

Original Paper

Assessing the Impact of Marketing Communication on the Performance of the Hospitality Industry in Akure, Ondo State (A Case Study of Some Selected Hotels in Alagbaka, Akure, Ondo State)

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Abstract

Marketing communication is a management strategy that adopts the use of public relations, advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, social media, web ads, direct marketing and oral communication as a tool for reaching out to her target audience thus the globally increasing competition in the hospitality operations. The study however examined the impacts of marketing communication and the impact of the social media marketing strategy on the performance of the hospitality industry in Ondo State. Some hotels were selected in respects of hotel ratings where patronage, number of rooms, services and facilities provided remained the yardstick for selection and five hotels were chosen from the State capital, Akure, Ondo State. The study adopted quantitative research. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to respondents and 85 questionnaires were retrieved. The results obtained showed overall mean score of 3.70 indicating that marketing communication enhances the performance of hospitality industry and data further showed that the R-value is 0.376^a, this indicates that there is a minimum or insignificant relationship between social media and the performance of the hospitality industry with a small amount of 46.6% while the value of R square is 0.141 suggesting that social media has little influence in the amount of 24.3% on the performance of the hospitality industry in the study area. The study concluded that marketing communication plays a major role in the performance of the hospitality industry. The Study recommends that the management of the hospitality industry should devise a policy of marketing communication.

Keywords

Marketing communication, Social Media, Impacts and Hotel performance

1. Introduction

The increasing competition as being witnessed today globally in the atmosphere gives room for the shifting from the traditional means of marketing through signposts, personal communication, and oral communication to an advanced and more sophisticated marketing communication strategy which is sustainable, far-reaching, and globally acceptable and most importantly with the changes in products and services in line with technology advancement, hence, one means of marketing communication may not be sufficient to enhance customer's awareness, customers' satisfaction and subsequently profit maximization which is the hallmark of establishing a hospitality industry (Kim et al., 2004).

Communication in the hotel and tourist industries still needs external considerations for a successful and efficient relationship that can result in correct awareness and pull factors for guests/customers. Meanwhile, in the hospitality and tourist industries, marketing communication focuses on fun and appeal to attract customers and urge them to patronize and consume hospitality and tourism products. However, effective and efficient marketing communication goes beyond placing advertisements, marketing and promotion through signposts, and producing flyers or brochures; it requires strategic management decisions to assemble experts who can translate hospitality and tourism products to household interest through aggressive and well-planned marketing communications. To achieve successful marketing communication, the management must embark on a well-planned communication strategy plans that will attract hospitality services to the prospective guests with correct resources, expertise in the communication and marketing sector, basic and modern techniques and of course press releases to create a far better advantage to compete favourably among other fierce competitors, enhanced customers awareness, their satisfaction, revisit intentions and subsequently revenue generation for the hospitality and tourism industry and finally, the sustenance of the industry. The hospitality and tourism sector, like all other sectors of the economy, relies on effective marketing and sales communications to achieve organizational goals, which are carefully planned with strong coordination for proper delivery of marketing strategies, while communication resources budgeted are properly utilized for the advancement of information with the expectation of tactical solutions, dimensional and long-term results (Holm, 2006).

According to Tasha et al. (2023), successful organizations often employ marketing communications, whereas unsuccessful businesses seldom do so. To thrive in a turbulent economy, large hotels with several departments require effective marketing strategies. The downfall of formerly successful hotels and restaurants in the Kampala area suggests a lack of understanding of how marketing affects long-term performance (Isaac et al., 2023). Is it possible that diminishing sales, revenues, and profits are due to a failure in marketing communications? Between 2015 and 2017, average bed occupancy percentages decreased from 71% to 41% due to the loss of clients to newly developed hotels. Managers responded to the aforesaid circumstance.

Marketing communication is a management strategy that adopts the use of Public relations, advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, social media, web ads, direct marketing and oral communication as a tool for reaching out to her target audience. The management may decide to combine all the features mentioned above as a united force without isolating a particular technique (Amir Ekhlassi et al., 2012).

In the aspect of marketing communication Belch and Belch's definition of marketing communication focuses on the strategic use of communication tools and techniques to promote, position, and differentiate a brand or product in the marketplace. This definition highlights the importance of a

strategic approach to marketing communication, using various communication channels to achieve specific goals. Fill and Turnbull's (2020), definition of marketing communication emphasizes the importance of developing and implementing effective messages to communicate the value of a product or service to its target audience. This definition highlights the need for a clear and effective message that resonates with the target audience.

The tourism industry is an important contributor to economic development in many countries, including Nigeria. However, competition among tourism destinations is increasing, and effective marketing communications strategies are necessary to attract visitors. While there is a growing body of research on the impact of marketing communications on tourism destinations.

1.1 Objectives

- 1) To examine the impact of marketing communication on the performance of the hospitality industry in Ondo State.
- 2) To examine the impact of social media marketing strategy on the performance of the hospitality industry in Ondo State.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between social media and the performance of the hospitality industry.

2. Literature Review

Businesses across all industries prioritize the concept of efficient marketing communication. The scientific evaluation of efficiency in Slovak and international literature is being conducted from a variety of perspectives, depending on the writers' scientific concentration. The innovation and relevance of communication technologies in recent decades have resulted in corporate growth and development, as well as increased competitiveness (Olah et al., 2018). Businesses have had to find new methods to fulfil client needs. As a result, businesses are becoming more conscious of the need to ensure the efficacy of diverse business operations (Nagy et al., 2018). To explain this, a marketing perspective is taken to explain the fact that organizations including the hospitality industry achieve their objectives by satisfying their customers more effectively than their competitors (Kotler et al., 2007). As a result, measures designed to assess the effectiveness of business activities should reflect the specific activities and types of products and services offered (Mala et al., 2018). It is also important to determine theoretical knowledge of the effectiveness and the veritable means of communicating with certain target audiences to get their awareness of products that are available in the hospitality industry through coordinated marketing communication as designed, planned and implemented by the management of the hospitality industry.

2.1 The Social Media Marketing Communication

Social media may help businesses share information, product descriptions, and marketing campaigns in a networked environment. Companies are developing novel marketing strategies to keep up with the changing marketing landscape. New websites aim to contact clients. Many businesses plan to invest in social media marketing to increase their internet presence. This growing industry has the potential to transform the way marketing strategies are developed and presented. Social media is widely accessible, making it an ideal platform for the hotel business to boost brand recognition and receive direct input from customers (Evans & Bratton, 2012; Cai & Hobson, 2004). Effective use of social media is crucial for growing new companies in today's competitive internet industry. Social media marketing is

described as a brand's attempts to communicate with its target audience using social media platforms. Digital media outlets include paid, owned, and earned media. Social networks rely on content and interactions. Social marketing may be defined as a "process that applies marketing principles and techniques to create, communicate and deliver value to influence target audience behaviours that benefit society (public health, safety, the environment, and communities) as well as the target audience". According to Alhaddad (2015), social media marketing communication involves promoting businesses or websites through various platforms. According to Evans and Bratton (2012), social media is a strong marketing tool that has transformed communication. According to Cai and Hobson (2004), link building is a low-cost advertising approach that generates considerable traffic and links for firms. According to Evans and Bratton (2012), a company's ability to attract significant attention is beneficial. Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a powerful tool used by progressive firms to offer products/services or generate advertising income (Cai & Hobson, 2004; Weed, 2011).

2.2 The Concept of Marketing in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

To increase benefits, resorts should prioritize understanding the needs and expectations of their target client organizations. Understanding consumers' needs is crucial for hotels to maintain their loyalty (Page, 2007). Hotels worldwide compete for market share and innovate to outperform competitors (Weed, 2011). To boost the image of the hotel. Effective marketing communication helps hospitality organizations thrive. Meanwhile, marketing communications have a favourable impact on sales success. Effective marketing communication strengthens a hotel's brand and increases client happiness and loyalty (Weed, 2011). Hotels are one of the fastest-expanding sectors globally.

Hotels contribute significantly to national economic development and growth.

Increasing revenue, creating job opportunities, and improving resources are crucial for many countries. Many governments prioritize the hotel business to boost foreign exchange and economic development. Management employs tourism and hotel income to build infrastructure, offer better services, and improve living circumstances (Onyango, Edwin, Ouma & Lucas, 2012).

2.3 The Principle of Marketing in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The hospitality industry like every other industry has its products (food, drinks, accommodation, laundry and other services) to be introduced to prospective customers or guests thus hospitality marketing helps advertisers in travel, restaurants, and consumer services bring awareness and consideration of their products and services to consumers. Hospitality marketing strategies can play an important role in helping brands drive customer engagement and stay top-of-mind. Sigala (2015) investigated marketing concepts in this industry, highlighting the significance of good marketing tactics for firms to survive in a competitive and quickly changing market. Marketing for hospitality and tourism refers to the network of techniques and relationships used to market travel-related products and services. Marketing promotes destinations, hotels, transportation services, and local activities, with an emphasis on customer service and unique experiences. Successful marketing necessitates a thorough awareness of customer requirements and preferences, as well as the capacity to react to changing market conditions. The assessment also underlined the importance of social media and other digital marketing channels in the hotel and tourist industry, recommending that firms be active and involved on these platforms.

2.4 The Basic Concept of Marketing in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Based on Buhalis and Foerstl (2018), marketing in the tourist sector is a complicated and comprehensive process that includes a variety of activities and tactics. The authors described tourist marketing as “the management process that identifies, anticipates, and satisfactorily satisfies customer requirements profitably”. Buhalis and Foerstl (2018) stressed the importance of knowing consumer behaviour and preferences, stating that enterprises in the tourist sector must be able to generate focused and individualized marketing efforts that appeal to various parts of the market. According to Buhalis and Amaranggana (2018), the emergence of sustainable tourism and the growing relevance of social responsibility are influencing how firms handle marketing and consumer involvement in the industry.

2.5 The Strategy of Communication in the Hospitality and Tourism in Nigeria

Okon (2018) defines communication strategy in the Nigerian hospitality and tourist industry as firms’ planned and coordinated attempts to communicate effectively with their consumers and stakeholders. The author stated that efficient communication is vital for developing strong customer connections, creating brand loyalty, and improving the reputation of enterprises in the industry. This means that organizations must be able to do market research and gather data on client behaviour and feedback to create focused and tailored communication strategies. The author also underlined the necessity of developing strong client connections through effective communication. This means not just communicating successfully during the pre-booking and booking periods, but also maintaining continuous communication and interaction with guests.

2.6 The Importance of Marketing Communication to the Performance of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The hotel and tourist industries benefit greatly from effective marketing communication. Effective marketing communication is critical for increasing brand awareness, promoting tourist attractions, and drawing customers to hospitality firms. This literature study investigates the role of marketing communication in the growth of the hotel and tourist industries, emphasizing the necessity of a customer-centric strategy and the use of various communication channels. It was a survey of literature on the role of marketing communication in the growth of the hotel and tourist industries.

3. Methodology

This study used quantitative research with a survey design since it entailed describing, documenting, evaluating, and reporting on present situations as they existed. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to respondents drawn from the general managers, departmental managers, supervisors, and guests of a few hotels in Alagbaka Akure, Ondo State and 85 were retrieved. The target demographic engaged in providing information on the influence of marketing communication on the performance of the hotel business in Akure, Ondo State. However, the study used a basic random procedure, which gave each person of the population an equal chance of being chosen as a subject. Meanwhile, hotel selection was based on hotel ratings, which included patronage, amenities and services supplied, the number of rooms available, car park spacing, and other factors. The respondents’ demographic data were examined using a table, and the hypothesis was tested using a correlation coefficient to assess the link between marketing communication and hospitality performance. The quantitative data gathered were examined with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022).

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of Demographic Data

Table 1. Gender

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Male	37	43.5%
Female	48	56.5%
Total	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 2. Age

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	15	17.6%
31-40	35	41.2%
41-50	20	23.5%
51-60	10	11.8%
61 and Above	5	5.9
Total	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 3. Marital Status

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Single	50	58.8%
Married	30	35.3%
Divorced	5	5.9%
Widowed	Nil	Nil
Total	85	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 4. Category of Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
General Manager	5	5.9%
Departmental manager	25	29.4%
Supervisor	35	41.2%
Guests	20	23.5%
Total	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 5. Academic Qualifications

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	27	31.8%
ND/NCE	30	35.3%
HND/BSC	20	23.5%
MSC/MBA	5	5.9%
Ph.D.	3	3.5%
Total	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 6. Religion

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	40	47.1%
Muslim	25	29.4%
Traditionalist	15	17.6
Others	5	5.9%
Total	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 7. Ethnic Group

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yoruba	55	64.7%
Igbo	20	23.5%
Hausa	10	11.8%
Total	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

4.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Distribution for the Study

Table 8. Selected Hotels in Alagbaka Akure, Ondo State

HOTELS	RESPONSES		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
	STAFF	GUESTS		
ROYAL BIRDS	18	6	24	28.2%
ST JACOBS	16	5	21	24.7%
DE JAVU	13	4	17	20%
SUNVIEW	10	3	13	15.3%
GRAND CAPITAL	8	2	10	11.8%
TOTAL	65	20	85	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

4.3 Analysis of Objective One

Table 9. The Impact of Marketing Communication on the Performance of the Hospitality Industry in Ondo State

IMPACT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION	SA		A		N		D		SD		\bar{x}	Rk
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Building brand awareness	65	76.5	10	11.8	-	-	4	4.7	6	7.1	3.72	High
Reach the right audience	58	68.2	15	17.6	2	2.4	5	5.9	5	5.9	3.65	High
Creating demand	75	88.2	10	11.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.81	Very

for products and services													High
Developing strategic vision	60	70.6	13	15.3	2	2.4	-	-	10	11.8	3.59		High
Educate Customers	78	91.8	2	2.4	-	-	-	-	5	5.9	3.83		Very High
Build brand trust	50	58.8	25	29.4	5	5.9	5	5.9	-	-	3.50		High
Creating brand consistency	45	52.9	15	17.6	5	5.9	15	17.6	5	2.4	3.48		High
Cultivating customer relationship	69	81.2	11	12.9	3	3.5	2	2.4	-	-	3.78		High
Carrying out customer information	80	94.1	5	5.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.90		Very High
Increased revenue generation	70	82.4	15	17.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.80		Very high
Expressing competitive advantage	75	88.2	5	5.9	3	3.5	2	2.4	-	-	3.81		Very High
Overcoming marketing obstacles	65	76.5	10	11.8	2	2.4	5	5.9	3	3.5	3.72		High
Help to meet the customer's need	60	70.6	10	11.8	5	5.9	8	9.4	2	2.4	3.59		High
OVERALL MEAN											3.70		High

Note. SA-Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1).

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

4.4 Analysis of Objective Two: The Impact of Social Media Marketing Strategy on the Performance of the Hospitality Sector in Ondo State

Table 10. The Impact of Social Media Marketing Strategy on the Performance of the Hospitality Sector in Ondo State

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA (SM) QUESTION/S TATEMENT	SA		A		N		D		SD		\bar{x}	RK
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
SM helps to increase hotel profitability	75	88.2	5	5.9	5	5.9	-	-	-	-	3.81	Very High

It helps to increase the market share	80	94.1	5	5.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.90	Very High
It helps to boost sales	81	95.3	4	4.7	-	--	-	-	-	-	3.92	Very High
Reduction in the cost of marketing	70	82.4	10	11.8	-	-	-	-	5	5.9	3.80	High
It targets a large audience	74	87.1	6	7.1	-	-	5	5.9	-	-	3.84	High
Connect social posts to opportunities	60	70.6	25	29.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.59	High
Generate Leads among competitors	65	76.5	10	11.8	5	5.9	5	5.9	-	-	3.72	High
Drive thought leadership	79	92.9	6	7.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.88	High
Market place awareness	84	98.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.2	3.98	Very High
Enhancement of customers' insight	73	85.9	12	14.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.84	High
OVERALL MEAN											3.82	Very high

Note. SA-Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1).

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 11. Analysis of Coefficient Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
3	0.376^a	0.141^a	0.13571214	0.4878275

Note. The significant relationship between social media and the performance of the hospitality industry.

Predictors: (Constant), Mass Media.

Dependent Variable: Performance of the hospitality industry.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Demographic Presentation

The Table 1 shows that 37 respondents (43.5%) are male while 48 respondents (56.5%) are females.

The Table 2 shows that 15 respondents (17.6%) fall under the age bracket of 18-30, 35 respondents (41.2%) fall under the age bracket of 31-40, 20 respondents (23.5%) fall under the age bracket of 41-50, 10 respondents (11.8%) fall under the age bracket of 51-60 and 5 respondents (5.9%) fall under the age bracket of 61 and above. The Table 3 shows that 50 respondents (58.8%) are single, 30 respondents (35.3%) are married, 5 respondents (5.9%) are divorced, and no respondents for widowed.

The Table 4 shows that 5 respondents (5.9%) are General Managers, 25 respondents (29.4%) are Departmental managers, 35 respondents (41.2%) are Supervisors and 20 respondents (23.5%) are Guests. The Table 5 shows, 27 respondents (31.8%) are SSCE holders, 30 respondents (35.3%) are ND/NCE holders, 20 respondents (23.5%) are HND/BSC holders, 5 respondents (5.9%) are MSC/MBA and 3 respondents (3.5%) are PhD holders. The Table 6 shows 40 respondents (47.1%) are Christians, 25 respondents (33%) are Muslims, 15 respondents (17.6%) are traditionalists and 5 respondents (5.9%) chose others. From the Table 7, it shows that 55 respondents (64.7%) are Yoruba, 20 respondents (23.5%) are Igbo, and 10 respondents (11.8%) are Hausa.

The Table 8 shows that 24 respondents (28.2%) are from Royal Birds Hotel, 21 respondents (24.7%) are from St Jacobs Hotel, 17 respondents (20%) are from De Javu Hotel, 13 respondents (15.3%) from Sunview Hotel while 10 respondents (11.8%) are from Grand Capital hotel.

4.5.2 Analysis

Table 9 shows the data analysis of the impact of communication on the performance of hospitality in Ondo State, indices suggested and were used to measure the impact of Marketing Communication (MC) brings about building brand awareness with 65% strongly agreeing, MC reaching the right audience (58% strongly agree), creating demand or products and services (75% strongly agree), developing a strategic vision (60 % strongly agree), while 70%strongly agree that MC educate customers, 50% strongly agree that MC creating brand consistency, 69% respondents strongly agree that MC cultivating customer relationship, 80% strongly agree that MC carrying out customer information and 70% strongly agree that MC increased revenue generation. Also, MC expressed competitive advantage (75%), overcoming marketing obstacles (65%) and 60% strongly agree that MC help to meet the customer's needs.

Meanwhile, further analysis showed different assertions scored different means as stated below and this is in tandem with (Victoria et al., 2023); the mean score ranged between 3.48 (45 respondents) to 3.90 (80 respondents) with the average and overall mean score of 3.70 indicating that marketing communication enhances the performance of hospitality industry.

The Table 10 shows the analysis of the impact of the social media marketing strategy on the performance of the hospitality industry. The data show that 75 respondents (88.2%) Strongly agree that Social Media (SM) help hotels to increase profitability, 80 respondents (94.1%) strongly agree that SM increases market share, 81 respondents (95.3%) strongly agree that Social media boost sales, while, 70 respondents (82.4%) strongly agree that SM reduces the cost of marketing, 74 respondents (87.1%) strongly agree that SM target large audience, 60 respondents (70.6%) strongly agree that SM connects social posts to opportunities. In the same vein, 65 respondents (76.5%) strongly agree that SM generates leads among competitors, 79 respondents (92.9%) strongly agree that SM drives thought leadership, 84 respondents (98.8%) strongly agree that SM create marketplace awareness and 73 respondents (85.9%) strongly agree that Social media enhance customer's insight.

However, data showed that individuals answered questions related to the impact of social media on hospitality performance with the mean scores ranging between 3.59 (60 respondents) to 3.98 (84 respondents) with an overall mean score of 3.82 suggesting that social media impacts the performance of the hospitality industry.

4.5.3 Hypothesis

Table 11 shows that the R-value is 0.376 this indicates that there is a minimum or insignificant relationship between social media and the performance of the hospitality industry with a small amount of 46.6% while the value of R square is 0.141 suggesting that social media has little influence in the amount of 24.3% on the performance of the hospitality industry in Alagbaka Akure. The data implies that 75.7% of other factors were responsible for the hotel performance in Alagbaka, Akure, and Ondo State which are not covered by this research work.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that marketing communication plays a major role in the performance of the hospitality industry most especially in the aspect of customer awareness, product and service exchange, building of brand, customer satisfaction and how to improve the revenue generation for the hospitality industry. However, the study revealed that social media is not playing a significant role yet in the performance of the hospitality industry in Alagbaka, Akure, Ondo state thus the relationship between social media and hotel performance is minimal in the study areas.

6. Recommendation

The Study recommends that the management of the hospitality industry should devise a policy of marketing communication with some coordinated efforts by the management team with sufficient resources to enforce and implement marketing communication and also test run some forms of marketing communication like Social media, web-page, online adverts ad adverts etc. for the performance of the hospitality industry to compete globally.

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