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DEPARTMENT: HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

OPTION; ROOM DIVISION MANAGEMENT

**TOPIC: Contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction**

**A case study of Great Season Hotel**

Submitted by: Diane UMUTESI

Registration No: 21RP07026

Under supervision and guidance of Mr. Ntakirutimana Denys

A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of advanced Diploma Degree in Hospitality Management with Room Division Management as an option.

2024



# **Declaration**

I, **UMUTESI Diane,** do declare that the content of this research project entitled **“the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction”** submitted to RP Karongi College is my original work and has never been published or submitted to any other academic institution before the award of degree.

**Diane UMUTESI**

Names: Signature Date

1……………………………. …………………….. …/……/2024

(Reg No: 21RP07026)

# **Approval**

I, undersigned, **NTAKIRUTIMANA Denys** certify this research project entitled to the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction is a record of original work done by **Diane UMUTESI** under my supervision.

**Supervisor’s Names Signature Date**

**Denys NTAKIRUTIMANA**  September 30th /2024

# **Abstract**

*This study investigates the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction at the Great Season Hotel. The general objectives of this study were to assess the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction. and the specific objectives was to examine the roles and responsibilities of front office staff to the customer satisfaction, assess the impact of customer satisfaction on the hotel’s brand, and identify challenges faced by front office staff in delivering excellent service. The study has been carried out during this research project where researcher asked different question to both employees and customers of the hotel. Data collected from employees focus on the specific duties of front office staff, their experience, and strategies to improve service quality and 75% of the staff was answered three research question as yes which was asked on the role and responsibility to get customer experience. And customer responses explore their impressions of the front office and factors influencing their satisfaction for 85% The research further delves into how customer satisfaction affects the hotel’s reputation and revenue growth. Findings reveal that front office staff play a crucial role in guest satisfaction, impacting the overall brand image. Key challenges identified include long hour of operation, little feedback result in high levels of stress, and lack of performance feedback and low salary. To enhance service delivery, the study suggests that those challenges must be addressed to ensure smooth operation and guest satisfaction. overall, the researcher emphasizes the need of hotels to invest in continuous staff training, better engagement, and feedback integration as key strategies. To enhance service delivery and stronger connections between the hotel and its guests. The results offer valuable insights for hotel management to improve customer satisfaction through front office operations.*

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# **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

CS: Customer Satisfaction

FO: Front Office

RP: Rwanda Polytechnique

PMS: Property Management System

POS: Point of Sale

US: United State

VIP: Very Important Person

# **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

## 1.2 General Introduction

This chapter is concerned with introduction, background to the study, the problems statement, objectives of the study, the research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and limitations of the study.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

( JAWABREH, 2022) All service companies, particularly the hotel sector, are working hard to enhance their communication skills to make consumers happy with their services. In order to fulfill the fundamental requirements and expectations of consumers, hotel owners are increasingly focusing more on communication skills. Hotel owners are more likely to anticipate and satisfy their clients' needs and desires if their requirements are well recognized and understood (Juwaheer, 2004; Abuhashesh et al., 2019; Mahmoud et al., 2021). Customers who are pleased are more inclined to return or extend their stay at the hotel (Choi and Chu, 2001; Al Khasawneh et al., 2021). Around the 1903s, the meaning of term “front office” had evolved and was mainly used to the most critical staffers in company such as management and executive. The front office staffs are essential to the hotel's ongoing performance as major drivers of client satisfaction. They provide continuous guest contact and the hotel's most varied operational exposure. The front desk personnel, on the other hand, will represent the hotel's image to consumers, and they will have a strong sense of anticipating guests' requirements and exceeding their expectations.

(Maya,2021). Front desk employees are often those professionals that generate income for the hotel by offering direct client service. Being a front desk employee necessitates having certain traits, like empathy, social skills, problem-solving, dependability, and communication (Jill, 2023).

The hospitality sector is working to advance and improve the visitor experience. Because it establishes the initial impression for the visitor, the hotel front desk is an essential component of front office operations (Jain, 2022). In this competitive period, hotels have implemented new procedures to raise their performance standards while also delighting guests. In order to maintain satisfied guests, the hotel realized that it had to provide the greatest services and try new things. The guests had more options; therefore, it was crucial to keep them and provide them with life experiences so they would grow to be devoted consumers. The hotel changed several of its procedures as a result of the guests' candid feedback, implementing new, efficient, and ground-breaking ones. According to research, a hotel's ability to differentiate itself from competitors depends on how well its guests are treated. According to research, front desk staff members and visitor happiness are related, and employee attitudes and motivation levels have an impact on how well hotels perform (Crompton, 2000).

In today's highly competitive business landscape, customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in the success of any organization. Organizations across various industries are continuously striving to enhance their customer experiences to gain a competitive advantage. In the service industry, particularly in the hospitality sector, the front office staff plays a vital role in shaping the overall customer experience.

(EMALIA, 2021)Rwanda's front office standards have been improving to meet international hospitality standards. Many hotels and resorts in Rwanda have well-trained front office staff who are skilled in customer service and guest relations. They aim to provide a high level of service to ensure guest satisfaction.

(INN, 2022)On average of 25% of tourists experienced bad customer experience during their stay in Rwanda. Rwandan customer service is also seen as the worst in the East African region, which comprises of Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. The most cited problems being (ODOUR, 2015).

## 1.3 problem statement

Customer dissatisfaction happens when customers feel that their requirements, wants, and expectations have not been met by a service provider (Formal Plus 17Dec2020). When customers are not satisfied, they are unsatisfied.

Customers occasionally express dissatisfaction with the way a service or product was provided because of insufficient workers at front office parts. Customer discontent may stem from a variety of problems, including those relating to pricing, usability, failure to satisfy explicit expectations, and problems with customer service (Fuchs,2022).

Front desk staff must be sufficiently staffed, know how to avoid and address these problems, and be knowledgeable to satisfy customers. It's important to note that good front desk service makes guests feel like they belong and will stay at the hotel again. Depending on how well they treat guests, front desk staff can either keep them coming back or turn them off and make them unloyalty to the establishment.

## 1.4 Objective of the Study.

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the research is to assess the contribution of front office staff to the customer satisfaction.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the role and responsibilities of front office staff on customer satisfaction.

2. To assess the impacts of customer satisfaction on hotel brand.

3. To identify the challenges faced by front office staff in delivering excellent customer service.

## 1.5 Research Question

1. What are the role and responsibilities of front office staff on customer satisfaction?

2. What are the impacts of customer satisfaction on hotel brand?

3. What strategies can organizations employ to enhance the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction?

## 1.6 Research Hypothesis

1. A well Front office staffing play great role to maximize customer satisfaction

2. Customer satisfaction maximizes hotel revenue through front office staff.

3. Staffing skilled labor at front office enhance customer satisfaction

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

### **1.7.1 To the Researcher**

This study will help the researcher for further fulfillment of Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management with Room Division as a specialization and will be awarded the degree. It will help and equip her with skills and knowledge of how front office staff contribute to customer satisfaction to improve its effectiveness. The researcher will get the knowledge of how to keep up all necessaries needed to be maintained by staff at front office to meet with customer needs.

**1.7.2 To Future Researchers**

This study is going to assist other researchers to guide them for making research useful of its relevance, it will be used by other academicians who will need it for further research.

### **1.7.3 To the Government of Rwanda**

This study can help the government of Rwanda to have high Public Perception: Satisfied customers contribute to positive public perception of the government. When citizens are satisfied with the services they receive, they are more likely to have a favorable opinion of the government and its performance. This can lead to increased trust, support, and confidence in the government's ability to deliver on its promises

Service Quality Improvement: Customer satisfaction feedback provides valuable insights into the quality of government services. By actively seeking and addressing customer feedback, the government can identify areas where improvements are needed and take appropriate action. This helps in enhancing service quality, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Citizen Engagement and Participation: Satisfied customers are more likely to actively engage with the government and participate in public initiatives. When citizens feel their needs are being met, they are more inclined to provide input, collaborate, and contribute to the development and implementation of policies, programs,

### **1.7.4 To the RP Karongi College**

This project will be printed and kept in PR Karongi college library to be shown the visitors about benefit of front office staff to satisfy customer in community challenges. And will help the students of PR Karongi college from hospitality management and other researchers to use it as reference during their other research.

And this research will help the students of PR Karongi college to know the advantage of front office staff in the hotel Industry.

### **1.7.5 To the Hospitality Industry**

Currently, there is a gape in hotel sometimes hotel use the untrained staff, and they cannot deliver good service to the customer. This research will bring improvement of services because it is going to bring new innovative to how good customer care can do in appropriate way this will increase level of customer’s satisfaction and their wellbeing respectively. And, customers will increase their level of service experience, and this will increase high customer turnovers due to satisfaction they will gain from this customer care improvement.

### **1.7.6 To the Community**

This project will help community especially in Kinyinya Sector to generate money from those customers who will be satisfied by their customer’ service.

## 1.8 Scope of the Study

### **1.8.1 Content Scope**

This research project focuses specifically on the contribution of front office staff in the hospitality industry. The study will primarily explore hotels, resorts, and other lodging establishments. While the findings may have broader implications, the research is limited to this sector.

It is important to note that this study relies on self-reported data and perceptions of customers and front office staff. The accuracy and reliability of the findings are subject to the respondents' honesty and willingness to participate in the research. Additionally, the study's scope is constrained by time and resource limitations.

### **1.8.2 Geographical Scope**

This study will be conducted at Great season Hotel in Kigali city, Gasabo district, Kinyinya Sector Gacuriro cell.

### **I.8.3 Time Scope**

This study will carry out from February 2024 up to September of 2024

## 1.9 Limitations and Delimitation of the Study

### **1.9.1 Limitation of the Study**

The challenges that supposed to committee is insufficient technology system like PMS, POS, vending machine and financial challenge. There will be also another challenge of use non automated tools, equipment and make my project delay and on the side of data collection.

### **1.9.2 Delimitation of the Study**

A researcher is predicting to use those required systems from some hotel through explaining my aims that it’s for academic. Some money is supposed to be collected from different parties like friends, relatives and saving to get those tools and to be able to pay those automations in research

# **CHARPER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## 2.1 Introduction

The front desk staff of a hotel is vital to the satisfaction of its guests. Throughout the whole guest life cycle, interactions with customers are most regular at the front office areas. In other words, the front desk has a direct impact on the business of the hotel when the operations team creates a pleasant first impression that encourages guests to return or post positive reviews.

## 2.2 Definition of Key Terms

### **2.2.1 Hotel**

According to Rumekso state that hotel is a building with facilities such as food and beverage which run well to get the benefit (Rumeks, 2002)

Hotel Industry refers to the sectors of hospitality industry that focus on providing accommodation, lodging and related service to the travelers and guest.

### **2.2.2 Customer**

A customer is an individuals or business that purchase another company’s goods or services. customers are important because they drive revenues, Businesses can neither survive nor thrive without them (Kenton, 2024)

### **2.2.3 Customer Satisfactions**

Customer satisfaction (CSAT) is a measure of how well a company’s products, services, and overall customer experience meet customer expectations. It reflects your business’ health by showing how well your products or services resonate with buyers. Or customer satisfaction is a measure of how happy your customers are with your product or service. And for many businesses, it’s the difference between a success and a failure no pressure (Msallam, 2015)

Oliver ([2014](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11002-023-09671-w#ref-CR22), p. 8) defines customer satisfaction (CS) as a judgment that a product/service feature or the product or service itself provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfillment, including levels of under or over-fulfillment. Similarly, Anderson and Sullivan characterize CS as a post purchase evaluation of product quality given repurchase expectations. Thus, CS is a customer’s evaluative summary judgment of consumption experiences that is associated with customer and firm Level of outcomes (Aliana, 2024)

### **2.2.4 Front Office**

The front office is the face of the organization, so it has primary responsibility for dealing with current and prospective clients. It handles marketing and sales functions like order processing (Wallstreetmojo, 2024)

### **2.2.5 Brand**

Brand is an intangible asset of a company which is made by their products and services (Haigh, 2004). The main reason behind the success of a brand is how brand influence on the satisfaction level of a customer and how it impacts on customer’s buying decision, this leads them to retain loyal with the brand and they will endorse the brand to their household members and groups (Sarfraz Ashraf, 2018)

## 2.3 Importance of Front Office

The hotel front office employees play a critical role in helping the hotel to run smoothly. Plus, as they’re one of the few departments that have direct contact with guests, they’re also perfectly positioned to ensure a first-class customer experience.an email wherein the guest confirms the information with the hotel that has been selected by the guest for his/ her stay. When the guest interaction happens with the front desk employees the front office software records the guest’s information such as name, age, contact numbers, probable duration of stay for room reservation and so on (Sohain,2021).

## 2.4 Difference Between Front Office and Back Office

Front office and back office refer to distinct business processes within a company, based on the physical location where businesses have traditionally performed these functions. Front office functions, for example, refer to front facing tasks or interactions, whereas back-office functions had more with supporting work that occurred behind the scenes (Wallstreetmojo, 2024)

## 2.5 Contribution of Front Office Staff to Customer Satisfaction

The front office team plays a key role in planning the guest experience to help ensure that the hotel showcases all its best offerings effectively. As they regularly interact with the guests throughout their stay, they receive valuable feedback to help them with this key task. From suggesting things to do and local attractions to see to highlighting some of the hotel’s own onsite activities, front desk employees’ knowledge can improve the overall guest experience (Oak, 2023)

Front Office functions include reservation, registration, room and rate assignment, guest services, room status, maintenance and settlement of the guest account, and creation of guest history records. The Front Office develops and maintains a comprehensive database of guest information, coordinates guest services, and ensures guest satisfaction. These functions are accomplished by personnel in diverse areas of the Front Office Department. The front office is also the face of the hotel. It is the first guest contact area and the nerve center of the hotel. All the activities and areas of the front office are geared toward supporting guest transactions and services (Augustine, 2024)

When we back in history, the term front office was first used in the US, but now it is a common word globally. Traditionally, the front office department consists of several teams, such as reception, concierge, switchboard, reservations and guest relations. These elements in the front office department vary depend on the hotel. (Vegini, 2002) Vergini and Wood stated that “the front office department is in many ways the “heart” of the hotel”. The reason is not only from the fact that revenue stream and sales generation are mainly from the front office. Far beyond that, the front office department is the section where guests made the first and perhaps also the last contact with the hotel. As a result, the perception of the guest about the service level of a hotel will mostly be based on the service level at the front office (Tran, 2020)

## 2.6 Role of Hotel Front Office Staff to the Hotel Revenue

Traditionally, the front desk or Front Office department is viewed as a hotel’s center for communication and transactions with its guests. The undeniably has a significant role to play in a hotel’s daily operations and a profound influence on the guests’ first and overall impression of the property. Nonetheless, whether in the academic literature or in practice, rarely is the role of Front Office employees associated with strategic, revenue-generating aspects of the hotel business. It was not until online booking platforms experienced an exponential growth and automation technologies were introduced into hotel operations that industry experts began to question the need for the guest-registering and room-assigning Front Office clerks. To reinforce the role of these Front Office staff and prove their worth, a logical way for hoteliers is to ensure that their Front Office associates actively contribute to the hotel’s profitability (Huyen, 2019)

## 2.7 Challenges Faced by Front Office Staff

Front line as well as front hotel employees play an essential role in creating positive customer experiences,which are factors of customer satisfaction and appraisal of service quality. Front Hotel employees also face many challenges while performing their jobs. Front facing a strnous workload,frquent challenges of circumstance,lack of performance feedback and low pay,they are easily irritated and exhausted,which in turns affects their behavior and may lead to resignation.One critical challengefaced by front office line employees in hotel industry is role stress.Long hours of operation ,polychronic behaviors,a high demands ,low resources job model and little and little feedback result in high levels of stress and burnout (Biyan Wen, 2020).

he morale of front office staff can be poor because they do repetitive work, and their pay is typically the lowest compared to other department workers. This is a very critical concern because the interaction of these workers with customers will affect the company's productivity and performance in some way (Anjaneyulu, 2024)

* 1. Rules and Regulations for Hotel Front Office Staff

**All front office staff must follow this rules regulation such as:**

Arrive on time, inspired and motivated ,Dress up properly and [maintain high grooming standards](https://setupmyhotel.com/hotel-sop-standard-operating-procedures/front-office-sop/sop-front-office-staff-grooming-and-hygiene/),

Smile naturally on stage and backstage, Be proactive and motivate each other, There is no mine, everything is ours, Even if smoking is not good for you, you are only allowed to smoke in the designated staff area ,After smoking, please consider our guests and colleagues, wash your hands & take a mouthwash or mint, Breaks are important but don’t take extensive ones, Never Ever leave your Desk unattended, Always communicate your position with your teammates, Keep your eyes open, observe, and check our environment permanently, Report any irregularity, It’s your responsibility to keep our hotel clean, maintained, and stylish, Every guest is a [VIP](https://setupmyhotel.com/glossary/vip/) ,Never say I don’t know or/and it’s not my job, always offer an alternative, Chewing doesn’t look good on you, Don’t lean on the wall, the wall can stand by itself, Keep your mobile on silent mode and do not speak on mobile in the guest areas, Don’t hide your mistake, instead learn from it, Do not disclose guest details: like profiles C.C No. and current guest balance outside the hotel, Dispose (by shredding) any outdated internal or guest documents after a specific period, mask guest credit Card no. when implying on emails, Never say out the guest room number, instead point out the room number displayed on the key card or indicate which floor they will be allocated on.(Mohamed,2024).

## 2.9 Front Office Staff Hiring Techniques

Hiring for hospitality is a philosophy of hiring hotel staff with hospitality at the front of your mind. Hotel employees are essentially the face of a hotel, and they comprise most of the interaction’s guests have while staying at a property. A meaningful interaction with a staff member could mean the world to a lonely or weary traveler, while a negative interaction could have significant consequences on the future success of your property. Hotel may seemingly operate as one big unit, but profitable hotel operations require the success of many moving parts. Every employee plays an integral role in the overall performance of a hotel. As a result, hoteliers know that hiring the right staff, and creating the right team, can make or break a property (Campbell, 2023)

Hospitality goes hand in hand with having a positive attitude, embracing others, and making guests feel at home. From small [boutique hotels](https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/hospitality/what-is-a-boutique-hotel) to [booming vacation resorts](https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/hospitality/what-is-an-all-inclusive-resort), the [hospitality industry](https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/hospitality/what-is-the-hospitality-industry) is built on the [guest experience](https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/hospitality/hotel-customer-experience), and hiring hotel staff is a major part of that. A rude or disruptive employee can negatively affect a [hotel’s guest feedback](https://www.cvent.com/en/blog/events/gather-valuable-hotel-guest-feedback) scores, online reviews and, in the end, its overall success (Campbell, 2023)

## 2.10 Interdepartmental of Front Office and Other Staff

Communication is one of the organizational functions that helps a company to stay efficient and productive. One of the more important forms of organizational communication is inter-departmental communication, the Institute for Public Relations notes. The importance of communication between different departments in an organization becomes most evident when that communication breaks down. Implementing policies to strengthen inter-departmental communication help to underscore its importance and maintain an efficient flow of information (Root, 2019)

Cross functional teams i.e., groups composed of members from different functional departments, expedite innovation via the cross pollination of expertise and the reduction of traditional hierarchical approvals with the resultant delays from passing information between departments. These diverse teams promote buy-in from the involved departments. Additionally, cross-functional brainstorming facilitates higher quality decisions compared to the conventional model of independent employees and departments. Diverse thinking within groups generally creates better solutions than individuals alone (loving, 2021)

# **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that the researcher assumes to use while conducting the research. It describes the research design, target population, sampling techniques, sampling size, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical consideration.

## 3.2 Research Design

A **research design** is a strategy for answering your [research question](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/) using empirical data. Creating a research design means making decisions about your project. A well-planned research design helps ensure that your methods match your [research objectives](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-objectives/) and that you use the right kind of analysis for your data (McCombes, 2021)

A research design is referred to the plan or structure that guides the process of conducting research. It is a critical component of the research process and serves as a blueprint for how a study will be carried out, including the methods and techniques that will be used to collect and analyze data. A well-designed research study is essential for ensuring that the research objectives are met and that the results are valid and reliable (Jain, 2023).

## 3.3 Research Population

A **population**is the entire group that you want to draw conclusion about (Bhandari, 2020).In research, the population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or events that share a common characteristic and are the focus of the study. It represents the complete set of elements that the researcher aims to study and draw conclusions about (Jilcha Sileyew, 2020; Garg, 2016 in (Nurhafizah Ahmad ;Fadzilawani Astifar Alias ; Noor ‘Aina Abdul Razak, 2023). Defining the population is a critical step in research design as it sets the boundaries and scope of the study's findings (Nurhafizah Ahmad ;Fadzilawani Astifar Alias ; Noor ‘Aina Abdul Razak, 2023).

Table 1**: population of the Study**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Population** | **Classes** | **Population size** |
| Customers | Great season Hotel | 40 |
| Employees | Great season Hotel | 15 |
| Total |  | 55 |

**Source: Primary data July 2024**

## 3.4 Sampling Techniques

### **3.4.1 Sampling Technique**

While conducting research about a group of people, it’s rarely possible to collect data from every person in that group. Instead, you select a **sample**. The sample is the group of individuals who will participate in the research. To draw valid conclusions from your results, you must carefully decide how you will select a sample that is representative of the group. This is called a **sampling method or technique** (Ashona, 2020)

### **3.4.2 Sample Size**

**Sample size is the** number of observations or individuals included in a study or experiment. It is the number of individuals, items, or data points selected from a larger population to represent it statistically. The sample size is a crucial consideration in research because it directly impacts the reliability and extent to which you can generalize those findings to the larger population (Staff, 2023)

The number of individuals you should include in your sample depends on various factors, including the size and [variability](https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/variability/) of the population and your research design. There are different[sample size calculators](https://www.ai-therapy.com/psychology-statistics/sample-size-calculator) and formulas depending on what you want to achieve with statistical analysis (Combe 2019)the researcher use Yamens formula to calculate the sample size,

#### **3.4.2.1. Interpretation of Yaman Formula**

Yaman formula: n=N/(1+N(e)2

The variables in this formula are:

n= the sample size

N= the population of the study

e= the margin error in the calculation (0.05)

Sample size of hotel customers=40/ (1+40 (0.05)2=40/ (1+40(0.0025) = 36

Sample size of hotel employees=15/ (1+15(0.05)2=15/ (1+15(0.0025) = 11

Table 2 **Sample Size of Respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Respondents** | **Sample size** | **% (percentage)** |
| Customers | 40 | 73 |
| Employees | 15 | **27** |
| **Total** | **55** | **100%** |

**Source: Primary data July 2024**

## 3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In this research, the researcher will use different instrument to collect data such as questionnaires for primary data and observation for secondary data.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a research tool or survey instrument that consists of a set of questions or prompts designed to gather information from individuals or groups of people (Hassan, 2024)

A **questionnaire** is a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions. Questionnaires can be used to collect quantitative and/or qualitative information (Bhandari, Questionnaire Design | Methods, Question Types & Examples, 2021).

### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation research is a type of research method where the researcher observes and records the behavior of individuals or groups in their natural environment. In other words, the researcher does not intervene or manipulate any variables but simply observes and describes what is happening (Hassan, 2024)

## 3.6 Validity and Reliability

**Reliability**and**validity** are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a methods technique. or test measures something. Reliability is about the consistency of a measure, and validity is about the accuracy of a measure (Middleton, 2019)

# **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH PROJECT PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION**

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction at Great Season Hotel. The researcher collected data from both employees and customers to understand how front office interactions impact the overall customer experiences. This was to determine the role of front office personnel in improving customer satisfaction and how their service influence guest satisfaction.

The study addressed the following key questions:

the responsibilities of front office staff in enhancing customer satisfaction, how does front office staff influence customer loyalty and hotel reputation, what are the factors determine customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry?

## 4.2 Front office responsibilities in customer satisfaction

Front office staff servers as the initial point for guests, playing a critical role in shaping the guest’s perception of the hotel. The responsibilities of the front office staff include:

1. Guest reception and check-in: first impressions matter significantly. Front office staff providing essential information about the hotel services.
2. Handling guest inquiries and requests: prompt and accurate responses to guest’s inquiries contribute to their satisfaction. whether it is providing information about local attractions or resolving issues, the efficiency of the front office staff is critical.
3. Complaint Management: Handling guest complaint promptly and professionally can prevent negative experience from escalating, ensuring that guests leave with a positive impression despite any challenge they face.
4. Communication and contribution with other department: effective communication between the front office and other departments ensures that guests’ needs are met swiftly. Such as arranging housekeeping, room service, or maintenance requests

**Influence of Font office staff on customer satisfaction**

Front office staff influence several aspects of customer satisfaction:

First impression: The demeanor and efficiency of the staff suring check-in set the tone for the guest’s stay, Personalized Services: staff who addres guests by name and offer personalized services create a welcoming atmosphere, Problem Resolution: Quick resolution of issues, such as a room changes or a special requests, positively impacts the guest experience, Customer feedback: gathering and responding to feedback during the stay shows guests that their opinions are valued, encouraging repeat visits

## 4.2. Presentation of finding

Quantitative data analyzed in form of tables are data collected from respondents, where both customers and employees collected data presented separately.

### **4.2.1. Data collected from customers**

Table 3 Gender of respondents

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Frequently | Percentage |
| Male | 10 | 45% |
| Female | 12 | 55% |
| **Total** | 22 | **100%** |

Source: Primary data 2024.

According to the table above, as researcher found out that both sexes were represented however, the majority of respondent by sex were female equal 55% and male were equal 45% means that all gender were involved in giving information and the information they provided showed that most were female

**Table 4 Age of respndents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Frequently | Percentage |
| 18-25 | 7 | 32% |
| 26-33 | 8 | 36% |
| 34-41 | 4 | 18% |
| 42-49 | 3 | 14% |
| **Total** | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024.**

According to the table above, the highest number of the respondents was between the ages of 26 and 32 represented 36%, followed by respondents of between 18-25 represented by 32% and ones between 34-41 years represented by 18% and from 42 years and 49 represented by 14% means all respondents were mature enough to give reliable answers regarding the study.

## 4.3 Question collected for staff

Table 5 **The department where respondents is working for.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Department | Frequently | Percentage |
| Front office | 12 | 55% |
| Housekeeping | 8 | 36% |
| Food and beverage | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above, the highest number of respondents was working in front office departments was 12 represented by 55% followed by 8 who was working in housekeeping represented by 36% and 2 working in food and beverage represented by 9% this means the answers is reliable because the highest numbers of respondent was from front office department.

Table 6 **Personal experience of respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Working experience | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1-3 years | 5 | 42% |
| 4-7 years | 4 | 33% |
| 8-12 years | 2 | 17% |
| Above | 1 | 8% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above showed that most respondents had personal experience in hotel industry was between 1-3 years represented by 42%, followed by one with between 4-7 years of experience at the rate of 17% and the one with above experience were represented by 8%.

Table 7 **Education level of respondent**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Education level | Frequently | Percentage |
| Primary level | 3 | 25% |
| Secondary level | 4 | 33% |
| University level | 5 | 42% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above table showed that the respondents with university level represented by 42%, followed by respondent with secondary level represented by 33% and one with primary level represented by the rate of 25%. means that the respondents were qualified to provide needed information.

**Questions for employee**

Table 8 **Information employees have about front office**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Front office department | Frequently | Percentage |
| First impression of the guest | 7 | 58% |
| Assist guest with special need | 5 | 42% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: primary data 2024.**

According to the table above the most respondents was 7, represented by 58% showed the front office department is the first impression of the guest, followed by assist guest with special need represented by 42%.

Table 9 **The role and responsibilities of front office staff to satisfy customers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Role and responsibilities | Frequency | Percentage |
| Great and welcoming guest | 6 | 40% |
| Handle guests complain | 5 | 27% |
| Answer all incoming calls | 2 | 8% |
| Conduct department meeting | 3 | 9% |
| Reservation management | 4 | 10% |
| Maintain the reservation record | 2 | 8% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above the highest respondent was 6, represented by 40% showed great and welcoming guests, followed by 5 represented by 27% with handle guest complain, the one represented by 10% with reservation management, respondent showed conduct department meeting represented by 9% and the one with maintain the reservation record represented by 8%.

Table 10 **Employees thought about what they would do to improve the ability to deliver smooth guest experience at front office**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Things to improve | Frequency | Percentage |
| Training for staff | 5 | 42% |
| Smile goes along way | 0 | 0% |
| Engage your guest | 2 | 17% |
| Guest feedback matter | 4 | 33% |
| All above | 1 | 8% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to table above, training staff identified as the way of improving the ability to deliver smooth guest experience at front office by 42%, followed by guest feedback matter by 33%, the one with engage the guest by17% and the last one thought they should do all things above with the rate of 8%.

Table 11 **How employees see the hotel without effective operations of front office**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Effect | Frequency | Percentage |
| Slow in service | 12 | 55% |
| Loss in revenue | 8 | 36% |
| Poor image | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the information above the employee identified that hotel without effective front office operation can be slow in service, which is represented by 55%, followed by loss in revenue by 36% and the one with poor image by 9%.

**Question for customers**

Table 12 **Impression customers get from front office staff.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Impression | Frequency | Percentage |
| Smartness | 5 | 42% |
| Communication | 4 | 33% |
| Rapid | 3 | 18% |
| Politeness | 2 | 9% |
| Discipline | 1 | 8% |
| Unskilled | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above the customer identified the impression they get front office staff the most impression was smartness by 42%, followed by communication by 33%, followed by rapid represented by18%, the one with politeness by 9% and the last one with discipline by 8%.

Table 13 **Aspect customer thought needed to be improved at front office for better guest satisfaction**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Aspect | Frequency | Percentage |
| Train staff | 7 | 58% |
| Engage your guest | 3 | 25% |
| Dealing with guest feedback | 2 | 17% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: primary data 2024**

According to the information above the customer thought the aspect needed to improve better guest satisfaction was training for staff represented by 58%, followed by engage your guest by the rate of 25%, and that last one with dealing with guest feedback by 17%.

Table 14 **How customer rate the service level of front office staff in term of service delivery compared to another department of the hotel**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Frequency | Percentage |
| Excellent | 5 | 42% |
| Best | 4 | 33% |
| Better | 3 | 25% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above customer showed the level of service of front office staff compared to another department they said was excellent by 42%, followed by best with the rate of 33% and better with 25%. It means the front office staff was excellent as the highest level in term of service.

**Question for employee.**

Table 15 **who employees thought was customer in hotel.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Meaning | yes | No | Frequency | Percentages |
| Customer is any individual or business that purchase another company’s goods or service. | 12 |  | 12 | 100% |
|  | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Total |  | | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to above table, respondent showed that customer is an individual or business that purchase another company’s good or service to the rate of 100%.

Table 16 **Impact of satisfying a customer for the hotel.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Impact | Frequency | Percentage |
| Good reputation | 7 | 58% |
| Increase hotel revenue | 3 | 25% |
| Strengthening business backbone | 2 | 17% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary 2024**

According to information showed that respondents think that good reputation is good impact of satisfying customer for the hotel represented by 58%, followed by increase hotel revenue to rate of 25%, and strengthening business backbone at 17%.

Table 17 **How to maintain interconnection between a hotel and its customer.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Frequency | Percentage |
| Apply guest feedback to future stay | 5 | 42% |
| Know your VIPs and personalize their experience | 4 | 33% |
| Automate follow -up to keep the conversation going | 3 | 25% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the above table respondents showed that way to maintain interconnection between hotel and its customer was to apply guest feedback to future stay represented by 42% followed by know your VIPs and personalize their experience to the rate of 33% and automate follow up to keep the conversation going to 25%.

**Question for customer**

Table 18 **The factors to determine the selection of the hotel brand**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Factors | Frequency | Percentages |
| Your vision | 5 | 42% |
| Brands reputation | 4 | 33% |
| Cost | 2 | 17% |
| Requirements | 1 | 8% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to above table most respondents was 5, represented by 42%, showed your vision as the factors to determine the selection of the hotel brand, followed by brand reputation by 33%, followed by cost with 17%, and the one with requirement with the rate of 8%.

Table 19 **The reason why customers prefer to use hotel than other related service establishments.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Reasons | Frequency | Percentage |
| Consistency quality | 6 | 50% |
| More amenities | 4 | 33% |
| Better location | 2 | 17% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the table above the most reason customers prefer hotel service than other related services was consistency quality represented by 50%, followed by more amenities by 33% and last one better location by 17%.

Table 20 **Advise customers thought the hoteliers can do for ensuring guest satisfaction from front office.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Advise | Frequency | Percentage |
| Consistent deliver | 7 | 58% |
| High level of professionalism | 3 | 25% |
| Well trained | 2 | 17% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the information above the customer advise the hoteliers to deliver services consistent with the rate of 58%, followed by high level of professionalism which is represented by 25%, and well trained with 17%.

**Question for employee**

Table 21 **The most common complaint or issue employee encounter from guest.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Complaints | Frequency | Percentage |
| Service-related complaints | 5 | 42% |
| Attitudinal complaints | 3 | 25% |
| Mechanical complaints | 4 | 33% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the information above the employee identified that the most complaint they faced was service-related complaints represented by 42%, followed by mechanical complaints by25% and attitudinal complaints by 25%.

**If there were some logistical or operational challenges employee thought can make difficult to provide the level of service. Yes or no**

According to the information identified by employee the most of them showed that there were some challenges at the rate of 58% and the one who choose no was represented by 42%. That means there is some challenge because most of them choose yes.

Table 22 **How employees overcome the challenges**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Solution | Frequency | Percentages |
| Listening | 7 | 32% |
| Get all the fact | 6 | 27% |
| Act quickly | 4 | 18% |
| Keep the promise | 3 | 14% |
| Follow up | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the above table the respondents showed that to overcome the challenges listening is the most important thing they can do represented by 32%, followed by get all the fact by 27%, act quickly by18%, keep the promise by 14% and the one follow up with the rate of 9%.

**Question for customers**

Table 23 **The most common sources of conflict that can arise between customer and front office staff.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Source | Frequency | Percentage |
| When employee don’t have an adequate understanding of the client ‘priorities. | 8 | 36% |
| Unproper management of guest expectations | 12 | 55% |
| All the above | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data 2024**

According to the information above customer showed that the most common source of conflict was unproper management represented by 55%, followed by an adequate understanding of client priorities represented by 36%, and the one who thought its all above source by 8%.

Table 24 **How customer thought those types of issues could be prevented or resolved more effectively**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Resolution | Frequency | Percentage |
| Active listening | 8 | 36% |
| Empath | 7 | 32% |
| Clear communication | 4 | 18% |
| Feedback | 3 | 14% |
| None of above | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

**Source: Primary data**

According to table above the customer showed that the most thing you can do to prevent the issue was active listening represented by 36%, followed by empathy by 32%, clear communication by 18% and the one feedback with the rate of 14%.

**Last question: if the customer was faced by the situation where front office staff seemed struggled to provide smooth customer experience. They could answer by yes or no.**

The customer who answered this question by was 9 represented by 41% and others answered no was 13 represented by 59%.

## 4.4 Chapter Summary

To conclude this chapter, the researcher conducted fieldwork to gather insights from hotel staff and customers regarding the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction. Participants were invited to share their experiences and opinions on the service provided by front office personnel. The researcher also provided recommendations based on the collected data. According to the findings presented in the tables above, most participants expressed support for the project, emphasizing that the front office staff significantly enhances customer satisfaction and positively impacts the overall perception of the hotel experience.

# **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study and offers recommendations for both policy and practice. The study focused on the role of front office staff in customer satisfaction within Great Season Hotel. The research explored the staff's responsibilities, the impact of customer satisfaction on the hotel's brand, and the challenges faced by front office staff in delivering excellent customer service. This chapter is organized into three sections: a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## 5.2 Summary of the Research Project

The research aimed to understand the contribution of front office staff to customer satisfaction at Great Season Hotel. The study's objectives included examining the role and responsibilities of the front office staff in ensuring customer satisfaction, assessing the impact of customer satisfaction on the hotel’s brand, and identifying the challenges faced by front office staff in delivering high-quality service.

The study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach that included surveys with hotel employees and customers. The target population consisted of 55 participants, including front office employees and hotel guests, with a sample size of 47 respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires that covered aspects such as the roles of front office staff, the impact of customer satisfaction on hotel branding, and the challenges front office staff encounter in their daily operations.

The findings indicated that front office staff play a critical role in shaping customer experiences, particularly in welcoming guests, handling complaints, managing reservations, and maintaining hotel operations. Moreover, the study revealed that customer satisfaction positively influences the hotel’s brand reputation, revenue generation, and customer loyalty. However, challenges such as: lack of performance feedback and low salary, long hours of operation, polychronic behavior, little feedback result in high levels of stress were identified as obstacles to delivering consistent and excellent customer service.

## 5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research demonstrated that the front office staff are vital to the success of Great Season Hotel by directly influencing customer satisfaction. Their roles, from greeting guests to resolving complaints and managing reservations, are essential in creating a positive guest experience. The study also highlighted the significant impact of customer satisfaction on the hotel’s brand, reinforcing the importance of maintaining a well-trained and responsive front office team. However, the challenges faced by front office staff, such as long hours of operation, polychronic behavior, lack of performance feedback and low salary, and little feedback result in high levels of stress must be addressed to ensure smooth operations and improved guest satisfaction.

Overall, the research emphasizes the need for hotels to invest in continuous staff training and customer engagement strategies to enhance service delivery and foster stronger connections between the hotel and its guests.

## 5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for improving front office operations and customer satisfaction at Great Season Hotel:

### **5.4.1 To the Hotel Management**

1. **Invest in Staff Training**: The hotel should provide regular training programs for front office staff to enhance their communication skills, customer service techniques, and problem-solving abilities. Well-trained staff can better handle guest complaints and exceed customer expectations.
2. **Improve Feedback Systems**: Implement a robust guest feedback system to capture real-time data on customer satisfaction. This will help the hotel quickly address issues and improve its services based on guest experiences.
3. **Enhance Technology for Efficiency**: The hotel should invest in advanced front office management software to streamline operations such as reservation management, guest communication, and complaint resolution. This will improve efficiency and reduce delays in service delivery.

### **5.4.2 To Front Office Staff**

1. **Engage with Guests**: Front office staff should actively engage with guests, ensuring that they feel valued throughout their stay. Simple gestures like greeting guests with a smile, helping, and following up on guest concerns can significantly enhance the guest experience.
2. **Continuous Improvement**: Staff should embrace continuous learning and stay updated on hospitality trends to improve their service delivery. This can be achieved through internal workshops or industry certifications in hospitality management.

### **5.4.3 To Future Researchers**

Future researchers should explore the impact of technology on front office operations and how automation can improve customer satisfaction. Additionally, research could focus on the influence of employee well-being on service delivery and its subsequent effect on customer satisfaction.

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# **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Introduction letter**

Republic of Rwanda

Western Province

IPRC KARONGI

Hospitality Management

Tel: +250 788 522 633

Date: 17 September 2024

To: Manager of great season hotel

Dear sir,

**Re: Requesting a permission of collecting data in Great Season Hotel**.

With due respect, I would like to request for permission of collecting data in the hotel you are heading.

in fact, I am UMUTESI Diane a final year student from IPRC Karongi in Hospitality Management, I am currently conducting academic research on the “Contribution of front officestaff to customer satisfaction**”** at Great Season Hotel, since the population for my project had to include your staff and guests, your permission to approach them in this research will be great assistance.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

your sincerely,

Signature…………………………...

Diane MUTESI

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire**

**SECTION A: Demographic Information of the respondents**

Dear sir/Madam tick, circle or specify in the space provided accordingly

1.Gender:

i. Male

ii. Female

2. Age

i.18-25

ii. 26-33

iii.34-41

iv. 42-49

3. Questions for staff(employees)

i. What is your working department?

a. Front office

b. Housekeeping

C. Food and Beverages

ii. What is your working experience?

1. 20 – 30 years
2. 31-40 years
3. Above

4. level of education

1. Primary level
2. Secondary level
3. University level

5. What do you know about front office department?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**SECTION B: Questions related to the roles and responsibilities of front office staff on customer satisfaction**

**Question for employees**

1.What are the role and responsibilities of front office staff to satisfy customers

i. Great and welcoming guest

ii. Handle guest complaints

1. Answer all incoming call
2. Conduct department meetings
3. Reservation management
4. Maintain the reservation record

2. What would you do to improve the ability to deliver smooth guest experience at the front office?

a. Trainings for staff

b. Smile goes a long way

c. Engage your guest

d. Guest feedback matters

e. All above

3. How do you see the hotel without effective operations of front office

a. Slow in services

b. Poor service/loss in revenue

c. poor image

**Questions for customers**

Q1. Which impression did you get from the front office staff, choose all possible?

1. Smartness
2. Communication
3. Rapid
4. Politeness
5. Unskilled
6. Knowledgeable
7. Discipline

Q2. For better guest satisfaction, which aspects that need to be improved at the front office? how to

1. Train staff
2. Engage your guest
3. Dealing with guest feedback

Q3. How can you rate the service level of the front office staff in terms of service delivery compared to other department of the hotel, circle?

1. Better
2. Best
3. Excellent

**SECTION C: Questions related to the impacts of customer satisfaction on hotel brand**

**Questions for employee**

Q1. Who is a customer in hotel establishment, yes or not?

1. A customer is an individuals or business that purchase another company’s goods or services. customers are important because they drive revenues, Businesses can neither survive nor thrive without them.

Q2. What is the impact of satisfying a customer for the hotel?

1. Good reputation
2. Increase hotel revenues
3. Strengthening business backbone

Q3. How would you maintain interconnection between a hotel and its customer, circle?

### Apply guest feedback to future stay

### Know your VIPs and personalize their experience

### Automate follow-up to keep the conversation going

**Questions for Customer**

Q1. The factors to determine the selection of the hotel brand?

1. Your vision
2. Brand’s reputation
3. Cost
4. Requirements

Q2. Mention the reasons why do you prefer to use hotel than other related service establishments?

1. Consistent quality
2. More amenities
3. Better location

Q3. What can you advise the hoteliers for ensuring guest satisfaction from front office?

1. Consistent deliver
2. High level of professionalism
3. Well trained

**SECTION D: Questions related to the challenges faced by front office staff**

**Questions for employee**

Q1. What are most common complaints or issues you encounter from guest?

1. Service related
2. Attitudinal complaints
3. Mechanical complaints

Q2. Are there some logistical or operational challenges that can make it difficult to provide the level of service you would like to deliver yes or not?

Q3. How do you work to overcome those challenges?

1. Listening
2. Get all the fact
3. Act quickly
4. Keep the promise
5. Follow up

**Questions for customer**

Q1. Through your experience, what are most common sources of conflict that can arise between customer and front office staff, circle?

1. One source of conflict is when we don't have an adequate understanding of the client's priorities
2. Unproper management of guest expectations
3. All the above

Q2. How do you think these types of issues could be prevented or resolved more effectively?

1. Active listening
2. Empath
3. Clear communication
4. Feedback
5. None the above

Q3. Have you ever encountered a situation where front office staff seemed struggled to provide smooth customer experience, yes or not?