

Relationship Marketing and Customers' Loyalty in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

This study therefore seeks to investigate the impact relationship marketing tactics comprising of, trust, commitment, customer satisfaction and service quality on customers' loyalty in the Nigerian hospitality industry. The study adopted a survey design using convenience sample in selecting 201 hotel guests in Kano State of Nigeria. The survey questionnaires were analysed using the statistical software SPSS version 21. Correlation and regression analysis were employed to measure relationships and contributions among the dependent and independent variables. The result showed a positive significant relationship between commitment on customers' loyalty whereas trust as well as customer satisfaction did not show much significant relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that hotel industry managers should adopt pricing strategy and discount incentives as a means of achieving customer loyalty and also provide consistent, reliable and dependable service to customers.

Keywords: Relationship Marketing, Trust, Commitment, Customer Satisfaction Service Quality

INTRODUCTION

Staying ahead of the competition and achieving competitive advantage appear to be one of the critical challenges facing many service providers today. Relationship Marketing has, therefore, emerged as a key business strategic option for the service providers in their bid to hold on to their customers. In many developed countries service industry account for a majority of the gross domestic products (Kotler, Brown & Makens 2019). They further stated that in the developing countries majority of the workforce usually come from the service sector of the economy, which comprise; banking, healthcare, entertainment, legal, hospitality and transport. It is worthy to note that the importance of hotels to the development of every society cannot be

over emphasized. This is because it creates temporary lodging facilities to visitors or tourists on business or for pleasure. When people go on vacation, they lodge in hotels for privacy reasons. Hotels are very comfortable because people are always welcomed and their needs are always served (Omogunloye & Ayeni 2012). Ojukwu (2011) argued that the demand for hotels in Nigeria can be traced back to the invention of finance in the 18th century which gave rise to the demand for travel and trade. Economically, Kano State is being regarded as the commercial and investment centre of Northern Nigeria and the third largest non-oil and gas economy in Nigeria with an estimated Gross State Product [PPP] of US\$15-19 billion (Kano state investment book). Its economy is driven largely by commerce, manufacturing and subsistence agriculture. Kano is known as being a major commercial and manufacturing centre in the West African sub-region-even before the incorporation of Nigeria into the European system of global commerce. Al-Rousan, Ramzi & Badaruddin (2010) argued that customer loyalty happens when there is repeated purchasing by the same customers and their willingness to recommend the product to other customers without any outright benefits, and eventually the repeated usages would generate positive and quantifiable financial results. They went further to emphasize that among the economic benefits of customer loyalty are improvements in retention and increase in the share of a company. Therefore, Customer loyalty means a customer would return or continue to use the product or other products of the same organization, make business referrals, and internationally or even unintentionally providing strong word-of-mouth references and publicity. The concept of relationship marketing (RM) is virtually pervasive in every industry whether service or non-service sector as the most important reason for establishing any business is to satisfy the needs of customers which in turn lead to profit which serves as a reward for the risk taken. The major challenge is that once a customer is dissatisfied with the hotel services, he may not wish to visit the hotel again neither would he recommend it to someone else, no matter the facilities available. Most of the studies conducted to investigate the impact of RM on customers' loyalty and or business performance are country specific with very few related to hotel industry. Some of these studies include that of John, Adiele & Nkoro (2019) in their study Physical Settings and Patronage of Three Star Hotels in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory Abuja. The study focused on how physical setting plays critical role in shaping customers expectation. The results from empirical study of three star hotels in Abuja the federal capital territory show strong support for the effects of ambient conditions, spatial layout and signs, symbols and artifacts. They therefore developed a model that recommends three influences of physical settings: ambient conditions, spatial layout and signs, symbols and artifacts to attract and retain customers in the hotel industry.

Also, Ogbonnikan (2012) on his part conducted a study aimed at identifying the factors that triggered off or were responsible for hotel employees' satisfaction in Lagos Nigeria and also to determine the major factor(s) that led to job satisfaction which will in turn lead to increase in their efficiency. The finding of the study indicates that a lot of hotel workers were averagely satisfied with their jobs and job satisfaction leads to efficiency on the part of the employees.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill that vacuum by investigating the effects of RM on customer loyalty in the hotel industry with specific reference to Kano State in particular. This study will make use of, four variables namely; trust, commitment, customer satisfaction and

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service quality as a proxy of RM to ascertain their impact on customer loyalty in the Nigerian hotels, to see if we can have similar or different findings from related studies conducted in other CLM unties as it's yet to be determined whether these relationship marketing tactics can be used as determinants of customer loyalty in Nigerian hotels industry. The main objective of the study is to assess the impact of relationship marketing on customers' loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano and the specify objectives are to:

- i. find out the effects of trust on customers' loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano,
- ii. assess the extent to which commitment affects customers' loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano,
- iii. examine how customer satisfaction affects customers' loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Relationship Marketing

The concept of relationship marketing receives increasing attention from academics and practitioners (Ndubisi, 2007) and has played a lead role in the marketing subject (Andersen, 2002). Furthermore, Kotler & Keller (2019) assert that relationship marketing was mainly to match the customers' needs and the service promise, so that customers' loyalty would increase. In today's fast-paced and increasingly competitive market, the bottom line of a firm's marketing strategies and tactics is to make profit that will contribute to the growth of the company. The traditional marketing mix as observed by Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) is viewed as obsolete toward achieving high business performance in this dynamic, turbulent and sophisticated market. Hence there is a need for paradigm shift in the marketing practice i.e. customer retention through enhanced Relationship Marketing orientation. As companies and organizations are focusing their attention on how to create a long lasting relationship with customers and how to retain them, Relationship marketing has therefore emerged as the result of this paradigm shift.

Trust

In business, trust is viewed as one of the most relevant determinant of stable and collaborative relationships (Parvez & Akbar (2009). They also maintained that trust is essential for building and maintaining long-term relationships. Various definitions of trust have been offered by different scholars in various literatures. In the context of RM, trust is defined as the dimension of a business relationship that determines the level to which each party feels they can rely on the integrity of the promise offered by the other (Callaghan, Mcphail & Yau, 1995). Trust has been defined by Moorman, Deshpande, & Zaltman (1993:30) as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence". They assert that trust provides the basis for loyalty, relationship enhancement (decreased perception of risk), and also trust is mediated by customer perceived value of the relationship (i.e., perceived net benefits). Davis & Schooman (1995) cited by Parvez & Akbar (2009), defined trust as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trust or, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party. Geyskens & Steenkamp (1995) viewed trust as the extent to which a firm believes

that its exchange partner is benevolent and honest. Doney & Cannon (1997) emphasized that trust is the perceived credibility and benevolence. Kumra & Mittal (2004) cited in Raid & Medha (2013) assert that trust denotes faith in partner's openness and truthfulness in business communication. While Hunt & Morgan (1994) opined that trust exists only when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity. Based on above definitions, one can rightly say that for service providers to be trusted, customers must have confidence on their offerings. Equally, their services must be reliable. In fact, trust is a vital element in any meaningful relationship. From Anderson & Narus (1990), it can be deduced that if one party believes that the actions of the other party will bring positive outcomes to the first party, trust is said to be developed. Doney & Cannon (1997), added that the concerned party also must have the ability to continue to meet its obligations towards its customers within the cost-benefits relationship; so, the customer should not only foresee the positive outcomes but also believe that these positive outcomes will continue in the future. According to Gronroos (1990), trust is a widely accepted determinate of loyalty and has been documented in the form of an exchange relationship, it is equally considered by some as a critical component of business relationships (Moorman, Zaltman & Desphande 1992), and identified as a key construct in modelling relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Kassim & Abdullah (2010) studied the link between trust and customer loyalty in two cultural contexts i.e., Malaysia and Qatar and it was found that they are positively related and significant. Nguyen and Leclerc (2011) posited that customer in service industry tend to hold positive behavioural attitude toward the brand they trust. Zeithaml et al (1996), Castaneda (2011); Kaur et al. (2012); Shainesh (2012) cited in Raid and Medha (2013) perceived trust as a significant determinant of customer loyalty. Conversely, the research findings Sunil & Keyoor (2008); Irene Gil-Saura et al. (2009), Devlani & Heesup (2011) cited in Madjid (2013) proved that trust had no significant effect on customer loyalty. these findings are inconclusive and therefore yet to be decided what the case would be particularly within the Nigerian hospitality industry. Like trust, commitment is another important variable for determining the strength of marketing relationship. Hence, it is a useful construct for measuring the likelihood of customer loyalty and predicting future purchase frequency (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, it is hypothesized that: H₁: There is no significant relationship between trust and customer loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano.

Commitment

Moorman et al. (1992) viewed commitment as an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. Another strong definition of commitment offered by (Hadjikhani & Thilenius 2005) cited in Sohail (2012) denote commitment to be the willingness to rely on an exchange partner on whom another has confidence. Moorman et al (1992:32) also viewed commitment as an enduring attitude or desire for a particular brand or firm. It is the degree to which customers as member of an organization are emotionally connected to an organization, its brand or product, sustained by continues desire to maintain membership". Commitment can simply be considered as the sacrifices made by the seller and buyer to maintain a relationship as it is a known fact that mutual commitment is highly essential in building a long term relationship. Therefore, it can rightly be said that commitment is central in relationship marketing theory

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(Morgan & Hunt 1994). In essence, commitment signifies the intention to continue or maintain a relationship with the other party, meaning that commitment is another key element of social bond which bind both sellers and buyers together.

Morgan & Hunt (1994) also opined that commitment in a relationship is a psychological state where a client has plans to continue the relationship with his existing supplier. Highlighting the role of commitment in relationships, Parasuraman (1991) asserts that relationships are built on the foundation of mutual commitment. Jones et al. (2010) cited in Sohail (2012) investigated the dimensionality of commitment as a construct and concentrated on the differential effects of affective, normative and continuance dimensions on an array of consumer responses: repurchase intentions, willingness to pay more fidelity, and advocacy. Hence, it is hypothesized that: H₂: There is no significant relationship between commitment and customer loyalty in Kano.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has gained attention within the context of the paradigm shift from transaction marketing to relationship marketing (Gronroos,1994). Customer satisfaction is the feeling or attitude of a customer towards a product or service after it has been used. Customer satisfaction has traditionally been regarded as a fundamental determinant of long-term consumer behaviour (Oliver, 1981). Therefore, it can rightly be said that satisfied customers are valuable assets for every organization to gain the Customer loyalty and retention. As defined by Kotler & Keller (2016), satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment that result from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) to expectations. Bitner & Zeithaml (2003) stated that satisfaction is the customers' evaluation of service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. According to Boselie, Hesselink, & Wiele (2002) satisfaction is a positive, affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a party's working relationship with another. Similarly, according to Hansemark & Albinson (2004) cited in Angelova & Zekiri (2011) satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfilment of some needs, goals or desire.

Customer satisfaction does have a positive effect on an organization's profitability Satisfied Customers form the foundation of any successful business this is due to the fact that customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchases, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth. There are numerous studies that have looked at the impact of customer satisfaction on repeat purchases, loyalty and retention. Many researchers point out the fact that satisfied customers share their experiences with about five or six people. On the contrary, dissatisfied customers are more likely to tell another ten people of their experience with product or service (Angelova & Zekiri 2011).

When the performance of a given product or service falls below expectation the customer becomes dissatisfied. A customer becomes satisfied with a product if its performance matches his expectations. At the same time, if the performance exceeds his expectations, the customer becomes highly satisfied or delighted. Homburg, Koschate & Hoyer (2005) are of the belief

that a highly satisfied customer generally stays loyal, buys more as the firm introduces new products and upgrades existing products, talks positively to others about the firm and its products, pays less attention to competing brands and is less sensitive to price, offers product or service ideas to the firm, and costs less to serve than new customers because transactions become routine.

Sometimes the link between satisfaction and loyalty is not proportional. Suppose customer satisfaction is rated on a scale from one to five. At a very low level customer satisfaction (level one), customers are likely to abandon the company and even bad-mouth it. At levels two to four, customers are fairly satisfied but still find it easy to switch when a better offer comes along. At level five, the customer is very likely to repurchase and even spread good word mouth about the company. High satisfaction or delight creates an emotional bond with the brand or company, not just a rational preference. Xerox's executives found out that their "completely satisfied" customers were six times more likely to repurchase Xerox products over the following 18 months than their "very satisfied" customers (Palmatier, 2008).

As customer satisfaction rises, so does customer repurchase intention, this then influence the actual purchasing behaviour, which significantly impacts business performance (Buttle, 2004) cited in Roberts -Lombard (2011). Customer satisfaction has also been thought to be a key performance indicator for evaluating the quality of a relationship between service provider and customers (Nakhleh, 2012). Customers' expectations regarding costs and benefits of the relationship mainly depend on past experience, and satisfying experiences increase the motivation and the likelihood that an individual stay in the relationship (Mouri, 2005). Customer perception to products or services has been widely used to measure customer satisfaction. Li (2008), describes five emotions perceived by customers which lead to satisfaction and are outlined as follows: Satisfaction: the products can be accepted or tolerated, Content: the products bring people with a positive and happy experience, relieved: the products remove people's negative stale, Novelty: the products bring people with freshness and exciting and lastly Surprise: the products make customer unexpectedly pleased. Furthermore, customer satisfaction also has been measured relying on the phases of customer relationship life cycle, which characterizes different stages of a customer relationship and requires focus on specific target and customer expectation of different stages (Spath & Fahnrich, (2007) cited in Nakhleh (2012). In general, customer satisfaction enhances the quality of relationship between customers and service providers, and increases the repeat purchased behaviour. Growing body of research supports the notion that customers' satisfaction with goods and services, leads to their brand loyalty. For example, Velnampy & Sivesan (2012) found that customer relationship marketing has significant impact on customer satisfaction. However, the proportion of impact Customer Relationship Marketing has on the customer was low level.

According to their findings, most mobile service providing companies fail to build trust among their customers as companies spent lot of time and money trying to build and maintain their companies' infrastructural facilities but they fail to take fruitful effort to satisfy their customers' needs. They recommend that priority should be given by mobile telecommunication companies on how to reduce customer dissatisfaction by improving service quality to ensure customer retention and customer loyalty. Many researchers see that customer satisfaction has a positive

effect on organisations profitability. Much empirical evidence also shows the positive connection between satisfaction, loyalty and retention. Akbar & Parvez (2009), investigated the effects of set quality, trust, and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. They found a significant positive relationship between them. Their findings also supported the arguments that customer Satisfaction mediates perceived service quality dimensions and customer loyalty. In essence a growing body of research supports the notion that customers' satisfaction with goods and services, leads to brand loyalty (Oliver, 1997, 1999, Suh & Yi, 2006; Xu et al. 2006; Yi, 1990) cited in Angelova & Zekiri (2011). On the other hand, there are findings that contradict the claims on the positive effect of satisfaction on customer loyalty. For instance, the results from Abu-Elsamen (2011) uncovered that satisfaction variables are not functionally significant to customer loyalty. And the studies further proved that customer satisfaction does not directly influence customer loyalty. H₃: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in Kano.

Customer Loyalty

Pearson (1996) has defined customer loyalty as the mind-set of the customers who hold favourable attitudes toward a company, commit to repurchase the company's product/service and recommend the product/service to others. Loyalty has also been defined by Oliver 1999 as a Customer s deep commitment to purchase or to patronise a product or a service frequently in future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour.

In the context of relationship marketing, customer satisfaction is often viewed as a central determinant of customer loyalty (Law, Hui & Zhao, 2004). They also assert that the attraction of new customers should be viewed only as an intermediate step of strengthening the relationship, and transforming them into loyal customers is the main goal. From this perspective, it can be asserted that the fundamental goal of the RM approach is gaining and fostering customer loyalty. In the past, traditional marketing focused on attracting new customers rather than retaining existing ones, and selling rather than building relationships (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Nowadays, customer loyalty and retention is the most vital goal for service organizations success.

Theoretical Framework

The Commitment-Trust Theory

According to Palmatier (2008), the theoretical framework relating to trust and commitment can be traced to the work of Morgan & Hunt (1994), termed The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing which posits that the presence of relationship commitment and trust is central to successful relationship marketing. They built the theory on the basis of research grounded in social exchange theory, marriage, and organizational behaviour, they argued that relationship commitment which is "an enduring desire to maintain a value relationship, (Moorman et al 1992. p. 316), and trust, the "confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt 1994, p.23), indicate the key elements that explain the relationship on performance. Hence, relationship partners who are committed expend extra effort and work

to maintain and strengthen relational bonds, which positively influences cooperation, financial performance, and other positive outcomes (Morgan & Hunt.1994) Also, trust has a direct effect on relationship outcomes and an indirect effect through its influence on commitment (Crosby, 1984). To this end, this theory (The Commitment-Trust Theory) is used to explain two of the variables of this study it is a known fact that different competing theories based on various standards have been proposed for explaining customer satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Population of the Study

The population for this study consist of the guest or customers of these registered hotel in Kano State and the total number of the guests patronizing their services. According to the Kano State Ministry of Commerce Industry, Cooperative and Tourism there are one hundred and twenty three registered hotels operating in Kano State as at June 2024 with multitude number of guests patronizing their services daily. However, the population of the guests in this study confined to the total number of the hotel guests chosen as a sample size, based on the daily Occupancy rate for each hotel.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for authentic computation of sample size has been used to obtain 201 guests out of the 420 population of the guests patronizing nine hotels daily and they are selected using convenience sampling technique.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

Hotel Name	Room Capacity	Room Occupancy Rate (Daily)	Number of Guest Selected
Kabo Guest Inn	73	25 guests	12
Badala Hotel	30	5 guests	2
Aljazeera Hotel	32	22 guests	11
Niima Guest	99	65 guests	31
K suite	37	15 guests	7
Royal Tropicana	200	100 guests	48
Green palace	31	25 guests	12
Tahir guest Palace	250	152 guests	72
Horizon hotel	38	11 guests	5
Total		420	201

Source: Field survey (2024).

Table 1 shows the name of nine hotels selected and the total number of guests' population which is computed based on the individual hotel room occupancy rate as indicated in the table. The number of guests selected from each hotel is obtained on pro rata basis (proportionate to size) that reflect the customers base of each hotel in the sample amounting to the exact sample size of 201 guests who were Served with questionnaires.

Method of Data Collection

This study made use of a multiple choice structured questionnaire which was designed for the purpose of collecting the primary data that are considered essential for the successful conduct of the study. The rationale behind the selection of survey questionnaire results from the fact that the study is intended to measure guests' perception on trust, Commitment and customer satisfaction to ascertain their impact on their loyalty in their chosen hotels.

Reliability Test of the Research Instrument

The reliability of most questionnaires is best measured by the Cronbach's alpha statistics it is normally designed as a measure of internal consistency of a research instrument. Cronbach's alpha is a consistency test to determine whether all items within the instrument measure the same thing.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Response Rate

The data for this study was collected from the guests of nine hotels situated in Kano State of Nigeria. Two hundred and one (201) copies of the questionnaires were administered to the respondents, 192 representing 96% were completed and returned while the remaining 9 questionnaires amounting to 4% of the respondents were not retrieved. Data screening was conducted in order to get rid of the missing values as well as the outliers so as to ensure the normality of the data to be analysed.

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the statistical frequency distribution of the respondents regarding their characteristics. First the respondents were classified on the basis of sex. Out of the 152 respondents, 118 representing 77.6% were male, while the remaining 34 equivalents to 22.4% were female. The reason why male constitutes the majority of hotel guest in Kano state may not be unconnected with the role played by cultural predisposition where women are not encouraged to move freely to wherever they desire.

Regarding the marital status of the respondents, it was found that 47 respondents amounting 30.9% were single, 99 representing 65.1% were married, 5 equivalents to 3.3% were divorcees and only one respondent was a widow, with respect to the ages of the respondents, 20 people (13.2%) are within the age range of 18- 27 years, 62 guests (40.8%) are between 28 to 37 years, 58 respondents representing 38.2% are within the age range 38-48 years. The respondents whose ages range from 45 to 57 years are 11 representing 7.2% while one respondent aged above 57 years.

From the result obtained in the study, the educational qualifications of the respondents indicate that 10 guests (6.6%) had secondary school certificate as their final qualification, 46 customers (30.3%) had Diploma or NCE, 61 customers (40.1%) had university degree or its equivalent (HND), 32 guests representing 21% possessed post graduate qualification.

Regarding the occupational status of the respondents, the finding of this study revealed that 54 people representing 35.5% were civil servant, 25 guests amounting to 16.4% were self-employed, 71 customers equivalent to 46.7% are employed by the private sector while only 2 guests were students. The monthly income of the respondents according to the research findings indicated that 13 people equivalent to 8.6% are earning less than N18, 000, 35 guests (23%) have monthly income ranging from N18,000- 117,999, 39 respondents (25.7%) are earning between N118,000-217,999. The monthly income of the respondents whose monthly income ranges from N218,000-317.999 were 47 representing (30.9%), while 18 guests amounting to 11.9 % have monthly income exceeding N318, 000.

Table 2 presents the summary of Reliability Analysis of the variables

Table 2: Reliability Analysis of the variables

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
INDEPENDENTS VARIABLE		
(Customer Loyalty)	08	0.864
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE		
(Relationship Marketing)		
Trust	08	0.688
Commitment	03	0.514
Customers Satisfaction	08	0.686

Source; Field Survey, (2024)

From table 2, the Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.514 to 0.864, indicating that the instrument was reliable, this is in agreement with recommendation of Hulland (1999), cited in Bambale (2012), that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.50 and higher is considered to be appropriate.

Table 3: Showing Tolerance and VIF values

Independent Variable	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Trust	.561	1.783
Commitment	.418	1.617
Customer satisfaction	.531	1.856

Source; Field Survey, (2024)

Correlation:

The Spearman's correlation with two tailed tests of statistical significant at 0.01 levels was carried out to find out the strength of association and the consistency of the relationships between the constructs. The correlation matrix showing the statistical significance of the relationship between constructs is presented. Trust is significantly and positively correlated with customer loyalty ($r = 0.467, p < 0.01$). Commitment is significantly and positively correlated with customer loyalty ($r = 0.465, p < 0.01$). Customers' Satisfaction is significantly and positively correlated with customer loyalty ($r = 0.495, p < 0.01$).

Multiple Regression

The study developed hypotheses which are tested using multiple regression method to find the explanatory power of the model in determining customers' loyalty.

Coefficient ^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.176	.289	.060	-610	.543		
Trust	.076	.097	.259	.785	.434	.561	1.783
Commitment	.620	.175	.096	3.547	.001	.618	1.617
Custatisfaction	.118	.095	.497	1.234	.219	.539	1.856
Servquality	.525	.080		6.551	.000	.572	1.748

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between trust and customer loyalty. To test this hypothesis, we used the result from the table above

Multiple Regression; $\beta = 0.060$ $t = 0.785$ significance 0.434

Based on the above result, we accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the alternate hypothesis. This research therefore concluded that, there is no significant relationship between trust and customer loyalty. While the second hypothesis stated that, there is no significant relationship between commitment and customer loyalty. To test this hypothesis, the result presented in the table above is used. Multiple Regression Result: $\beta = 0.259$ $t = 3.547$ significance 0.01

Based on the above result, having the positive value of coefficient and p value we rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis. The research therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between commitment and customer loyalty. To test the last hypothesis result from the above table stated the Multiple regression result; $\beta = 0.096$ $t = 1.234$ significance=0.219. Based on the multiple regression results, the value of the coefficient is positive and the p-value is more than 0.05, hence we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate hypothesis. The research therefore concluded that there is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Discussion of Results

Out of the three research hypotheses formulated for the study, two were accepted and the remaining one was rejected. This section presented discussions of the findings based on the three formulated objectives and hypotheses of the study. The first objective of the study was to find out how trust impacted on customers' loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano. The finding of the study indicated that trust as a proxy of relationship marketing does not have a significant influence on customers' loyalty as obtained when testing hypothesis one. This result is in harmony with the results from some previous studies, such as; Sunil & Keyoor (2008), Irene Gil-Saura (2009), Devjani & Haesup (2011), and Nakhlah (2012).

Secondly, this study was aimed at assessing the extent to which commitment affects customers loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano. The finding of the study after testing hypothesis number two revealed that there is a significant relationship between commitment and customer loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano. This result is in agreement with findings of the studies conducted by; Parasuraman (1999), Morgan and Hunt (1994), Sohail (2012), Moorma et al (1992), Anderson & Narus (1998). The findings from the Research conducted by Anderson & Narus (1998) for example suggests that relationship commitment is at the core of all successful working relationships and that it is an essential ingredient in successful long-term relationships.

In examining how customer satisfaction affects customers' loyalty in the hospitality industry in Kano, the finding of this study obtained from testing hypothesis three emphasized insignificant relationship between customers' satisfaction and customers loyalty and is in consistent with the results of the researches conducted by Palmatier (2008) as well as Abu-Elsamen (2011). The findings from Abu-Elsamen (2011) uncovered that satisfaction does not directly influence customer loyalty.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the finding, it can be concluded that the guests patronizing the services of hotels in Kano State place much emphasis on two explanatory variables consisting of commitment and trust. It is therefore concluded that presence of customer satisfaction does not significantly affects customer loyalty but failure to secure customer satisfaction will lead to customer disloyalty. Furthermore, it has been concluded that customer's perception towards trust possess insignificant effect on customer loyalty. It has been deduced from the findings that greater percentage of the respondents attached less importance on items that explained trust such as employee's honesty, just, fairness and promises. This development could be attributed to the customer's modernization and sophistication which upgrade their needs to high level and reshape their pattern of consumption.

Based on the above findings and conclusions arising there from, the following recommendations are provided.

- In order to achieve high level customer commitment, hotel industry managers should consider that price increment should be made with high degree of rationality to avoid decrease in Customers loyalty. As it is indicated from the questionnaire drafted that pricing is an important element of commitment and from the responses accumulated, it shows that Nigerian customer are highly sensitive to price changes and that significantly affect their loyalty to the hotels. Hotels operating within competitive environment should use pricing strategy and discount
- Incentives as a means of retaining customers and enhancing the level of their commitment to the hotel, as the finding of the study indicates that customers are willing not to switch to any hotel in as much as the hotel patronized offer suitable prices and discount.

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