more on the job training and provide technical support to their employees. They should also work on establishing trust between the management and the workforce.

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Introduction

The hospitality industry has been among the largest and fastest-growing industries across the globe. In India, the growth rate has been noted in the past decade to increase at a rate of 8% per annum between 2007 and 2016. In Africa, a report by Pricewaterhouse Coopers reveals an expansion in the hospitality sector, where an increase in hotel revenue is expected to grow by 7.4% by the year 2022. The industry is noted to be among the largest sources of foreign exchange in Kenya (Ndivo & Manyara, 2018).

In Kenya, hospitality is a key part of the Kenyan economy contributing an average of 10% to the country's gross domestic product. According to the Hospitality Outlook report 2017-2021, Kenya was among the fastest-growing markets Africa in 2018 with an occupancy increase of 14.6% and a room revenue increase of 28%. Kenya's hotel stock is set to grow by the addition of 13 new hotels within the decade. These new properties, which will grow by 2,400 guestrooms, will expand Kenya's hotel capacity by 13 percent. According to the Hospitality Outlook report, the number of available guestrooms will rise at a compound annual increase of 2.5 percent from 18,600 in 2016 to 21,000 in 2021 (Hospitality Outlook, 2019).

The competitiveness of the hospitality industry is largely dependent on its ability to deliver services that are superior to those of competing nations. Hotel businesses globally are putting more emphasis on customer satisfaction as a critical factor for organizational success (Wambua, 2014). On the other hand, the quality of services delivered in hotels rises and falls on the organization's workforce. Success is determined by how well a hotel sells customer experience to their target customers better than the competitor within the same market (Rajini, 2016). In the case of differentiation of services, efforts are put to meet and exceed customer expectations. This is done by laying emphasis on robust qualitative services to secure and sustain high customer demand. Ideally, hotels rely on satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word of mouth from their customers in order to gain a competitive edge over their competitors. These features are a shadow of good employee performance, which translates to high-quality services.

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