

An Evaluation of Operational Management Factors on Sports Tourism and Hospitality Organisations as Tools for Service Delivery in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Operational management is concerned with the process of ensuring that service is delivered according to some predefined specifications. In Nigeria, particularly in sports, recreation and hospitality organisations, despite the abundance of researches in the main stream operational management, there is considerably a few on quality service delivery in sports, tourism and hospitality businesses. The study evaluated the operational management factors on sports, tourism and hospitality organisations as tools for service delivery in Nigeria. Two research questions were answered. One hypothesis was tested. Mixed methods and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 534 males and 620 female respondents out of 2,700 guests in six sports tourism and hospitality organisations, in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The population comprised tourists, guests, and staff that who have experience in sports, tourism and hospitality business. Two instruments were developed and validated; Operational Management Questionnaire (OMQ, $R = .98$) and Quality Service Delivery Assessment Questionnaire (QSDQ, $r = .83$) were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple regression at $p = .05$. The findings revealed that there was joint significant relationship between the operational management factors and quality service delivery ($R = .745$) and a multiple $R^2 = .56.2\%$ of predictor variables when taken together. This indicates that independent variables had joint contribution to quality service delivery. Based on the results of the findings, it was recommended that sports, tourism and hospitality organisations should promote in-service training, good leadership and motivational practices for their staff. For example, prompt payment of salaries, standard facilities in order to improve staff performance which in turn will lead to quality service delivery.

Keywords: Operational, Management, Sports, Tourism, Hospitality, and Service Delivery.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Operational Management is concerned with the dynamic process of organising necessary human and material resource to achieve the organisational objectives (i.e. providing quality service delivery. Operational factors may include leadership training, teamwork, and regulation of internal and external environment and motivations of employees and customers or fans). Operational management factors such as: leadership, training, teamwork,

and motivations are also important for management to improve organisational system, processes or services. This is due to the fact that, it has a lot to do with service delivery in the organisation. Thus, organisational manager needs to take leadership training, teamwork and motivational factors into cognisance, or be proactive in applying them in the organisation. Apart from finance, that may give the management warning that, organisational performance and service delivery is in danger, lack of motivation, and maintenance of internal and external environment and teamwork also result into poor service delivery.

According to Cole (2004), the management needs to take steps to improve the process of service delivery or aspect of service that people are dissatisfied with so as to prevent revenue loss or increase service delivery by taking care of operational management factors such as: maintenance of internal and external environment, teamwork, motivation of staff and customers, or fans, and invest in leadership training. He further explained that, management needs to focus on leadership training, teamwork, motivation, maintenance of internal and external environment, and motivation of staff, or fans because they are variables that may improve or increase service delivery in the organisation. Stoner and Wankel (2004) also submitted that, even after the operational system has been successfully designed and placed in actual operation, much of managerial challenges still remain. This is because the demand of organisation cannot always be met; hence leadership training, motivation, teamwork and maintenance of internal and external environment are very imperative.

In sports, tourism and hospitality sectors, it is rather unfortunate that these operational management variables that can improve quality service delivery are not given full attention by most managers. Adekitan (2017) revealed that, most tourism organisations in Nigeria, especially recreational parks do not render quality services to the tourists due to negligence in their operational system. This is inline with the submission of Stoner and Wankel (2004) that tourism and hospitality organisations require teamwork, leadership training, staff or customer motivation and good environment for their effectiveness and essential service delivery. And also because of their dynamic nature, employees need to grow into more responsibilities through systematic training, motivation and teamwork because it is only through that; he or she will feel confident to carry out the responsibilities of the job.

Leadership training involves the acquisition of skills or capacity to motivate, direct, and inspire group of individuals in order to bring the best out of them. Dnniel and Weihren (2004) submitted that operational system should be maintained at all levels in the organisation because it improves efficiency, moral, teamwork, lead to the introduction of a new technique and provide for succession as well as enabling qualified replacement to be available, raise the standard of unskilled labour, help to overcome loss of revenue, develop supervisors and decrease the amount of supervision needed. It also leads to reduction, wastage and encourages loyalty to the organisation. This study therefore, evaluates operational management factors (leadership training, teamwork, internal and external environment and motivation) on sports tourism and hospitality organisations as tools for quality service delivery in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of Research Problem

Despite the abundance of researches in the main stream operational management there is considerably a few about quality service delivery within sports tourism and hospitality sectors in Nigeria. Although, studies that have been conducted in this area, but literatures on operational management factors and quality service delivery are relatively scarce. Furthermore, operational factors causing quality service delivery are comparatively given less attention. In spite of the fact that hospitality sector is manpower intensive for which managers need to emphasise on effective service delivery, most hospitality organisations feel non obligated to train their managers, motivate their staff, and provide enabling environment as one of conditions of improving service delivery.

The study evaluated the operational management factors on sports tourism and hospitality organisations as tools for quality service delivery in Nigeria.

1.2 General Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the operational management factors on sports tourism and hospitality organisations as tools for quality service delivery in Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents?
2. Is there a relationship between operational management factors (leadership training, teamwork, internal and external environment, and motivation) on sports tourism and hospitality organisational service delivery?

1.4 Hypothesis

There is no significant joint contribution of operational management factors (leadership training, teamwork, internal and external environment and motivational practices) on sports tourism and hospitality organisational service delivery.

2. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The population for the study comprised tourists, guests and staff selected from some hotels and tourists centres in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

A total of 975 respondents were selected through multistage sampling procedure. Purposive sampling technique was used to select hotels and tourists centres. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts in hospitality and tourism studies, Kwara State University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Data was analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Hypothesis was analysed using multiple regression statistics.

3. RESULTS

1. Research question 1: What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents?

Table 1: showing the demographic characteristics of the respondents

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Occupation		
	Farmer	196	20.1
	Trader	379	38.9
	Civil servant	213	21.8
	Artisans	36	3.7
	Doctor, Nurse	4	.4
	Banker, Accountant	8	.8
	Engineer, Lawyer	6	.6
	Forces	16	1.6
	Pastor, Student, Housewife	117	12.0
	Total	975	100.0
2.	Age		
	18-22 years	110	11.3
	23-27 years	197	20.2
	28-32 years	235	24.1
	33-37 years	143	14.7
	38-42 years	149	15.3
	43-47 years	107	11.0
	Above 48 years	34	3.5
	Total	975	100.0
4.	Marital status		
	Single	439	45.0
	Married	530	54.4
	Divorced	4	.4
	Separated	2	.2
	Total	975	100.0

Table 1 presents distribution of tourists' according to gender, nationality, educational qualification, professional status. It shows that 544 (55.8%) of the tourists were females, while their male counterparts were 431(44.2%). This indicates that females' tourists who participated in the study were more than male. Also, 326 (33.4%) of the respondents had O'level certificate, 142(14.6%) had OND, 110(11.3%) had NCE, 132(13.5%) had HND, 188(19.3%) had bachelor's, 64 (6.6%) had Master's, 4 (.4%) were Ph.D holders, while 9 (.9%) had other qualifications.

The table above indicates that most of the tourists were youths with lower qualifications. These few foreigners patronise Nigerian national parks. With regard to professional status, 753(77.2%) of the respondents did not respond, 84(8.6%) said they were non-professionals while 138(14.2%) claimed to be professionals. Besides, 196(20.1%) of the respondents were farmers, 379(38.9%) were traders/business people, 231(21.8%) were civil servants.

3.1 Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no significant joint contribution of operational management factors (leadership, training, teamwork and organisational environment) to quality service delivery in Nigeria.

Table 2: Showing the Joint contribution of operational management factors (leadership, training, teamwork and organisational environment) to quality service delivery in Nigeria.

R	R Square		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.770	.593		.591	8.2209		
A N O V A						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	95560.854	4	23890.214	353.490	.000	Sig.
Residual	65556.280	970	67.584			
Total	161117.13	974				

$(R^2 = 0.593; F_{(4, 970)} = 353.490; P > 0.05)$

Table 2 shows the joint contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable; that is quality of service delivery correlated positively with the four independent variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R = 0.770$) and a multiple $R^2 = .593$. This means that 59.3% of the variance was accounted for by four predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $p < .50$. The table also reveals that the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the regression yielded F-ratio of 353.90 (significant at 0.05 levels). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model might have accounted for the remaining variance.

This result corroborates Stoner and Wankel (2000), who note that good work environment is an effective tool in sports and recreational organisations. Lansley and Lee-Ross (2008) and Cole (2005) also argue that organisations that have clear, well-planned and well-managed work environment tend to outperform their competitors in terms of quality service delivery. It is, therefore, important to have standard work environment. It also means that the organisational level, the general quality of work environment has an important impact on performance in leisure service organisations.

The result is in agreement with Adejumo (2012), who explained that competent care is part of service delivery. Competent care implies treating the customers with dignity; giving clear information and explanations; informing them about the service they are to receive or receiving; what the service offers, who is eligible, what costs are involved and what their responsibilities are: encouraging them to ask questions about the service; answering questions about service quality; providing assistance if requested; and referring to a more senior person if a complaint is lodged.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results in table 1 showed that the majority of the people who served as respondents were females who were within the age bracket of 23-27 years. The implication of these findings is that the female youths were involved in sports tourism and recreational activities than the male counterpart. It, therefore, means that the tourism and recreation activities may serve as tools for stopping the youths from restiveness. In recent times, youths have been identified as those behind crimes in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with Asagba (2001) who noted that recreational resource, such as parks, game reserves, and protected areas could play a key role in curbing youth restiveness. This implies that, if the youths are empowered through sports tourism, recreational activities and hospitality businesses, the incidence of youth restiveness can reduce to the barest minimum.

This finding is in tandem with Lashley and Lee-Rose (2001), who reported that quality of service is what determines visitors' choice of destination. In other words, if the visitors know that they will get better services or experience better service, they will like to visit the place and even want to go back. It is also indicated in table 1 that 439 respondents were single, 530 are married. This is in agreement with Orga (2012), who claimed that, in Nigeria, the majority of the married people are often seen visiting recreational venues during festival period. The implication of this is that, recreation business can serve as a means of employment generation and source of government revenue. It also means that park activities will have significant impacts on Nigerian economy if given attention.

As seen in table 1, most of the respondents were either traders or business people. This finding is in agreement with Fennel (2008), who argued that tourism is vast increasing due to the availability of disposable income. It also implies that, if Nigeria is seriously aiming for economic transformation, recreational programmes and resource should not be neglected. The finding also corroborates Oyejide and Bankole (2001) who said that the recreation and sports tourism could contribute to the Nigerian gross domestic products. The result of the hypothesis tested showed that there is a joint relationship between organisational cultures, such as attitude (respect for customers, display of good characteristics by employees to customers, commitment); enthusiasm towards customers, good social relations with customers, and commitment to standards of practice. The findings have further confirmed that there is joint relationship between the operational management factors, such as having good standards of practice, efficient information.

Majority of the respondents agreed that, operational management factors such as: motivational practices, work environment, good leadership can help sports tourism and hospitality business to improve their service delivery. They also agreed that, quality service delivery is driven by the work environment and leadership that is prevalent in the work place. They agreed that good work environment and work conditions are the benefits which employees expected in order to perform and render quality service. This is inline with Adekitan (2007) who found out that, in a park or recreational centres, a positive work environment acts as a foundation for a climate for service delivery. He also submitted that, a good work environment, good leadership training, motivational practice, and standard facilities are necessary for a business to thrive.

In conclusion, the study revealed that the contributions of operational management factors to the production of quality service delivery in sports tourism and hospitality organisations are extremely important. In view of this, work environment, good leadership and facilities are strong factors in quality service delivery in sports tourism and hospitality organisations in Nigeria. The study therefore, aligned itself with the submission of Cole (2005) who discovered that operational management factors help to provide excellent services.

The implication of this finding to the professional practice of sports tourism and hospitality industry is that, it can be used as a strategy for increasing customers' satisfaction and improvement of service delivery.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results, the study concludes that there is a relationship between operational management factors and service delivery it was concluded that operational management factors such as: motivational practices examples: prompt payment of wages, salaries, and personal emolument, good leadership quality and training, as well work environment jointly influences quality service delivery and improve organisational improvement. Operational management practices have brought significant contributions to quality service delivery in sports tourism and hospitality businesses. Moreover, from the results of this study, it is obvious that, quality services will enhance sports tourism and hospitality businesses patronage. From the findings, it is therefore recommended that, there is a need to promote motivational practices, for example, prompt payment of salaries, wages, standard facilities, training and re-training of employees in order to improve staff performance which in turns leads to quality service delivery..

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