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- promote scholarship and research collaboration among tourism and hospitality academics and professionals on the African continent and beyond.
- help bridge the gap between industry and academia by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas between the two entities.
- Provide an international forum for the discussion of a wide range of applied research relating to tourism and hospitality management in Africa.

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1 COVID-19 RISK PERCEPTION, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, PEER TEAM LEARNING AND LEARNING SATISFACTION AMONG HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM STUDENTS IN GHANA

Lolonyo Letsa,[1] Foster Frempong [2]*

Abstract

This study examined COVID-19 risk perception, student engagement, peer-led team learning, and learning satisfaction among students in the hospitality and tourism departments in Ghanaian universities. Valid responses for this study from 440 hospitality and tourism students across four (4) universities across the country were analysed to achieve this objective. COVID-19 risk perception proved to have a significant positive impact on students' engagement and peer team learning, but an insignificant negative influence on learning satisfaction. The results also underscored the positive role of the learning environment in driving students' engagement and learning satisfaction including the positive bearing of students' engagement on learning satisfaction. The study contributes to theory and practice by extending the social cognitive and self-determination theories to understand the links between COVID-19 risk perception, student engagement, peer-led team learning, and learning satisfaction among students in the hospitality and tourism departments in Ghanaian universities. Thus, the integration of social cognitive and self-determination theories in this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing learning experiences during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 risk perception, student engagement, peer-led team learning, learning satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

An infectious coronavirus, known as COVID-19, is spread through droplets from one person to another (CDCP, 2020, 2020). As of the 12th of April 2023, the COVID-19 statistics stood at 762,791,152 confirmed cases, including 6,897,025 deaths, globally (WHO, 2023). According to the Ghana Health Service (GHS), as of February 23rd, 2021, Ghana had recorded a cumulative total of 171,619 COVID-19 cases. This figure included 1,462 fatalities and 170,131 recoveries. At the time of this study, the top three regions in terms of COVID-19 cases were the Greater Accra Region [97,480 cases], Ashanti Region [22,640 cases] and Western Region [8,815 cases].

This pandemic has affected nations, at all levels, including businesses, rich, poor, young, and old in society and worst of all, the associated death rate (Cao et al., 2020). The focus of this study is on how COVID-19 has affected the educational sector, especially among the hospitality and tourism students in Ghana. According to Patrick Kuma-Aboagye, Director General of the GHS, as of February 9, 2021, Ghana had registered a total of 142 COVID-19 cases across various schools since their reopening. A total of 56 cases were confirmed in 23 schools in the Greater Accra Region, 82 cases in the Eastern Region involving 73 pupils and nine members of staff, three cases in the Upper West Region, and one case in the Western Region. These incidents in our schools had a psychological impact on many pupils since they were afraid of catching the disease if they participated in events that involved a large number of people. According to UNESCO (2020) as of 1st April 2020,

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about 1.598 billion students from various educational institutions at various levels from 194 countries were asked to stay at home and study due to the closure of schools of which Ghana was no exception. In the case of Ghana, all physical educational institutions from primary to higher learning institutions were closed because of the COVID-19 surge, although this approach had some challenges (Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2020).

Many educational institutions adopted new approaches to aid teaching and learning, using online platforms. This has exerted pressure on many educational institutions to invest massively in infrastructural development to cope with the new normal. Most higher education institutions have switched to online lectures/ tutorials and closed their physical libraries to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Cao et al., 2020; Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2020).

The new normal approach to teaching and learning according to Honorato et al. (2020) and Rose (2020) is more likely to have significant changes to the way the future workforce is educated, and this approach must be properly handed well to ensure that there is quality and effective teaching and learning. As part of the approaches to curb the spread of the COVID-19 infection, most school dormitories have been closed to students, meetings with friends and mates on campus have been cancelled, and other social events on campus such as parties have been banned (Cao et al., 2020). There has also been a loss of students' jobs putting much burden on most students who perform such school jobs or activities to take care of their educational needs (Liu et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the emotional well-being of students, as they have faced unprecedented challenges and stress during this global crisis. Studies have shown that it has created fears, frustrations, anxiety, and boredom among students (Cao et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; Ma & Miller, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Aside from the negative impacts of COVID-19 on people and societies, it has increased the level of personal hygiene among all people (Elmer et al., 2020).

Risk perception is a subfield of psychology that deals with an individual's perception and comprehension of a variety of objective risks in their surroundings. Risk perception is an important factor that has a significant impact on people's risk behaviours. According to Adefuye et al. (2009), when the population has a lower level of risk perception, it has a greater influence on their risk behaviour, which may reduce their preventive behaviour in the fight against the pandemic, as opposed to those with a high level of risk perception, who take extra precautions to prevent the spread of diseases (Brug et al., 2004). Risk perception influences many aspects of people's lives (Yang & Cho, 2017), including students' overall style of doing things (Gao et al., 2019). Despite existing research on COVID-19 risk perception, student engagement, peer team learning, and learner satisfaction, there appears to be a noticeable research gap in the connections among these factors within the Ghanaian context, specifically in the Ghanaian educational setting, particularly among hospitality and tourism students.

Students' engagement alludes to the degree of effort and psychological investment students dedicate to enhancing their learning experience. This encompasses their active participation and commitment to the learning process, aimed at acquiring new knowledge and skills essential for academic success (Dixson, 2015). Students' involvement in the teaching and learning processes has a great impact on how they interact with one another and in their fields of work, and if not adequately handled, this can have a bearing on their learning satisfaction (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016; Nortvig et al., 2018).

The quality and acceptability of teaching and learning in higher education institutions are heavily influenced by the satisfaction and experiences of students (Sampson et al., 2010). As a result of factors like digital literacy abilities, social and professional activities and the learner support system (which includes appropriate academic assistance), the degree of pleasure in school is affected (Allen et al., 2002). Students' overall satisfaction is influenced by factors such as the usage of learning techniques, learning challenges, peer-tutor assistance, capacity to apply information, and attainment of learning objectives (Moore, 2009). When first-rate learning practises are implemented through good planning, student engagement rises, facilitating information acquisition and comprehension (Ismail, 2018). Improving the learning process with proper learning techniques may result in improved outcomes and a high level of student satisfaction (Aung & Ye, 2016; Thanh & Viet, 2016).

However, students' satisfaction is expected to diminish throughout the COVID-19 period owing to the considerable risk of contracting the disease if they come into contact with sick persons. This is because most schools have limited face-to-face engagement for their classes and instead focus on online platforms, with no indication of when students would completely resume face-to-face or in-person education and normal school life. Students are now unable to participate in peer-led team learning in most educational institutions in Ghana owing to social distance and the fear of catching COVID-19.

In addition to the conventional lecture style that has been so firmly established in our educational institutions, peer-led team learning is a method in which students or learners actively participate in small group interactions (Snyder et al., 2016). The purpose is to get students in small groups to brainstorm and undertake problem-solving exercises, help weaker students increase conceptual knowledge, and talk about academic concerns (Gafney & Varma-Nelson, 2008; Gosser et al., 2001). However, due to the emergence of the deadly COVID-19, students are unable to engage in many academic activities that are required to acquire knowledge, even among themselves, due to the high risk of being infected with the disease when they come into contact with an infected person or student.

The pandemic has had a substantial impact on education institutions in general, owing to school closures and the large infrastructural improvements required to carry out effective teaching and learning processes. COVID-19 is spread from person to person through physical contact and the crowded nature of educational institutions makes them conducive environments for the spread of the virus. This was the reason why over 990 million students in pre-primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary, and higher education levels throughout the world were unable to return to their schools or institutions (UNESCO, 2020).

Previous studies in the realm of hospitality have focused on pedagogic forms of study that primarily focus on curriculum difficulties (Fidgeon, 2010), with minimal studies in hospitality education and pandemics such as COVID-19. This pandemic is a significant impediment to the tourism sector and educational systems. A student's academic and social growth may be severely hindered by mental health issues, which can have a long-term influence on their career and personal futures (Suldo et al., 2014; Wynaden et al., 2014). Because of the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the widespread use of social distancing techniques, it is expected that students' mental health will be affected, along with their overall social well-being.

Despite extensive research into the influence of COVID-19 on other sectors of the economy, there is little literature on COVID-19 risk perception, student engagement, and peer team learning satisfaction in our hospitality educational institutions (Baum et al., 2020; Baum et al., 2016). It is against this background that this study seeks to fill the gap identified by way of analysing the current shift in hospitality education and reveals the possible impact of COVID-19 on students' academic achievement in hospitality and tourism education by examining their COVID-19 risk perception, student's engagement, peer team learning and learning satisfaction. Lastly, this study deviates from other studies by integrating both social cognitive theory and self-determination theory to comprehensively understand the factors shaping learning experiences during the pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical Support

The social cognitive theory [SCT] (Bandura, 1986) and the self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) underpinned this study. SCT posits that individual learning and behaviour are influenced by the dynamic interplay of personal, behavioural, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). In the context of this study, SCT is used to explain how COVID-19 risk perception, as a personal factor, can impact student engagement, peer team learning, and learning satisfaction among hospitality and tourism students in Ghana. SCT emphasises the importance of observational learning, which occurs when individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes by interacting with and observing others (Bandura, 1986). This concept aligns with the study's focus on peer-team learning, as students are expected to learn from their peers through collaboration and observation.

SDT focuses on the psychological needs that drive human motivation and proposes that individuals are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and satisfied when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the context of this study, SDT is employed to understand how students' psychological needs influence their engagement in learning activities, participation in peer team learning, and overall learning satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. The fulfilment of these needs can be crucial in promoting effective learning experiences and maintaining students' well-being during challenging times (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Learner's Satisfaction

Students' satisfaction with their academic achievement or education is defined as a subjective and cognitive appraisal of the perceived quality of life at school (Baker et al., 2003). Students' happiness is heavily impacted by their level of participation (Korobova & Starobin, 2015; Ros et al., 2012). Students' engagement and satisfaction levels, when combined, might reflect a better knowledge of teaching and learning at the higher educational level (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). According to Richardson and Swan (2003), there is a strong association between students' total engagement level and their degree of happiness at higher educational levels. Marks et al. (2005) posit that a satisfied student is a sure sign of a successful learning experience and that students' perceptions of their learning outcomes are a reliable indicator of their feelings of satisfaction with their educational experiences, whether they occur in person or online. According to Ikhsan et al. (2019), effective student engagement adds greatly to learner or student happiness and has a favourable impact on their academic attainment level. According to Scharenberg (2016), student satisfaction is related to characteristics such as wellness, general life satisfaction and social ties (Persson et al., 2016); school involvement (Danielsen et al., 2011); and academic performance (Korobova & Starobin, 2015). All of these elements have a substantial impact on the student's level of pleasure. Studies have shown that negative behaviours such as stress and depression (Wang & Fredricks, 2014); absenteeism and drop out of school (Takakura et al., 2010) all have a negative influence on student academic progress.

COVID-19 Risk Perception and its Impact

The term risk perception refers to how individuals perceive events that are connected to dangers to which they are or may be exposed (Rohrmann, 2008). It encompasses a wide range of negative consequences that people identify with a specific cause (Renn & Rohrmann, 2013). There are multiple aspects of risk perception that influence individuals, including individual and societal characteristics, as well as other social, cultural, and environmental factors. In Pidgeon's (1998) view, these factors go beyond the standard definition of danger and instead are based on the personal experiences, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings of individuals, as well as larger social, cultural, and institutional practices. These risk perceptions serve as a preventative strategy for successful decision-making (Wiedemann & Schütz, 2005). Participation in preventive health behaviours is impacted not only by objective health risk awareness but also by health beliefs and unique health cognitions (Renner et al., 2008). According to Cori et al. (2020), the following characteristics contribute to understanding risk perception and its influence on decision-making: familiarity, controllability, voluntary exposure, potential catastrophe, equity, immediacy of danger, and degree of knowledge. Risk perception is an individual's subjective judgement on the features, severity, and management of such occurrences. It is typically determined by how individuals perceive such danger, which results in a cascade of fear which spreads across society.

Since the devastating COVID-19 outbreak, many individuals have died worldwide, and many economies, both developed and developing, have been damaged. Fear is one of the COVID-19 traits that affects many people, particularly students at higher education institutions. Students are afraid of contracting the sickness and, as a result, are unable to connect successfully with their peers. The risks associated with COVID-19 are complicated, and it is critical to investigate how risk perception affects student academic performance. The current concern and perception of the dangers of COVID-19 may be used to promote enhanced readiness and improved response by the health sector to assist in improving academic achievement (Cori et al., 2020). According to Brug et al. (2009), risk perception is one of the important variables in determining individuals' responses or attitudes regarding global pandemics such as COVID-19. Risk perception is defined as a cognitive process in which people engage in many daily tasks and are in charge of guiding people's behaviour when they must make judgments regarding possible dangers (Capone et al., 2020). They include several elements, such as present and future repercussions, as well as their influence on people's emotions and well-being (Slovic, 2001). Risk perception has an influence on the overall well-being of individuals in a specific place, hence information concerning such risks must be managed carefully to minimise misinterpretation among people. Furthermore, if the information provided is insufficient, it can lead to people taking inappropriate protective actions (Seale et al., 2009), such as disobeying public health authorities' recommendations or, on the other hand, negative emotional responses and unwarranted concerns about contact with other people (Wang et al., 2018). According to Fraser's (2020) research, people's risk perception varies with age.

Literature suggests the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the psychological and physical well-being of students, the general public, patients, medical personnel, children, and the elderly (Cao et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). According to Pragholapati (2020), COVID-19 has afflicted around 24.9% of pupils worldwide, and as a result, they have suffered varying levels of anxiety since the breakout of COVID-19. The pandemic has had an impact on academic activities like everyday school life and delays in academic activities, all of which have had an impact on students' academic progress. Many higher education institutions have switched most of their operations to online learning platforms to slow the development of the COVI9-19 pandemic. It is critical to note that, in the case of hospitality and tourism training, the big component of practical training is likely to have a significant impact (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). This epidemic has had a detrimental influence on several nations, including Hong Kong, China, Singapore, and even Canada, where hospitality and tourist education are key priorities. Many academic institutions have reduced face-to-face teaching and learning, which influences student academic progress as well as their career growth and objectives. Indeed, students found it difficult to communicate with the academic community (e.g., peers, teachers, advisors, and administrators), which has reduced team building among students (Aristovnik et al., 2020). In most developing countries, where information, communication, and technology are not well grounded for teaching and learning and internet access is expensive, it puts a lot of stress and cost on many students, affecting teaching and learning, especially with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Dhawan, 2020; Marinoni et al., 2020).

A recent German study found that individuals were concerned about COVID-19 in general, but less concerned about being infected, and that older people believe they are less likely to be infected by the COVID-19 pandemic than younger ones (Gerhold, 2020). In this context, it would be fascinating to investigate the influence of this construct on the well-being of students during the epidemic. According to Arnsten (2009), fear has a negative impact on the brain architecture of memory and learning; students who have had fatal or chronic scary experiences frequently lose their learning capacity, resulting in poor academic and learning performance or failing grades. The study, therefore, hypothesised that in a practical curriculum like hospitality, student engagement, peer-led team learning and student learning satisfaction would be hampered; COVID-19 risk perception was expected to have a negative effect on student engagement, peer-led team learning and student learning satisfaction.

Based on this, the following hypotheses are presented.

Hypothesis 1a: COVID-19 risk perception has a significant negative influence on student engagement.

Hypothesis 1b: COVID-19 risk perception has a significant negative association with peer team learning.

Hypothesis 1c: COVID-19 risk perception has a significant influence on student learning satisfaction.

Peer Team Learning

The manner of teaching and learning at higher education institutions is mostly focused on instructor-centred lectures, assignment verification, and so on. Many studies have criticised these strategies as ineffective for pupils (McKeachie et al., 1987; Smith et al., 2005). According to these findings, this strategy provides pupils with little chance to build their own critical and metacognitive thinking abilities. Students must be permitted to generate and construct their knowledge for higher-level reasoning and conceptual grasp of what is being studied to be effective in teaching and learning (Varma-Nelson & Coppola, 2005). When teaching and learning are based on student-centred groups, they have the potential to improve academic accomplishment as well as lead to more positive attitudes and self-concepts about their educational experience and the subject area (Johnson et al., 1998; Stevens & Slavin, 1995). Models or ideas such as problem-based learning (PBL), process-oriented guided inquiry learning (POGIL), and peer-led team learning (PLTL) describe student-based learning (Eberlein et al., 2008). This study, on the other hand, focuses on peer-led team learning (PLTL).

According to Chan and Bauer (2015), data suggest that when students participate actively in PLTL, they tend to stay in their course of study and acquire a stronger interest in the subject, resulting in excellent academic accomplishment. It must be established that the focus of peer team learning is to group students into small groups of five to eight, with a ladder to engage the group in solving critical issues in their field of study, assistance in understanding basic scientific concepts, and discussion of ideas to improve the students' lives (Gafney & Varma-Nelson, 2008; Gosser et al., 2001).

Peer-Team Learning is mostly centred on group learning in school. It is built on interaction among a small group of students who exchange views on a common academic attainment concern (Roth et al., 2001). PTL involves students working together to solve an issue while peer leaders provide guidance on resources, thinking processes, and methods (Crocolice & Deming, 2001). Furthermore, peer leaders foster a conversation among students in a group so that they may connect with one another, stimulate brainstorming, and encourage them to solve and debate structured issues (Gosser et al., 2001). Peer team learning has shown that students do better academically when they participate in team learning (Chan & Bauer, 2015). Other research has found that peer team learning can benefit students by introducing them to issues that may not be fully covered in the curriculum (Tang et al., 2004). Peer teachers who guided small group tutorials in a problem-based curriculum were seen as better at providing feedback, empathising with student issues, establishing a better tutorial atmosphere, and getting support from learners than groups mediated by a faculty member (Kassab et al., 2005). There is, however, minimal information on how happy students are with peer teaching vs teaching done by a faculty member, as well as how attentive students are to criticism of their communication skills from near-peer student instructors. As a result, the study presents these hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2a: Peer team learning has a positive influence on student engagement.

Hypothesis 2b: Peer team learning has a positive influence on students' learning satisfaction.

Student Engagement

Student engagement is widely recognised as a key component influencing students' academic progress in higher learning educational institutions. According to Kahu (2013), student engagement studies are extensively conceptualised and explored. Students' engagement is highly valued since interested students may acquire and master more skills and are more likely to impact their level of happiness. The importance of student engagement and its influence on student accomplishment is no longer debatable (Trowler & Trowler, 2010). Researchers described and comprehended student participation in a variety of ways (Ashwin & McVitty, 2015). According to Fredericks et al. (2004), student engagement is a tri-dimensional concept: "behavioural, emotional, and cognitive", which are influenced by a variety of factors including "teachers, institutions, students, families, and communities, as well as curriculum and resources available". According to Kahu (2013), research enhanced Fredericks et al.'s (2004) definition by including structural and psychological repercussions (proximate and distal) as a manner of clearly defining the level of student involvement. This complicates the definition of engagement, and it is not the purpose of the study to resolve the complicated nature of the engagement construct, which incorporates a number of aspects. Several new empirical studies that investigate various facets of student involvement have arisen as an extension, to address the constraints of the Fredericks et al paradigm (Kahu, 2014; Maskell & Collins, 2017; Nelson et al., 2014).

This present outbreak has, in some manner, affected student involvement throughout the world. According to Nepal and Rogerson (2020), student involvement is often regarded as a critical component influencing academic success and learning at the postsecondary level. This has become required since it is extensively discussed and explored, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kahu, 2013). Significant study should be conducted on the amount of student engagement since students learn more when they are involved in class, which is critical to academic progress and learning satisfaction. The importance of student involvement and its influence on student accomplishment is no longer debatable (Trowler, 2010). Student involvement is difficult in this present epidemic, as most higher learning institutions have switched to online learning, because online learners appear to have fewer possibilities to engage with the school, indicating the absence of university elements. Students in the hospitality and tourist industries, where the majority of their training is practical, are especially vulnerable due to a lack of physical interaction with their facilitators. When there is a lack of engagement, academic performance may suffer, which in turn will have an impact on job ambitions or performance. The current COVID-19 epidemic must emphasise the importance of our higher learning institutions' ongoing engagement efforts in creating and maintaining student hope and engagement levels, which aid in student retention (Zhong et al., 2021).

Although the Internet has compelled many schools to spend extensively on technology for teaching and learning, not all courses can be delivered online due to practical considerations, and hospitality and tourism education is no exception. Active learning techniques might be used in some aspects of the course, such as collaborative group work, assisting students' presentations and discussions, actively sharing resources, providing course assignments with hands-on components, and so on (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Investment in technology for teaching and learning has been proven to greatly boost learner engagement (Kahn et al., 2017), particularly when facilities integrate multimedia technology while instructing students (Geerling, 2012). Furthermore, kids learn better from computer-based education including words and visuals than from words alone in academic learning (Mayer, 2017), and this can have a huge positive impact on the students' lives. The following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Student engagement has a significant positive influence on student learning satisfaction.

Learning Environment

One of the important aspects that encourage teaching and learning is the character of the university environment. Large sums of money are expended in transforming classrooms into technologically equipped learning spaces in modern education (Beery et al., 2013). Technology appears to have taken over modern education; SMART Boards, interactive projectors, integrated cameras and multimedia tools, and internet-based technology have all refurbished the modern classroom (Bouslama & Kalota, 2013).

According to Brooks (2011), the physical environment of the school can boost students' learning capacities and academic achievement. According to studies, classrooms are thought to encourage student-centred learning and capitalise on student choices and current lives (Gurzynski-Weiss, et al., 2015). It is considered that having an innovative and well-designed educational environment facilitates student-centred learning, equalises participation, and allows pupils to work with more peers than they would in typical classrooms (Gurzynski-Weiss, et al., 2015). However, any pedagogical adjustments based on learning would be ineffective without teachers and instructors implementing practical pedagogy with the space's intended usage (Bouslama & Kalota, 2013; Dittoe, 2002). Thus, it is pointless to make any design changes based on learning unless educators apply pedagogy that is appropriate for the space's intended purpose. Effective learning settings must be relevant to students' learning and persistence (Earthman & Lemaster, 2009). Teachers and trainers should be able to facilitate the process of teaching and learning (Bouslama & Kalota, 2013). As a result, a classroom is just a physical reality that serves to facilitate the teaching and learning processes (Dittoe, 2002). Classroom design may help students stay motivated and on task (Miller et al., 2001). Thus, the nature of the physical classroom, as well as the use of technology for teaching and learning, all contribute to the learning environment. As a result, the study presents these hypotheses.

Hypothesis 4: The learning environment has a significant positive bearing on student engagement.

Hypothesis 5: The learning environment has a significant positive influence on student learning satisfaction.

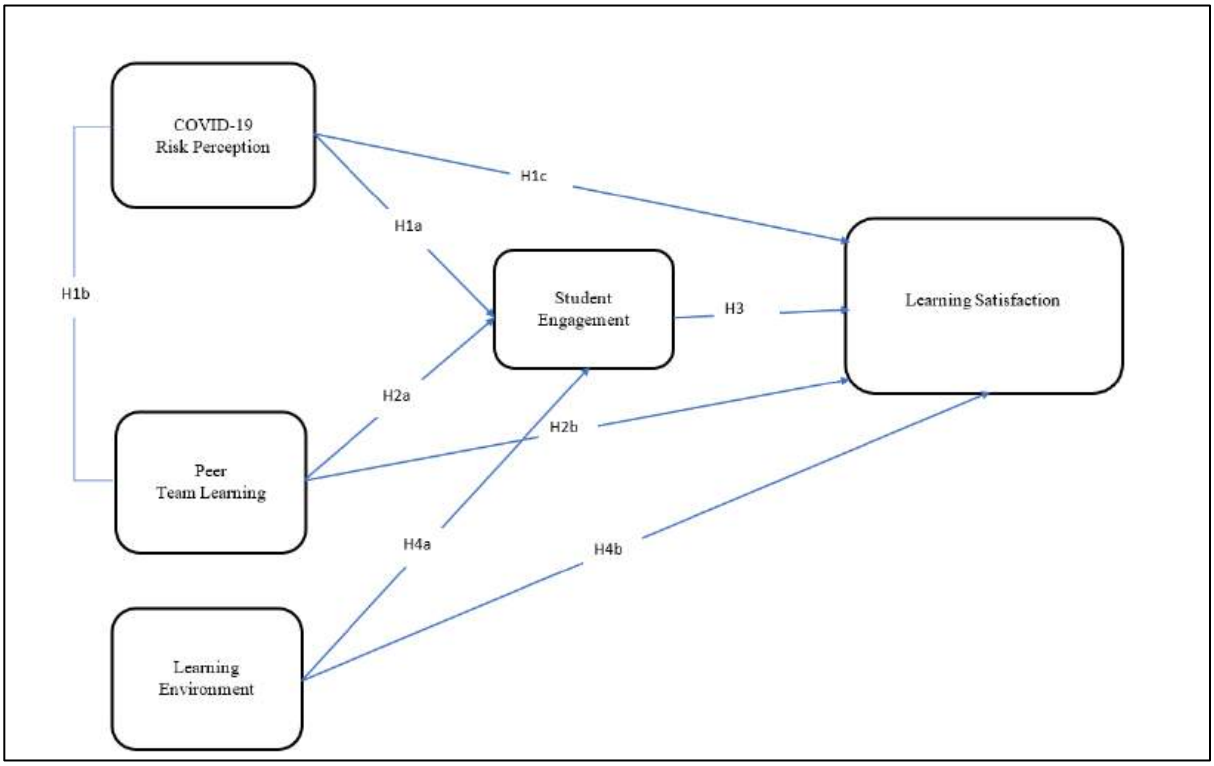

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Study

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

Through a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional design, the study focused on students in the hospitality and tourism departments of traditional and technical universities in Ghana. The total number of hospitality and tourism students for the four universities was 1,340. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the unwillingness of people to touch or come into contact with other people, a convenience sampling technique was adopted for the study to get the participants for the study (Etikan et al., 2016). The respondents were from four purposefully selected universities located in the most affected regions of Ghana (i.e., Greater Accra and Ashanti regions). The sample size was 440 respondents who responded to an online survey using Google Forms. Guided by the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) approach, which recommended a sample size of 297 for our population of 1,340 students, the study exceeded this recommendation by achieving a sample size of 440 respondents. Once this number was reached, the researchers stopped accepting further responses through the online survey. The data collection spanned three months (i.e. from March to May 2021).

Measures

A multi-item questionnaire was employed in the collection of data. The questionnaire was in two sections. The first section covered the respondents' demographics. The second section focused on the learning environment, student engagement, COVID-19 risk perception, peer team learning, and learning satisfaction. The learning environment was measured using 10 items derived from the literature. Student engagement was measured using 15 items from Skinner et al. (2009) and Ladino Nocua et al. (2021). The COVID-19 risk perception measure with four items was adopted from Ding et al. (2020). A peer team learning questionnaire was adopted from Wells (2013) with six main items. A four-item scale from van Damme et al. (2002) was used to measure learning satisfaction. Each measure employed a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

The data collected was processed using SPSS version 25, and Jeffreys' Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). The hypotheses were tested using the partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach implemented by SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was used because of its robustness and as it is suitable for examining complex relationships among multiple variables (Hair et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). In this study, we employed both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability coefficients to assess the constructs' reliability (Akgül, 2019; Jennex, 2019; Salvendy & Smith, 2009). Further, average variance extracted (AVEs) and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) were used to examine the constructs' convergent and discriminant validities (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006; Henseler et al., 2015; Sarstedt et al., 2021). Thus, the structural model was tested following the establishment of an adequate measurement model (i.e., the reliability and validity of the measures).

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

As revealed in Table 1, the majority of the respondents were females (58.6%). Thus, the ratio of females was larger than that of males; this distribution is not surprising given the respondents' industry setting. Because of the nature of the professions, the hospitality industry, like many others in the service sector, draws a large number of females in Ghana. Age-wise, 93.2% (410) were aged 21 to 30; 4.8% (21) were aged 31 to 40; 2% (9) were aged 41 and above. This means that the majority of the respondents were aged 21 to 30. In terms of level at the university, 1.8%

(8) were Level 100 students; 12% (53) were Level 200 students; 55.7% (245) were Level 300 students; and 30.5% (134) were Level 400 students. This means that the majority of the respondents were above Level 200.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Characteristic		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	182	41.4%
	Female	258	58.6%
	Total	440	100.0%
Age	21-30	410	93.2%
	31-40	21	4.8%
	41 and above	9	2.0%
	Total	440	100.0%
Level	Level 100	8	1.8%
	Level 200	53	12.0%
	Level 300	245	55.7%
	Level 400	134	30.5%
	Total	440	100.0%
Diagnosed	Yes	72	16.4%
	No	368	83.6%
	Total	440	100.0%
Exposed	Yes	65	14.8%
	No	375	85.2%
	Total	440	100.0%

Measurement Model Assessment

The results in Table 2 show that all the items report significant loadings as desired (Akgül, 2019; Jennex, 2019; Salvendy & Smith, 2009). Further, the average variance extracted values (AVEs) are greater than the critical value (0.5) and all construct reliabilities are above 0.7 (see Table 3), demonstrating the adequate reliability and convergent validity of the measures (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006; Sarstedt et al., 2021). Thus, items with weak loadings were retained given the presence of adequate construct reliabilities and validities. Finally, the discriminant validity evaluation demonstrates that all of the HTMT values (see Table 4) are considerably lower than 0.90, thereby confirming the measures' discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 2: Detailed Factor Loadings

						95% Confidence Interval		Standardized		
Latent	Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Lower	Upper	All	LV	Endo
BEN1	BE1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.906	1.147	0.906
	BE2	0.970	0.029	33.658	< .001	0.913	1.026	0.931	1.112	0.931
	BE3	0.919	0.031	29.448	< .001	0.858	0.980	0.887	1.054	0.887
	BE4	0.990	0.028	35.250	< .001	0.935	1.045	0.945	1.136	0.945
	BE5	1.023	0.029	35.664	< .001	0.966	1.079	0.948	1.173	0.948
CEN1	CE1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.813	1.001	0.813
	CE2	0.982	0.046	21.161	< .001	0.891	1.073	0.839	0.983	0.839
	CE3	1.068	0.044	24.324	< .001	0.982	1.154	0.916	1.069	0.916
	CE4	1.076	0.045	24.053	< .001	0.988	1.164	0.910	1.077	0.910
	CE5	1.068	0.044	24.356	< .001	0.982	1.154	0.917	1.069	0.917
CRP1	RP1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.539	0.698	0.539
	RP2	0.483	0.090	5.371	< .001	0.307	0.659	0.283	0.337	0.283
	RP3	0.724	0.099	7.280	< .001	0.529	0.919	0.404	0.505	0.404
	RP4	0.764	0.106	7.208	< .001	0.556	0.972	0.399	0.533	0.399
EEN1	EE1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.849	1.002	0.849
	EE2	1.016	0.038	26.513	< .001	0.941	1.091	0.911	1.018	0.911
	EE3	0.971	0.042	22.921	< .001	0.888	1.054	0.842	0.973	0.842
	EE4	1.058	0.039	26.950	< .001	0.981	1.135	0.918	1.059	0.918
	EE5	1.091	0.042	26.042	< .001	1.009	1.173	0.903	1.093	0.903

Latent	Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval Lower	Upper	Standardized All	LV	Endo
LEN1	LE1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.789	0.980	0.789
	LE2	1.028	0.053	19.216	< .001	0.923	1.133	0.808	1.007	0.808
	LE3	0.599	0.059	10.070	< .001	0.483	0.716	0.468	0.587	0.468
	LE4	0.971	0.057	17.096	< .001	0.860	1.083	0.739	0.952	0.739
	LE5	1.046	0.052	20.208	< .001	0.945	1.148	0.839	1.025	0.839
	LE6	1.054	0.050	21.112	< .001	0.956	1.152	0.866	1.033	0.866
	LE7	1.071	0.050	21.220	< .001	0.972	1.170	0.869	1.050	0.869
	LE8	1.070	0.050	21.322	< .001	0.972	1.168	0.872	1.048	0.872
	LE9	1.104	0.051	21.692	< .001	1.004	1.203	0.882	1.081	0.882
	LE10	1.105	0.051	21.694	< .001	1.005	1.204	0.882	1.082	0.882
PLT1	PT1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.877	1.087	0.877
	PT2	1.061	0.036	29.771	< .001	0.991	1.131	0.925	1.153	0.925
	PT3	1.016	0.035	28.734	< .001	0.946	1.085	0.911	1.104	0.911
	PT4	1.051	0.036	29.037	< .001	0.980	1.122	0.915	1.142	0.915
	PT5	1.026	0.037	27.949	< .001	0.954	1.098	0.900	1.115	0.900
SEN1	BEN1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.907	0.907	0.907
	EEN1	0.919	0.044	20.954	< .001	0.833	1.005	0.955	0.955	0.955
	CEN1	0.880	0.047	18.876	< .001	0.789	0.971	0.915	0.915	0.915
SLS1	LS1	1.000	0.000			1.000	1.000	0.901	1.080	0.901
	LS2	0.990	0.031	31.834	< .001	0.929	1.051	0.928	1.070	0.928
	LS3	0.976	0.033	29.830	< .001	0.912	1.040	0.904	1.054	0.904
	LS4	0.921	0.037	25.031	< .001	0.849	0.993	0.838	0.995	0.838

Table 3: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Covid-19 Risk Perception	0.772	0.848	0.584
Learning Environment	0.948	0.956	0.688
Learning Satisfaction	0.941	0.958	0.850
Peer-Led Team Learning	0.958	0.967	0.855
Student Engagement	0.975	0.977	0.741

Table 4: Discriminant Validity using HTMT

Constructs	CRP	LEN	SLS	PLT	SEN
Covid-19 Risk Perception (CRP)					
Learning Environment (LEN)	0.542				
Learning Satisfaction (SLS)	0.369	0.604			
Peer-Led Team Learning (PLT)	0.413	0.574	0.824		
Student Engagement (SEN)	0.484	0.653	0.846	0.851	

Structural Model Assessment

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of COVID-19 risk perception on students' engagement, peer-led team learning, and learning satisfaction. The study further examined the effect of peer-led team learning on student engagement and student learning satisfaction; and then the effect of learning environment, peer-led team learning, and students' engagement on learning satisfaction. Consequently, eight hypotheses were tested. The structural model results were evaluated once the construct measurements were shown to be reliable, valid and significant. This procedure comprises evaluating the model's prediction capabilities as well as the association that exists between the research constructs (Hair et al., 2013). Figure 2 shows the general model with estimates of the relationships among the variables.

As depicted in Table 5, the model explains 72% of the variance in SEN ($Q^2 = 0.532$), 14.7% in PLT ($Q^2 = 0.122$) and 70% in SLS ($Q^2 = 0.593$). These demonstrate the adequate predictive power and relevance of the model (Hair et al., 2019; Usakli & Kucukergin, 2018). Based on the estimates of the coefficients, *t*-scores, and *p*-values as depicted in Table 5, CRP had significant positive influence on SEN (H1a: $\beta = 0.088$, $t = 2.393$, $p = 0.017$), and PLT (H1b: $\beta = 0.383$, $t = 9.020$, $p = 0.000$), but insignificant negative influence on SLS (H1c: $\beta = -0.056$, $t = 1.643$, $p = 0.100$); leading to the rejection of hypotheses H1a, H1b and H1c. PLT significantly positively influenced SEN (H2a: $\beta = 0.657$, $t = 16.791$, $p = 0.000$) and SLS (H2b: $\beta = 0.2358$, $t = 5.080$, $p = 0.000$); therefore, hypotheses H2a and H2b are supported. Similarly, SEN showed a significant positive influence on SLS (H3: $\beta = 0.474$, $t = 6.395$, $p = 0.000$), hence hypothesis H3 is supported. Lastly, LEN emerged to have a significant positive influence on SEN (H4: $\beta = 0.230$, $t = 5.018$, $p = .000$) and SLS (H5: $\beta = 0.104$, $t = 2.296$, $p = 0.023$); suggesting the acceptance of hypotheses H4 and H5.

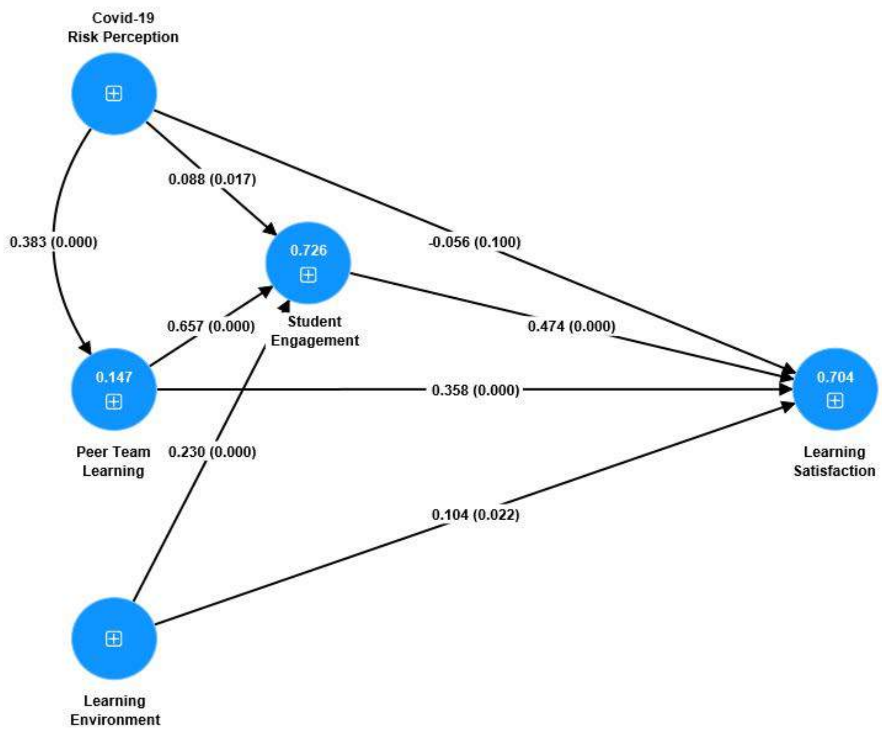

Figure 2: The General Model with Estimates

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	Outcome	Estimate	Std. Error	*t*-value	*p*-value	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
CRP	SEN	0.088	0.037	2.393	0.017	0.023	0.166
CRP	PLT	0.383	0.042	9.020	0.000	0.290	0.459
CRP	SLS	-0.056	0.034	1.643	0.100	-0.129	0.007
PLT	SEN	0.657	0.039	16.791	0.000	0.577	0.732
PLT	SLS	0.358	0.071	5.080	0.000	0.225	0.503
SEN	SLS	0.474	0.074	6.395	0.000	0.323	0.612
LEN	SEN	0.230	0.046	5.018	0.000	0.132	0.315
LEN	SLS	0.104	0.045	2.296	0.022	0.019	0.198
Model's summary					R^2	R^2 Adjusted	Q^2
SEN					0.726	0.724	0.532
PLT					0.147	0.145	0.122
SLS					0.704	0.702	0.593

DISCUSSION

The study looked at the effect of CRP on SEN, PLT and SLS; the effect of PLT on SEN and SLS; the effect of SEN on SLS; and the effects of LEN on SEN and SLS. Subsequently, eight hypotheses were tested. The findings from the results as illustrated in Table 6 supported five out of the eight hypotheses.

Table 6: Summary of Hypotheses Test Results

Hypotheses	Structural Relationship	Coefficient	*t*-value	*p*-value	Decision
H1a	CRP --> SEN	0.088	2.393	0.017	Not supported
H1b	CRP --> PLT	0.383	9.020	0.000	Not supported
H1c	CRP --> SLS	-0.056	1.643	0.100	Not supported
H2a	PLT--> SEN	0.657	16.791	0.000	Supported
H2b	PLT --> SLS	0.358	5.080	0.000	Supported
H3	SEN --> SLS	0.474	6.395	0.000	Supported
H4	LEN --> SEN	0.230	5.018	0.000	Supported
H5	LEN --> SLS	0.104	2.296	0.022	Supported

Effect of CRP on SEN

This study found that COVID-19 risk perception has a significant positive effect on students' engagement. Thus, the higher the infection risk perception, the higher the engagement level. Thus, H1a is statistically not supported. This finding corroborates Zhong et al.'s (2021) finding which established that student's engagement experience was positive despite the crisis. This finding also aligns with the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), which posits that personal factors, such as risk perception, can influence individual learning behaviours, including engagement. In this case, students who perceived a higher risk of COVID-19 were more likely to exhibit increased engagement in their studies, driven by their awareness of the potential consequences of the pandemic on their future prospects. This can be attributed to the fact that the study was conducted at a time when social distancing protocols had been relaxed with vaccination and other increased protection protocols. When confronted with novelty and uncertainty, an individual tends to make adjustments (e.g., in behaviour, emotion, and cognition) to adapt to the new environment. This switch in response is called adaption. Previous research has suggested that adaptation and academic emotions may interact to influence student engagement. Adaptability therefore enhances students' engagement amid the pandemic (Zhang et al., 2021). Adaptability is defined as the ability to productively adjust one's cognition, affect, and behaviour, indicating an individual difference in how one adapts to changing, new, and unknown environments (Martin et al., 2012). There are three components: cognitive adjustment, behavioural adjustment, and affective adjustment. Cognitive adjustment refers to changing one's thinking; behavioural adjustment refers to changing one's behaviours; and affective adjustment refers to changing one's affective reactions (Holliman et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2012). Martin et al. (2013) discovered that among high school students, a higher level of adaptability was strongly connected with both higher positive student involvement and lower negative student engagement. Prior studies have also discovered that the adaptability of first-year students was a major direct predictor of both positive and negative behavioural engagement (Collie et al., 2016; Holliman et al., 2018).

Influence of the CRP on PLT

This study found a significant positive effect of COVID-19 risk perception on peer-led team learning. This means that as infection risk perception increased, peer-led team learning also increased significantly, thus rejecting hypothesis H1b. This finding supports the SCT and SDT which emphasise the role of observational learning in acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes through interaction with and observation of others (Bandura, 1986). In this case, students who perceived a higher risk of COVID-19 were more likely to engage in peer team learning, allowing them to benefit from the collective intelligence, expertise, and experience of their peers in navigating the challenges of the pandemic. Further, the finding suggests that the students were cognisant of the potential long-term implications of the pandemic on their future careers and sought to adapt to the evolving situation. Again, adaptation is put forward as the reason for this anomaly. With the lifting of bans on gathering and COVID-19 prevention protocols in place, students still had contact. Meanwhile, the risk perception was not that high to trigger significantly less contact with colleagues. Also, even with the bans on gathering, the limit was up to 20; which means that 3 to 6 students could gather safely in a classroom for effective peer-led team learning in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborative systems such as Slack and Zoom as well as social media platforms such as WhatsApp groups may assist peer learning by offering unique channels for questioning, idea sharing, and agile problem-solving help in response to specific requests, according to Walker et al. (2021). With the help of their peers, students who were less confident in their ability to complete their projects were able to learn from their peers to succeed.

Influence of CRP on SLS

This study found that COVID-19 risk perception has an insignificant negative effect on hospitality students' learning satisfaction, thus not supporting hypothesis H1c. Despite the lack of statistical significance, the direction of the relationship (negative) suggests that as COVID-19 risk perceptions increase, there is a tendency, albeit not statistically significant, for students' learning satisfaction to decrease. This present finding aligns with the existing literature which suggests that the pandemic has had an impact on the psychological and physical well-being of students including life satisfaction (Cao et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Özer et al., 2021). This finding suggests that students who perceived a higher risk associated with the virus were less satisfied with their learning experiences. The negative effect could be attributed to various factors, such as the increased stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic, the transition to remote learning, and the disruption of practical training and industry placements in the hospitality and tourism sector (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016; Korobova & Starobin, 2015; Ros et al., 2012; Wang & Fredricks, 2014).

Influence of PLT on SEN and SLS

Hypotheses H2a and H2b were supported by the findings as the results of our study emphasise the positive role of peer team learning in fostering students' engagement and students' learning satisfaction. This means that as peer team learning increases, students' engagement and learning satisfaction also increase. These findings corroborate the existing literature that suggests that peer team learning increases efficient collaboration and social connection among students, which promotes improved academic achievement. Indeed, peer team learning can benefit students by introducing them to issues that may not be fully covered in the curriculum (Tang et al., 2004) and peer teachers who facilitated small group tutorials in a problem-based curriculum were perceived as being more effective at offering feedback, empathising with student concerns, developing a better tutorial environment, and gaining support from students than faculty-mediated groups (Kassab et al., 2005).

Influence of LEN on SEN and SLS; SEN on SLS

As expected, hypotheses H3 H4 and H5 were rejected, underscoring the positive role of the learning environment in driving students' engagement and students' learning satisfaction as well as the positive bearing of students' engagement on learning satisfaction. These findings support the literature that suggests the physical environment of a school boosts students' learning capacities and academic achievement (Brooks, 2011) and effective student engagement adds greatly to the learner or student happiness and has a favourable impact on their academic attainment level (Korobova & Starobin, 2015; Ikhsan et al., 2019; Ros et al., 2012; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Indeed, having an innovative and well-designed educational environment facilitates student-centred learning, equalises participation, and allows pupils to work with more peers than they would in typical classrooms (Gurzynski-Weiss et al., 2015). A happy student is a sure sign of a successful learning experience, and students' perceptions of their own learning outcomes are a reliable indicator of their own feelings of satisfaction with their educational experiences, whether they occur in person or online (Marks et al., 2005).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The prime objective of this study was to examine the effect of COVID-19 risk perception given the learning environment, students' engagement, peer-led team learning and learning satisfaction among hospitality and tourism students in Ghana. The study demonstrated the effect of CRP on SEN, PLT and SLS; the effect of PLT on SEN and SLS; the effect of SEN on SLS; and the effects of LEN on SEN and SLS. COVID-19 risk perception proved to have an insignificant impact on students' learning satisfaction, but significant positive influences on peer team learning and students' engagement. Vaccination, relaxed social distancing protocols and enhanced protective measures have eased adaptation and neutralised infection risk perceptions among students. Thus, student engagement levels have not been affected negatively. The study contributes to knowledge, theory and practice for ensuring students learning satisfaction, especially in times of pandemics such as COVID-19. Thus, in times of pandemics like COVID-19, social interaction is seriously affected; however, this study has revealed that with the right protocols, social interaction factors such as peer-led team learning, and students' engagement can be well managed to improve students' learning satisfaction.

Theoretical Implications

This study adds a fresh perspective to the ongoing discourse in the literature by clarifying hospitality and tourism students' risk perception given the learning environment, students' engagement, peer-led team learning and learning satisfaction among hospitality and tourism students in Ghana through the lens of SCT and SDT. Findings demonstrate that although risk perception significantly less triggers contact with colleagues, it does not necessarily discourage peer-led team learning and student engagement. The findings further accentuate the critical roles of peer-led team learning and learning environments in shaping students' engagement and learning satisfaction. Thus, the integration of social cognitive and self-determination theories in this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing learning experiences during the pandemic. By considering both the role of risk perception (as a personal factor) and the psychological needs of students (as proposed by self-determination theory), this study offers a holistic perspective on the determinants of student engagement, peer team learning, and learning satisfaction.

Practical Implications

The study's findings have implications for hospitality and tourism education. The education authorities should put in place measures to strengthen the information technology facilities of schools to support online teaching techniques. Since a lot of online teaching and less physical contact teaching has been the norm during this pandemic, the results indicate that a blend of the two would suffice for improving students' learning satisfaction. Educators and instructors should gradually increase the physical contact hours with students in order to be able to assess and help more with students' cognitive challenges. Considering students' engagement and peer team learning, universities should embrace collaborative learning which is an effective enhancer of involvement in learning activities. Students' engagement may be heightened when they work well with others (Wentzel, 2009), owing to a feeling of connection with others throughout the activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000). To make group work more effective, techniques to ensure that students understand how to communicate and behave in that context may be employed. Avoiding homogenous groups and grouping by ability, developing individual responsibility by assigning varied tasks, and assessing both the student and the group performance are all excellent ways to enhance collaborative learning.

Limitations of the Study

Like other studies, there are some limitations to this research. To begin with, the research was planned as a cross-sectional survey, which means that longitudinal investigations are required to corroborate the results. Second, since the survey was based on self-reports, there is likely to be some bias. Another drawback is that the findings may not apply to students at private universities since the research only included hospitality management students at government-funded institutions. Future studies should consider how adaptation and anxiety moderate the effect of COVID-19 risk perception on students' learning satisfaction within the context of the demographics of this study. This will enhance the understanding of the relationship among the variables understudied.

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2 STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION IN TOURISM GOVERNANCE IN GHANA

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Abstract

This paper analyses stakeholder collaboration in tourism governance in Ghana. It further examines the forms and rationale of stakeholder collaboration and the extent of stakeholder collaborations. The paper deployed the qualitative approach in research, descriptive research design and purposively selected 14 participants from public and private sector tourism organisations and local communities in Ghana's tourism industry. These participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience in the tourism industry. The data was collected using in-depth interviews (IDI). The responses of participants were analysed inductively and deductively. Two key findings emerged from the study. First, it was found that there is a discernible line of authority where authority comes from the top management in the sector. Secondly, collaboration in the tourism sector is not well established.

Keywords: collaboration, collaborative governance, tourism stakeholders, tourism governance

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration in tourism governance is regarded as a necessity in the tourism industry (Shasha, et al., 2020; Siakwah, et al., 2020). Many potential benefits are derived from collaborative arrangements. These include: avoiding the cost of resolving adversarial conflicts among stakeholders in the long term (Emerson, et al., 2017; Faris et al., 2022); becoming more politically legitimate by giving stakeholders a greater influence in the decision-making which may impact their lives (Benveniste, 1989); improving the coordination of policies and related actions by considering the economic, environmental and social impacts of tourism (Newig, et al., 2018); and adding value by building on the store of knowledge, insights and capabilities of stakeholders in the destination (Buhalis et al., 2022).

While these advantages present a good reason to develop collaborative arrangements, there remain challenges in achieving collaborative outcomes. The fragmented nature of the tourism industry has been associated with a lack of collaboration, as many different stakeholders have interests in the tourism governance process (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002; Rana et al., 2022).

Collaboration can be seen as a formal institutionalized relationship among existing networks of institutions, interested parties or individuals. It is a joint decision-making process, involving key actors aiming at advancing shared visions and goals which will help resolve conflicts if any (Gray, 1989; Hall, 1999; Thomson & Perry, 2006). However, the strategic process of resolving conflicts is often lacking in tourism governance, making it difficult to reach a collaborative outcome. In the tourism field, it has become increasingly apparent to governments, tourism managers, planners and academics that no one individual organization can be responsible for the development of tourism (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002; Elliott, 2020).

Collaboration in tourism is often seen in the integration and participation of stakeholders which is integral to sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Hall, 1999; Stoffelen, 2018). Jamal and Getz (1995, p. 188) describe collaborative governance in a

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tourism context as “a process of joint decision-making among autonomous, key stakeholders to resolve planning problems and/or manage issues related to the planning and development”. A prerequisite for the use of the collaborative approach is at destinations where fragmentation and independent governance decisions by different tourism stakeholders give rise to power struggles over resources (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002).

In Ghana, tourism is considered a significant sector of the economy and also a tool for poverty reduction. Thus, a key area to be harnessed to boost the economy, generate employment and contribute to poverty reduction efforts (Adu-Ampong, 2014; Sonne, 2010). Boakye et al. (2013) indicate that management of tourism in Ghana does not lie solely in the hands of the tourism establishment but in multiple stakeholders such as the ministries, local communities, departments and agencies, hence a causal factor for collaboration. Ghana’s tourism sector comprises of key actors such as the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF), Ghana Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), Hotel and Catering Tourism Training Institute (HOTCATT) to mention a few, the traditional authority and civil entities in conjunction, with a ministerial committee comprising of ministries mandated by law to provide some tourism-related needs.

Geographically, in Ghana, collaboration studies have been investigated at the regional or community level of the tourism sector. These studies include tourism governance and institutional collaboration in the Central Region of Ghana (Adu-Ampong, 2014) and stakeholder collaboration in the governance of Aburi Botanical Gardens (Agbenyeke, 2017). There is no evidence in the literature to suggest that it has been done at the macro (national) level of Ghana’s Tourism Sector.

Statutorily, the Tourism Act 817 section 42 calls for collaboration between stakeholders in the tourism sector. This study focuses on stakeholder collaboration in tourism governance within the tourism sector of Ghana by exploring the scope of collaborative arrangements, looking at the forms and rationale of collaboration, and the intensity (efforts) of collaborative relations in a collaborative planning approach implemented by Ghana’s Tourism Sector. The outcomes of the study aim to provide some insight into the successful and sustainable governance of tourism where there are diverse stakeholder interests. This study therefore seeks to examine the forms and rationale of stakeholder collaboration in tourism governance in Ghana’s tourism sector. The study further examines the extent of stakeholder collaboration in tourism governance in Ghana’s tourism sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Frameworks

Hall’s typology of governance (2013) and Mandell’s continuum of collaborative efforts (1999) were chosen as the theoretical basis for this paper. These theories have been extensively used in the tourism stakeholder literature to explain why the complexity of tourism requires collaboration.

Hall typology of governance framework

Hall (2013) developed a typology of governance framework which he argues is suitable for tourism. This typology is an encapsulation of different patterns of collaboration between stakeholders in the tourism policy domain over time. Hall identifies four forms of governance, namely hierarchies, markets, networks and communities as the typical forms of governance that can be seen in the economic sphere in general and the tourism policy domain in particular.

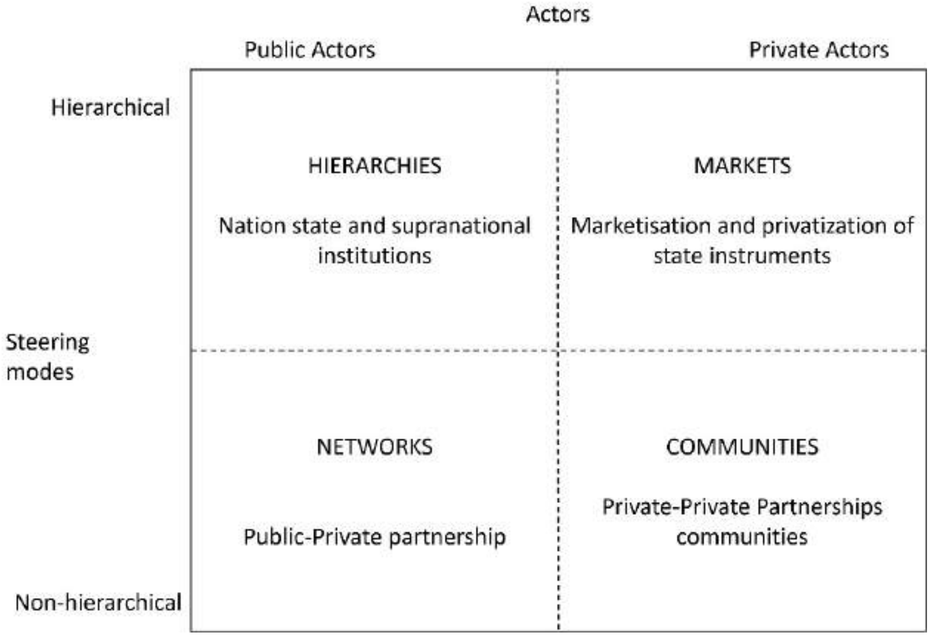

Figure 1: Framework of Governance Typology

Source: Hall (2013)

Mandell's continuum of collaborative efforts

Mandell's continuum of collaborative efforts also shows the different kinds of relationships and interactions that exist between the various stakeholders in both the public and private sectors of the tourism policy domain. Mandell (1999) notes that in a bid to achieve individual goals, stakeholders need to be able to establish contact with and interact with key people. As policy issues become multifaceted and crosscutting, it becomes imperative that individual players within a policy domain reach out to and link up with other stakeholders to coordinate the resolution of issues (Mandell, 1999). These efforts at collaboration according to Mandell (1999) occur along a continuum that ranges from loose linkages and one-time coalitions to more enduring structural arrangements. This continuum of collaborative efforts is as follows;

- Linkages or interactive contacts between two or more organizations.
- Intermittent coordination or mutual adjustment of the policies and procedures of two or more organizations to accomplish some objectives.
- *Ad hoc* or temporary task force activity among organizations to accomplish a purpose or purposes.
- Permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more organizations through a formal arrangement (that is, a council, or partnership) to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes.
- A coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope and all actions occur within the participant organizations themselves or involve the sequential or simultaneous activity of the participant organizations.
- A collective or network structure where there is a broad mission, joint and strategically

> interdependent action. The structural arrangement takes on broad tasks that reach beyond the simultaneous actions of independently operating organizations (action may include, but reaches beyond, linkages, coordination, task force or coalitions).

In many tourism destinations, good intentions in speech and even on paper about collaboration do not always translate into reality. Consequently, Mandell's (1999) work on the continuum of collaborative efforts provides an enriching perspective through which the depth and extent of collaborative governance may be measured. Using this framework in a study of collaborative tourism planning, Ladkin and Bertramini (2002) were able to identify the different kinds of relationships that exist between and within the public and the private sector in the tourist destination community of Cusco, Peru. By linking the responses of stakeholders in Ghana's tourism sector to this continuum, it will be possible to examine how the identification of various key actors in the sector impacts efforts towards collaboration. The call for coordination and collaboration in tourism governance according to Hall (1994) is one of the great truisms of tourism policy and planning. Much of the research on collaborative governance in tourism is linked to tourism planning and policies (Adu-Ampong, 2014; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002; Timothy, 1998; Waayers et al., 2012), public-public partnerships (Hall, 1999; Zapata & Hall, 2012) and sustainable tourism development (Jamal & Getz, 1995, 1999). What all these researchers point out is that in an increasingly networked and interdependent tourism sector, there is a need to formally bring together the various actors to interact and come out with ways of achieving the mental vision of achieving sustainable tourism development and contributing to poverty reduction.

Collaborative Governance in Tourism

Due to the acknowledged fragmentation of the tourism industry, the problem of collaborative governance in tourist destinations continues to garner attention in the tourism literature (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Hall, 1999; Jamal & Getz, 1995, 1999). Both academics and practitioners have hinted at the significance of coordination in the regulation of the tourism industry, as well as in the planning and execution of policies, due to the numerous stakeholders who impact and are influenced by tourism development policies. Collaboration between public bodies with jurisdiction over the tourism sector is more common than just coordination between the public, private, and civil society sectors in the practice of collaborative governance (Adu-Ampong, 2014).

A better climate for creating collaborative governance between the public sector and civil society entities and vice versa is provided by high levels of collaboration amongst public agencies. For instance, Lovelock (2001) describes how the contentious relationship between Parks Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission, two federal organizations in Canada, has made it challenging to make decisions regarding the policy domain of tourism development in natural parks.

Benefits of Coordination and Collaboration in Tourism Planning and Development

Collaboration in the tourism industry generally entails coordination between numerous public entities with jurisdictions that could have an impact on the sector. This is in addition to public-private-civil sector coordination. Effective public agency coordination creates a better climate for the growth of partnerships between the public sector and civil society organizations, as well as vice versa.

Collaboration in tourism planning has many advantages that have been noted in the literature so far. Stakeholder conflicts can be avoided, resources can be pooled for cost-effectiveness, and a particular tourism destination's competitive edge can increase (Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Gray, 1985). For instance, Jamal and Getz (1999) describe the advantages of a community-based round table collaboration amongst many stakeholders in the Canadian alpine town of Canmore, which is close to Banff National Park. They point out that the collaborative procedures enhanced stakeholder relationships across organizations and aided in building the capacities of both individual stakeholders and the community to handle planning challenges within the problem domain. To ensure that the voices and opinions of all parties affected by a policy are heard, collaboration on a political level offers an inclusive planning and policy-making process. A lack of cooperation, on the other hand, could harm the growth of tourism in any location. According to Lovelock (2001), the acrimonious relationships between Parks Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission, two government bodies in Canada, have made it difficult to make decisions regarding the policy area of tourism development in natural parks.

Despite the advantages of collaboration, the idea of collaboration falls short of properly accounting for systematic restrictions such as pre-existing power systems. There is a belief that power disparities may be resolved by the collaborative approach alone (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002). The partnership in the tourism planning process may not necessarily be acceptable in developing nations, according to Tosun (2000), who correctly notes that it evolved and was developed in the setting of wealthy countries. In some cases, development organizations located in Western nations offer financing and investments for building collaborative procedures. Tosun (2000) continues to make the case that in such circumstances, collaboration is subject to operational, structural, and cultural limitations that are all too frequently disregarded, and that as a result, collaboration may end up being imposed on developing nations by advanced Western economies.

METHODOLOGY

Study Context

Ghana's tourism sector was deemed appropriate for this study, particularly because of the fragmented and diffused nature of the tourism sector, comprising of different governing entities, a major causal factor for collaboration. Another reason for choosing Ghana is because of the paradox of it being considered one of the poorest countries (IMF, 2006), although tourism is often touted as a key to local economic development and poverty reduction. This paradox tends to be characteristic of many major tourism destinations in other African countries (Boakye et al., 2013).

Statutorily, the Tourism Act 817 section 42 calls for inter-organisational collaboration between public and private actors or organisations in the tourism sector.

Research Perspective

The study adopted the interpretivist paradigm which formed the basis of qualitative study in social research. This forms the basis of a qualitative study in social research (Sarantakos, 2005). This paradigm attempts to understand phenomena according to the meanings that people assign to them (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). It necessitates that the researcher put oneself in the shoes of the study's stakeholders, or subjects, and consider the world from their point of view (Jennings, 2010). Thus, the study of lived human experience within the social contexts in which the experience occurred and from the perspectives of the participants (Titchen & McCormack, 2007) to describe the meaning of a concept from several individuals who have experienced it (Creswell, 2013).

Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed and seeks to explore the issues of collaboration in tourism governance. Patton (2002) avers that descriptive research is based on the premise that people (in this study, stakeholders) can better explain their actions and decisions when they are asked to do so in an in-depth manner. This can only be done by allowing them to tell their stories unfettered by what the researcher has read in the literature. Therefore, a descriptive research design would provide the necessary platform to investigate the phenomenon, that is, stakeholders' collaboration in the governance of the tourism sector in a more detailed way.

Target Population

By using the stakeholder concept, 11 major stakeholders; the public, private and local communities involved in the tourism sector were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The stakeholders interviewed were from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), Ghana Tourism Development Company (GTDC), Hotel, Catering and Tourism Training Institute (HOTCATT), Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF), Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust (GHCT), Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS), Ghana Hotels Association, Travel and Tour Association of Ghana (TTAG), Tour Guides Association of Ghana (TORGAG) and traditional authorities in Ghana.

Table 1: Target Population for the Study

Categories	Actual Stakeholders	Management Positions
Public	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	Director for PPME Director for Protocol
	Ghana Tourism Authority	Deputy Executive Director (Operations)
	Ghana Tourism Development Company Limited	Chief Executive Director
	Hotel, Catering and Tourism Training Institute	Administrator (Representative of the Executive Director)
Private	Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF)	President (GHATOF)
	Ghana Hotels Association	President Elect
	Tour Guides Association of Ghana	President
	Travel and Tour Operators of Ghana	Secretary
	Ghana Wildlife Society	President
	Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust	Programs Director (Representative of the Executive Director)
Local Community	House of Chiefs	Secretary (to the President of House of Chiefs) Development Chief 1 Development Chief 2

Sampling

The study used a purposive sampling technique. This is because it helps to identify and select relevant stakeholders who are proficient and well-informed about a phenomenon of interest (Etikan, et al., 2016). In addition to knowledge and experience, note the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. Fourteen (14) individuals were selected as the sample size (Table 2).

Table 2: Sample Size

Category	Stakeholders	Number
Public		5
	• Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (2 Respondents)	
	• Ghana Tourism Authority	
	• Ghana Tourism Development Company Limited	
	• Hotel and Catering Tourism Training Institute	
Private		6
	• Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF)-(4 Respondents)	
	• Ghana Wildlife Society	
	• Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust	
Local Community	• Traditional Rulers	3
Total		14

Research Instrument

An in-depth interview guide was used to elicit the needed information on the nature of stakeholder collaboration, taking into consideration the stakeholder collaborative efforts and mechanisms for stakeholder collaboration from respondents. The preference for an in-depth interview (IDI) guide was based on the fact that IDI allows for a level of flexibility for an interviewee to answer questions in his or her manner while providing rich data (Bryman, 2015). The interview questions were worded in the English Language since the heads of various institutions are literate.

Pre-testing of Research Instrument

A pre-test of the instrument was conducted at Cape Coast in Ghana's Central Region to test the suitability of the research instrument and to clarify areas of ambiguity, complex questions and potential practical problems. Two stakeholders, the Ghana Tourism Authority and Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust, were interviewed. The regional level was selected for the pre-test because it is also managed under a public-private partnership arrangement. Data collected was analysed manually using both inductive and deductive content analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

An Interview Guide was administered to respondents after an introductory letter was shown to them and informed consent was sought. The stakeholders were interviewed at their offices and places of work after a telephone call which confirmed the day and time of the interview. The interviews were conducted at a time that was convenient for each respondent. All interviews were recorded except in an instance where a respondent refused to be recorded. In that instance, notes were taken. On average, interviews lasted about 50 minutes.

Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative research does not lend itself to the generation of quantifiable responses as in quantitative research. It was, therefore, necessary to find ways of capturing and analysing the data to ensure rigour. Data was electronically captured using a digital voice recorder and manually transcribed. A mixed method, deductive and inductive content analysis approaches was employed to analyse the data collected. Based on the suggestions by Groenewald (2004), Patton (2002) and Attride-Stirling (2001), a three-tier coding scheme was developed to extract the themes emerging from the interview data.

The first stage involved extracting the lowest-order premises evident in the text or otherwise delineating off units of meaning (basic themes). The second stage involved grouping the basic themes or clustering of the units into abstract themes (organising themes). Extractions from this level were put into the final level connecting the major and unique themes in the text as a whole (global themes).

The global themes emerging from the interview data were inductively analysed (Patton, 2002). Deductively, theories such as Hall's (2013) Typology of Governance and Mandel's (1999) Continuum of Collaborative Efforts were tested against the situations on the ground. The analysis centred on the research questions for this study. The analysis concentrated on issues, some of which were unique to the individual cases and some common to all the organisations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two key findings emerged from the study. First, it was found that there is a discernible line of authority where authority comes from the top management in the sector. Secondly, collaboration in the tourism sector is not well established.

Profile of Stakeholders in Tourism Governance

A profile of the respondents shows that nine participants have been with their institutions for a fairly long time, that is four years or more, and thus are in a position to provide credible opinions on their institutions' mandates. Five of the respondents had been at their institution for a period of up to two years. While this might mean they may not fully grasp the nuances of their institutions, their participation was still valuable because they still had first-hand knowledge and information about how the institutions performed and how they related to each other.

Table 3: Profile of Stakeholders in Tourism Governance

Stakeholders (Institution)	Designation	Number of years in the Institution
A	Director for Protocol	7
B	Chief Executive Director	1
C	Executive Director	1
D	President	5
E	President	5
F	Secretary	4
G	Deputy Executive Director (Operations)	1
H	Development Chief	6
I	Development Chief	5
J	Paramount Chief's Representative	6
K	Programs Director	5
L	Executive Director	2
M	Chief Economic Planning Officer	9
N	President Elect	-

Forms and Rationale of Stakeholder Collaboration

This research examines the form and rationale of stakeholder collaboration in relation to Hall's typology of governance (Hall, 2013). This typology identifies hierarchies, communities, markets and networks.

Hierarchies

"Governance conducted by and through vertically integrated state structures is an idealized model of democratic government and the public bureaucracy" (Pierre & Peters, 2020, p. 15), and provides the "traditional" model of state governance. The study found evidence of a hierarchical form of governance although other variants were noticeable. These responses by some participants aptly illustrate this hierarchy;

> *"It is top-down, we are not reinventing the wheel as it were. Everything we do must operate naturally through structures, so in terms of collaborations, it is difficult to operate out of the known structure (Public Sector, Participant B)".*

> *"Vertical top-down approaches (hierarchies) are used to ensure that objectives are achieved. Mostly from the ministry (Public Sector, Participant M)".*

> *"In practical, I think the top-down approach has been more overused in collaboration in the sector (Private Sector, Participant N)".*

The rationale for the predominant existence of the vertical top-down approach (hierarchies) to collaboration between stakeholders in the tourism sector of Ghana is that the vertical top-down approach used in collaboration in the sector makes things easy and simple. Heads come up with ideas and these are poured down on the people at the bottom to implement in the sector.

> *"It makes things easy and simple. You come up with the ideas, you are convinced by your ideas, you pour it down for people to implement, how much more easy can it be (Private Sector, Participant N)".*

The hierarchical form of governance is the most common type of governance in Ghana's tourism sector, according to studies. Stakeholders employ the conventional structures. This proves that there is a distinct hierarchy of power with a supreme leader. Ideas are mainly initiated by the Ministry and then transferred to the implementing bodies. The Ministry intervenes to serve as a mediator. In other words, the approach has a bureaucratic feel to it. According to Pierre and Peters (2020), a democratic government and public administration with vertically integrated state institutions is an ideal. The separation of power and authority implied by this, however, goes against the claim made by Hennerman et al. (1995) that collaboration is non-hierarchical. Collaborations are therefore viewed as non-hierarchical and transient because they permit the expression of opinions and interests. This viewpoint is also supported by Long (1997), who claims that collaboration between partners must take place at levels that have been agreed upon. The widespread use of hierarchies, or the vertical top-down method, is largely attributable to their ease of use and convenience. This is defined by the hierarchical relationships between the various levels. This makes it straightforward to come up with ideas and present them to groups in charge of implementation. This backs up Hall's (2013) claim that decisions about actual and conceptually distinct policies are made at the top and implemented at the bottom in vertical top-down systems (hierarchies). This implies that there is a clear transfer of authority between several levels.

Bottom-up approach (communities)

Also, this approach is very much influenced by communitarianism and demands for more direct citizen involvement in governance. The study found that the bottom-up approach or community as classified by Hall (2013) is used depending on what activity or project is to be implemented.

> *"It depends on what we are doing, if it is a project which is to be implemented at the community level, we apply this approach for ideas or inputs (Public Sector, Participant B)"*

Furthermore, some research participants argued for the choice of the bottom-up or community form of collaboration, with the explanation that it leads to effective implementation of activities and allows for effective results to be realized as the top-down approach has failed over the years.

> *"To ensure effective implementation of activities and for effective results to be realized. Because, when you look at the past, using the top-down approach it has failed (Private Sector, Participant K)".*

Moreover, the bottom-up technique is one form of industry governance used, albeit less frequently. Its implementation takes place at the local level and is based on the project or activity that is going on there. This makes it possible to take local perspectives into account while making decisions. This is seen in tourism planning and policy as a strategy to provide locals the freedom to make their own decisions and to directly manage the benefits that come from the development process. This outcome is consistent with Hall's (2013) typology, which calls for the immediate involvement of the local population in a specific jurisdiction. The bottom-up approach ensures successful implementation and outcomes, in contrast to the past. Also, it encourages participation from those at the bottom, creates projects, elicits ideas, builds consensus, and distributes decision-making power.

Networks

This can be seen between the Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission in the management of the Kakum National Park as well as having managerial responsibility for the visitor centre. This was built with funds from USAID and Conservation International.

> *"We operate the Kakum National Park in conjunction with the Wildlife Division of Forestry Commission with funds from USAID and Conservation International (Private Sector, Participant K)".*

More so, in terms of the rationale for the choice of networks, by entities who used it, they indicated that it facilitates the coordination of interests of parties involved and also, the allocation of resources and also enhances the efficient implementation of policies.

> *"Coordination of our interests and allocation of resources are facilitated, which also enhance the efficient implementation of policies (Private Sector, Participant K)".*

The highest-level government agency, the GTA, hardly takes part in this collaboration because of its ties to the public sector agency, the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission (WD-FC), in the Kakum National Park tourism business. This fixed and institutionalized linkage contrasts with the ad hoc and transient nature of many so-called network structures. The development of tourism has been successfully accelerated by this collaborative effort. The other side of the coin is that the decision-making process does not always consider the interests of other major stakeholders. These ad hoc network linkages place more emphasis on tourism growth than on tourism governance. Networks necessitate collaboration between the public and private sectors (Hall, 2013).

Network governance is commonly regarded as a successful strategy for ensuring the sustainability of tourism development since it incorporates the perspectives of both public and private players. Networks assist in coordinating public and private interests and resources for the growth and strategy of tourism (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Bramwell, 2005; Dredge, 2006a; Hall, 2008a; Pavlovich, 2001; Scott et al., 2008). This increases the efficiency with which policies are carried out.

Markets

Another form of collaboration also revealed by the study is the market form of collaborative governance where private individuals are allowed to operate in the sector to provide services.

> *"I am into private business, that is, a travel and tour operators union (Private Sector, Participant F)".*

Furthermore, the choice of markets by the industry is because of the belief that it is the most efficient and just allocative mechanism in the industry. One research participant opined that there is efficient outcome and also, a just allocative mechanism in the industry.

> *"It is efficient and an allocative mechanism for services to be provided to consumers (Private Sector, Participant F)".*

Another kind of governance found by the study is the market. Private individuals or investors may provide services in the sector. With this technique, the sector or state assigns significant roles to private companies or individuals (the forces of supply and demand) to deliver services, boosting self-regulation in the process. This outcome is in line with Hall's (2013) assertion that marketization and privatization give the forces of supply and demand significant roles in the economy. Self-regulation is frequently used to achieve this, which affects the growth of sustainable tourism (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1999; Hall & Williams, 2008; Jenkins, 1982; Wanhill, 1986). A successful technique of allocating resources for the provision of tourism services is thought to be the market-type of collaboration. This has to do with the function that consumers play in empowering citizens, the policy setting for economic actors where they work together to address problems of shared interest, and efficiency that yields efficient solutions. The market has come to be seen as everything that the Government is not, according to Pierre and Peters' (2020) assertion. Because it prohibits politicians from assigning resources in ways that are not the most efficient uses of them, it is considered to be the most efficient and equitable system for resource allocation.

Extent of Stakeholder Collaboration in Tourism Governance

Gray (1985) sees collaboration as the pooling together of resources by two or more stakeholders in solving a set of problems. Within this view, there is some level of collaboration within the tourism sector. However, the research findings and analysis suggest an overall low level and intensity of collaboration between institutions, in providing a measure of the nature and extent of collaborative efforts in tourism planning and development. The ensuing tables show collaborative efforts within the public-private sector, public sector and private sector, public-private sector and traditional authority respectively in line with Mandell's Continuum of Collaborative Efforts.

Table 4: Collaboration Efforts between the Public and Private Sector

Mandell's Continuum of Collaborative Efforts	Public-Private Collaboration in the Tourism Sector
Linkages or interactive contacts between two or more actors	Formal interactive contacts between Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF) (Tourism Development Fund, purchase of logistics etc.) Formal interactive contacts between Ghana Tourism Development Company (GTDC) and Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), Land Commission, etc., Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and Wildlife Society on the Amansuri Conservation, Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust (GHCT) and Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission (WD-FC) on the management of Kakum National Park etc.
Intermittent coordination of the policies and procedures of two or more actors	Non existent
Ad hoc or temporary task-force activity among actors to accomplish a purpose or purposes	Most commonly used in collaborative efforts within the tourism sector. Specific project coordination committees are usually set up which then gets dissolved at the completion of projects. Even for recurring events like International Mother's Day Tongue, Chocolate Day, Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) and Emancipation Day celebrations, etc there is no structured interactive platform. Ad hoc collaborative efforts are embarked upon once the programme is about to take place
Permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more actors through a formal arrangement to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes	Unofficial
A coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope	Non-existent
A collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint strategically interdependent action	Non-existent

The findings suggest that there is no intermittent coordination of the policies and procedures of two or more actors, unofficial permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more actors through a formal arrangement to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes, and a coalition were interdependent. Stakeholder collaboration between the private and public sectors is seen as dappled and expedient, usually centred on the

Table 5*: Collaboration Efforts within the Public Sector*

Mandell's Continuum of Collaborative Efforts	Public Collaboration in the Tourism Sector
Linkages or interactive contacts between two or more actors	Formal and informal linkages in terms of coordination which is due to the bureaucratic nature of public sector activities
Intermittent coordination of the policies and procedures of two or more actors	There is no formal coordination established since it is purely policy- based but few intermittent coordination there is relates to the implementation of polices (tourism activities).
Ad hoc or temporary task-force activity among actors to accomplish a purpose or purposes	Each institution relies on ad hoc collaborative efforts with others in order to undertake specific projects or tasks. This is the most entrenched form of collaboration within the public sector. For instance, in the rehabilitation of the Elmina and Cape Coast Castles, an ad hoc coalition of Central Region Development Commission (CEDECOM), Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) was formed with funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This coalition still works. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Bureau of Ghanaian Languages on the organization of the International Mother's Day Tongue etc.
Permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more actors through a formal arrangement to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes	Regular coordination between Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture (MOTAC), Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), Ghana Tourism Development Company (GTDC) and Hotel, Catering and Tourism Training Institute (HOTCATT) to align plans which the ministry has an oversight.
A coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope	Non-existent
A collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint strategically interdependent action	Non-existent

implementation of projects as and when the need arises.

From this, it is seen that there is a non-existent coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but purposes are narrow in scope. There is also no collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint strategically interdependent action, hence there is more improvement to be made.

Due to the bureaucracy existing in the country, it is not surprising that the public sector within the tourism sector consists of a large number of entities. The findings are similar to those found in other studies (Adu-Ampong, 2014; Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002; Timothy, 1998; Waayers et al., 2011). Related to the public-private sector collaboration, the research analysis reveals that collaboration within the public sector is mainly purposive and impromptu – informal linkages exist mostly to solve a particular problem or take advantage of an opportunity. This is due to the many constraints faced.

Table 6: Private Sector Collaboration in the Tourism Sector

Mandell's Continuum of Collaborative Efforts	Private Collaboration in the Tourism Sector
Linkages or interactive contacts between two or more stakeholders	Informal interactive contacts. For instance, between the travel and tour agents and the accommodation for provision of services to consumers
Intermittent coordination of the policies and procedures of two or more stakeholders	Non-existent
Ad hoc or temporary task-force activity to accomplish a purpose or purposes	Between Hotels (Hotel Association), car rentals, restaurants, travel and tour agents in delivery of services to tourists
Permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more stakeholders through a formal arrangement to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes	A council consisting of all heads of all 21 associations under Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF)
A coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope	Unofficial
A collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint strategically interdependent action	Non-existent

Also, from the study, there are informal interactive contacts, an unofficial coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken but where purposes are narrow in scope. Again, non-existence of a collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint strategically interdependent action. This indicates that collaboration within the private sector is bitty.

The study shows that collaboration with the traditional authorities occurs as and when there is an activity or project. These authorities opined that there is less involvement of them (traditional authority) in the administration of tourism in the sector. In general, empirical reality as perceived by the private sector actors is on many levels consistent with the literature on collaborative governance. For the most part collaborative governance is seen as a formalised, consensus-oriented and deliberate collective decision-making process (Ansell and Gash, 2008) rather than the ad hoc nature of much of the collaborative efforts in the tourism sector – an obstruction of the formalised collaborative arrangement between tourism entities.

The collaborative effort between various tourism entities in the sector does reflect the literature on collaborative governance in which the state's role is that of an initiator and an enabler. The evidence portrays a classic example of Kooiman's (2000) explanation that in contemporary socio-political governance and management, no single actor be it public or private possesses sufficient action potential to solve complex problems or take advantage of opportunities.

Table 7: Public-Private Sector and Traditional Collaboration in the Tourism Sector

Mandell's Continuum of Collaborative Efforts	Public-Private and Traditional Collaboration in the Tourism Sector
Linkages or interactive contacts between two or more stakeholders	Informal interactive contacts. As and when there is a tourism activity
Intermittent coordination of the policies and procedures of two or more stakeholders	Non-existent
Ad hoc or temporary task-force activity to accomplish a purpose or purposes	Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture, Ghana Tourism Authority and Traditional Authority on the major projects in various areas. For instance, the intended Marine Drive project, maintenance of various tourist attractions etc.
Permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more stakeholders through a formal arrangement to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes	Non-existent
A coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope.	Non-existent
A collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint strategically interdependent action	Non-existent

Thus, it focuses on its core mandates. On the whole, one cannot comprehensively answer that collaboration within the tourism sector is well-established based on the above comparison. Thus, collaboration in the tourism sector is not well established and shows much room for improvement, in line with Mandell's Continuum of Collaborative Efforts (1999).

CONCLUSION

In addition to the state sector, the private and civil sectors have become more significant actors as a result of ongoing changes in contemporary tourism planning systems. The core claim is that today's challenges and chances for growth in the tourism industry are extremely complicated, varied, and dynamic. As a result, no one institution possesses all the resources needed to seize the available opportunities or to address both current and emerging issues. To ensure that tourism contributes to economic growth, the necessity of institutional collaboration in the planning and development process has been highlighted as being crucial. It is frequently noted that collaboration is necessary due to the high levels of fragmentation in the tourism industry (Bramwell & Lane, 1999), the "new public management" initiative to increase efficiency in the public sector (Hall, 1999; Hood, 1991), and the relational interventionist model of state involvement in the economy (Rhodes, 1996: Stoker, 2006).

Despite not occurring in a systematic manner, collaboration in the planning and development of the tourism industry can be measured by aspects like the recognition of interdependence, the existence of a shared vision among stakeholders, and the joint formulation of development objectives. The growth of what Mandell (1999) refers to as networks of linkages which are more or less formalized regarding preserving common interests is fundamentally influenced by these elements.

Collaboration efforts are also significantly impacted by the institutional structure of entities associated with tourism. This study has brought to light important policy-level areas that require action. A clear understanding of the responsibilities and roles of the many players within the tourist sector is essential. Since stakeholders need to understand what is expected of them and what is expected of others, this has to be the first step in collaborative activities. A comprehensive stakeholder consultation is also required as a preliminary step in creating a formal platform for ongoing communication among stakeholders. To properly coordinate the creation and implementation of tourism policy, concerted efforts toward open communication must be made. Making tourism planning and development a collaborative effort is also necessary if tourism is to meaningfully contribute to socio-economic development. In the end, a productive planning and growth process for Ghana's tourism industry will benefit other nations.

Limitations of the study

This research has some limitations related to stakeholders identified, interview questions, time allowed for the interview process, and subjectivity. The sample size is small and does not represent the majority of stakeholders in the tourism sector in Ghana. Stakeholders spoke with passion and shared their perspectives, but may have toned their responses. The researcher strictly observed the time allotted for each question to ensure an effective interview process. Subjectivity was unavoidable as the researcher was the interviewer, author, and interpreter of the data gathered. Future studies could be on factors that constrain and facilitate collaborative governance. By looking at the crucial factors that impede and those that facilitate collaboration in tourism planning and development.

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3 MAKING HEALTHFUL FOOD CHOICES: UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION ON RESTAURANT MENU

Abednego Kofi Bansah

Abstract

Nutrition-related illnesses continue to pose challenges for healthcare providers and as such, people are encouraged to look into meal constituents, especially in the hospitality industry. This study sought university employees' general perception of nutritional information on restaurant menus. Data was purposively obtained from employees who patronized restaurants on the university campus. Descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test were used to analyze the data. Results indicated that respondents had some form of perceived knowledge of nutritional information with calories and cholesterol, reported as the most important information to be provided on menus. There was a statistically significant difference between females and male respondents with females showing a greater positive perceived nutritional knowledge than their male counterparts. University employees had a high perceived expectation of the provision of nutritional information on menus of restaurants on campus. Implications for restaurants on campus to provide nutritional information on menus that can guide healthier food choices and the University's management involvement in encouraging individuals to develop and maintain better eating habits are also discussed.

Keywords: nutrition information, restaurant menu, university employee, food choice, training

INTRODUCTION

One of the five major risk factors that have contributed to the rise of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), is nutrition-related illnesses (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2019). Nutrition-related illnesses as a result of unhealthy diets continue to pose challenges for healthcare providers (Musaige, 2011; Ng, et.al., 2011; Perk, 2017; Vorster, et al., 2011; WHO, 2017). Nutrition-related illnesses have become so pervasive that they have been likened to global warming (Narayan, Ali, & Koplan, 2010). As a result, individuals are more health conscious and more concerned with the nutritional information of what they consume (Addison-Akotoye & Amenumey, 2017). The hospitality industry has accordingly responded with restaurant menus now being more focused on nutrition-related information as compared to the traditional details on quantity, quality, price, presentation and food preparation (Thomas & Mills, 2008; Din, et al., 2012a).

In recent times, customers have raised the bar higher and are calling for a greater level of nutritional detail on the menu. Customers now expect restaurateurs to provide information on the calorie, sugar, protein, carbohydrates and fat contents on the menu (Din et al., 2012a; Din, et al., 2017). It is suggested that the availability of nutritional information on restaurant menus would aid customers in making healthier choices (Azman & Sahak, 2014; Kiszko, et. al., 2014). A between-subjects experimental design that assessed whether the inclusion of kilojoule labelling alone or accompanied by further nutrition information on menus, led adults to select less energy-dense fast food meals (Morley, et. al., 2013). This study further emphasized the importance of having disclosure of energy content on menus at restaurant chains as this policy initiative could potentially yield health benefits at a population level (Morley et al., 2013). Likewise, a study

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conducted by Wei & Miao (2013), to examine the effect of calorie information disclosure on consumers' food choices at restaurants, revealed that menu content disclosure affects consumers' food choices. This is further reported by the University of California's Center for Weight and Health in 2009 when it was revealed that:

> On an annual basis, nutritional information could reduce the average adult fast-food patron's yearly intake by 9,300 calories preventing the equivalent of 2.7 pounds of weight gained per person per year and if customers see the nutrition information, it could prevent around 40 million pounds of weight gain annually for the entire state of California. (University of California, 2009, cited in Din et al., 2012a, p. 414).

It would therefore appear that the debate about whether or not to provide nutritional information has been decisively settled in the literature. What remains contentious is the capacity of the consumers to accurately estimate the nutritional content (Burton, et al., 2009) and most importantly, whether providing nutritional information on menus promotes healthful food choices in restaurants (Ellison, et al., 2014; Musiker & Kesa, 2014; Sinclair, et al., 2014; VanEpps, et. al., 2016).

This is further reiterated by Long, et al (2015, p. 11) who are of the view that "menu calorie labelling is a relatively low-cost education strategy that may lead consumers to purchase slightly fewer calories". The literature identifies some factors which shape individual perceptions of nutritional information in restaurant menus. Gender for example has been found (Chen, et al., 2015; Din et al., 2012a; Krešić, et al., 2018) to be a major determinant with females being more likely to use such information. Two surveys that examined supermarket shoppers' views of food label nutrition information terms reported that more women wanted information on the total amount of sugar, and the amounts of added sugar, dietary fibre, salt and starch, as well as health claims, and details of irradiation status on food label as compared to men (Worsely, 1996). So far, the literature has paid disproportionate attention to the gendered differences in the utilization of nutrition information. Yet it is important to understand the wider dimensions of requesting and usage of nutritional information.

Information on the other determinants of utility is quite few and far between in the literature. This paper therefore seeks to further explore the phenomenon through the perspectives of staff of a typical university environment. The University environment provides a useful context for such a study for three reasons. First, it is one which has very high literacy rates. Secondly, the predominantly sedentary nature of work implies a possible high level of health consciousness (Addison-Akotoye & Amenumey, 2017) and finally, there are a wide variety of food choices for patrons owing to the large number of eateries and therefore, a greater likelihood of them requesting nutritional information. This study therefore sought university employees' general perception of nutritional information on restaurant menus.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nutrition in Higher Education Setting

In a study to characterize food consumption and to determine the contribution of food consumption among employees of a University, it was reported that the majority (92.8%) of the University employees select to have meals at the workplace, with food consumption at the workplace contributing about 42.6 per cent of carbohydrates, 39.4 per cent of total fat and 36.8 per cent of proteins for daily intake (Lima, et al., 2018). This study further indicated a huge amount and contribution of daily sugar (48.4 per cent) intake at the workplace (Lima, et al., 2018). In another study to examine eating behaviours, food choices, health beliefs, and attitudes of University employees, it was reported that overweight individuals were less confident in making healthful food choices and were more influenced by food choices available at on-campus dining facilities (Freedman, & Rubsinstein, 2010). This study concluded that universities need to improve on-campus access to healthful foods (Freedman, & Rubsinstein, 2010). The outcome of these studies reiterates the need for consumer awareness for a more balanced food intake.

Even though available literature suggests that providing nutritional information on a menu may help customers make healthier eating choices (Chen, et. al., 2015; Din et al., 2012a; Krieger, et.al., 2013), most of these studies were conducted in developed countries. Also, this study area does not promote a balance between physical activity and food intake, and it is easy to find and purchase a large variety of meals that lack standardization in portion sizes within the restaurants on campus. This is in part because there is a greater value placed on the quantity of food for a lower price. Furthermore, with a paucity of data in the Ghanaian restaurant contextual setting, this study examined University employees' general perception of nutritional information in the restaurant menu. It is reported that attitudes toward the amount of nutritional information and toward the credibility of its source correlated directly to the amount of nutritional information (Hwang & Lorenzen, 2008). Furthermore, the more nutritional information presented, the more helpful the information and the more credible the source (Hwang & Lorenzen, 2008). Research indicates that participants' nutrition-related and overall attitudes toward a menu item are influenced by the provision of nutritional information (Hwang & Lorenzen, 2008). According to Din et al. (2012a, p. 419), customers probably get used to these nutrients which were normally highlighted in packaged, canned food, and beverage products.

The Nutrition Knowledge Debate

The traditional challenge with nutrition and its knowledge has always been how to bridge the understanding between what nutritionists, customers and society want to know in terms of scientific needs and interests. Two surveys that examined supermarket shoppers' views of food label nutrition information terms reported a divergence between consumers' and experts' views of the usefulness of label information (Worsley, 1996). This study indicated that consumers were less interested in energy content and dietary fibre, but more interested in a variety of other constituents such as cholesterol and flavourings (Worsley, 1996). The outcome of this study emphasized the need for food product labels which more fully reflect consumers' perceptions of foods, especially information about additives and negative nutrients (Worsley, 1996). This study emphasized the need to negotiate the different perspectives of consumer groups, regulators, nutrition educators and industry personnel about label design and content (Worsley, 1996). A study that examined the relationship between knowledge and conception of University students gained from school's curriculum with their nutritional behaviour and lifestyle revealed that science students and non-science students have almost the same nutritional knowledge level and the same nutritional behaviour but science students had far better nutritional conception (Hussein, et al., 2018). In another study that determined the nutrition knowledge, attitude and food habits of college students, the authors reported that physical education students scored highest in nutrition knowledge, and business management scored lowest (Barzegari, et. al., 2011).

Factors which have been known to be vital for food behaviour include The perceived consequences of the behaviour; Attitudes and beliefs about the behaviour and the object of the behaviour (e.g. perceptions about 'value for money'); Skills like knowing how to shop and how to cook; Confidence in being able to perform the behaviour; and, The social and physical, internal and external environment (Baranowski, et al., 1999; Worsely, 2002, p. 582). While the debate on the relationship between nutrition knowledge and food behaviours will linger, that is, in terms of its association to healthy eating (Wardle, et al., 2002), socioeconomic status (Davies, 2000), gender (USDA, 2000) and difference in nutrition interest (Chew & Palmer, 1994), the understanding of what entails nutrition and nutrients, requires careful examination. Furthermore, Worsely, (2002) also bemoaned the scarcity of data reflecting a relationship between nutrition knowledge and food behaviours due to the following:

1. Poor conceptualization of nutrition knowledge
2. Lack of relevance (e.g. knowledge of cholesterol may be more relevant to 60-year-olds than to 16-year-olds).
3. Poor measurement – There is a lack of well-validated nutrition knowledge instruments, which measure knowledge that is of relevance to both consumers and nutritionists.
4. Poor matching of knowledge and outcome variables (e.g. we cannot correlate a person's knowledge of world malnutrition with their use of vitamin supplements).
5. Many studies have been slight and did not have the statistical power to detect the influence of nutrition knowledge on food behaviours (Worsely, 2002, p. 584).

Knowledge is developed and used to meet individual goals and purposes. However, the answer to whether consumers and nutritionists share the same goals remains to be seen. In a study to measure consumers' need for and attitudes toward nutritional information on menus, it was reported that the provision of nutritional information could promote eating out more often among higher-income earners and college-educated strata (Bharath & Foster, 2009).

The acquisition of knowledge helps us to explain vital aspects of the world and gives predictability to events, thus meeting the human need for cognitive consistency or predictability (Worsley, 2002). Grunert, et al (1993), provided an approach to the lifestyle concept in analysing consumer behaviour. The approach, which was cognitive-based, explained lifestyle as *a mental construct which explains, but is not identical with, actual behaviour* (Grunert, et al., 1993, p. 12). Based on modern cognitive psychology, Grunert, et al., (1993) developed a cognitive model which relates lifestyle to other cognitive categories, and also how they are related to behaviour. Grunert and colleagues (1993) proposed approach was based on the assumptions that:

> While human behaviour can be explained by a cognitive paradigm, cognitive structures consist of declarative (vital for a persons' survival of which various types of nutritional knowledge falls) and procedural knowledge (the cognitive representation of a sequence of acts, or motions, or behaviours, which is typical for a given task). Furthermore, objects in the environment become relevant to a person only to the degree to which they are related to that person's self-concept, as mirrored in its system of goals and values. This linkage can be stored as a system of associations in cognitive structure, and can then influence behaviour without becoming conscious,

> or can be formed by conscious thoughts in a problem-solving situation. The linkage can involve both procedural and declarative knowledge (p. 12-13).

The assumptions were used as a basis to define consumption-related lifestyle in a new way; as "the system of cognitive categories, scripts, and their associations, which relate a set of products to a set of values" (Grunert et al., 1993, p. 13). Grunert, et al. (1993) proposed the below application to food products by delineating relevant parts of cognitive structure, and how they contribute to linking food products to values. According to Grunert, et al. (1993), the stated areas below can be regarded as possible *elements* of food-related lifestyles, because they contribute to the link between food products and values (Figure 1).

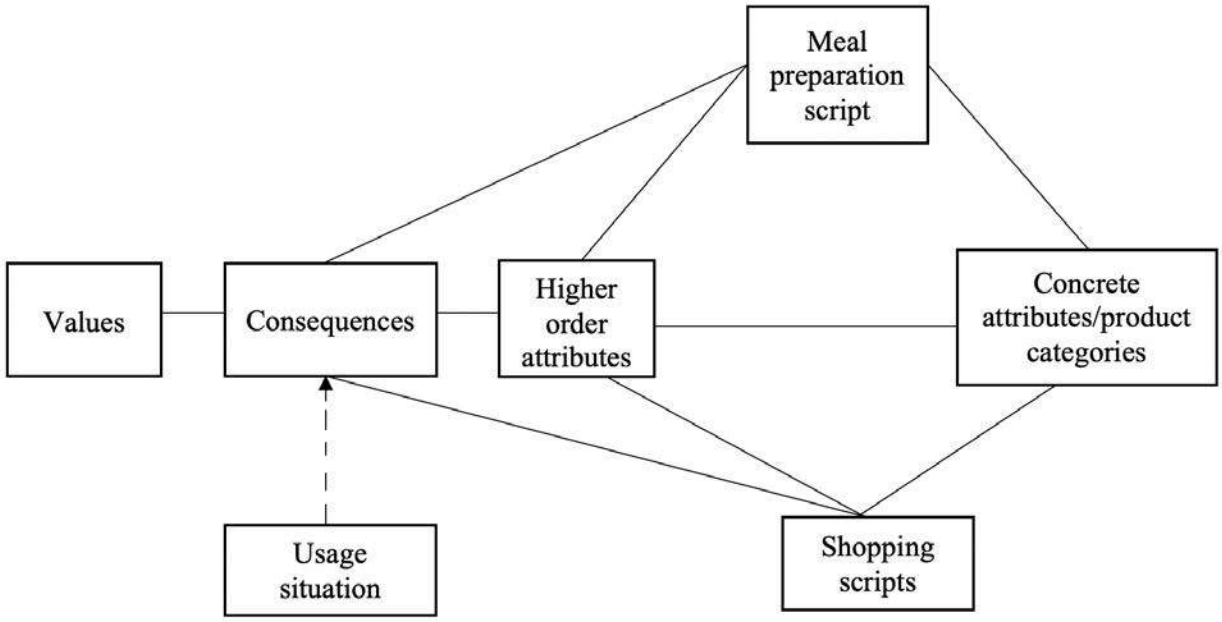

Figure 1: The Food Lifestyle Model
Source: Grunert, Brunso & Bisp (1993)

Table 1 presents the operational definition of the above elements. Within this study area, participants might have diverse values that could shape the stated elements of food-related lifestyles; however, the author is of the view that nutrition knowledge might play a pivotal role in shaping some of the elements in Figure 1 above. In that, nutrition knowledge, however its complexities might shape usage situations, desired consequences, desired higher-order product attributes and shopping scripts. While the debate on the influence of nutrition knowledge on food choices will linger, nutrition knowledge may play a pivotal role in the adoption of healthier food choices.

Table 1: Operational Definitions of the Elements

Element	Operational Definition
Shopping scripts	How do people shop for food products? Is their decision-making characterised by impulse buying, or by extensive deliberation? Do they read labels and other product information, or do they rely on the advice of experts, like friends or sales personnel? Do they shop themselves, or through other members of the family? In which shops - one-stop shopping versus speciality food shops?
Meal preparation scripts:	How are the products purchased transformed into meals? How much time is used for preparation? Is preparation characterised by efficiency, or by indulgence? Is it a social activity, or one characterised by family division of labour? To which extent does it involve technical aids? Human help? To which extent is it planned or spontaneous?
Desired higher-order product attributes	This refers not to concrete attributes of individual products, but to attributes which may apply to food products in general. Examples may be healthy, nutritious, natural, fancy, exclusive, or convenient.
Desired consequences	What is expected from a meal, and what is the relative importance of these various consequences? How important is nutrition compared to the social event? How important are emotional or feeling consequences and hedonism?
Usage situations	What are "the" meals? How are they spread over the day? Which products are typical for which meals? In which environment do they take place? Is a meal perceived differently when eaten alone, rather than with the family? With friends, guests?

Source: Grunert, et al., 1993, p.14.

METHODS

Study Design

A descriptive survey study was employed in this study. The study was conducted within one of the higher education institutions located in Ghana. The population for the study was made up of all academic (Teaching staff) and non-academic (Administrative) employees of the University. The researcher identified six (6) places on the University campus that befitted the status of a restaurant (Davis, et. al., 2009). Of the six (6), five (5) were purposively used for the study and the sixth was purposively reserved for the pilot study due to its obscured location on the Campus. The sample for this study was senior members of the University. At the time of data collection, 973 of the University's employees, were Senior Members (The University's HR Senior Members Section, 2019). Per the University's policy, an employee qualifies to be a Senior Member if the individual has attained a minimum of a master's degree or its equivalent in professional terms. Furthermore, the area of training for Senior Members was classified into science or non-sciences. Yamanes's formula was used to calculate the sample size of this study (Sarmah & Hazarika, 2012; Sarmah & Hazarika, 2013). Using the formula, an estimated sample size at a 95% confidence level was 284. However, to make room for non-response, 5% (15) of the respondents were added to the sample size of 284 to sum up to a 299-sample size. Of the anticipated 299 responses to be used for data analysis, 260 (87%) were deemed viable for analysis after data cleaning.

The study adopted the instrument used by Din et al. (2012a) whose questionnaire contained three (3) sections to address the research questions. Section A comprised four questions about demographic profile. Section B contained fifteen items (15) to assess the general perception of University employees toward providing nutritional information in the restaurant menu. Response ratings were based on a four-type Likert scale ranging from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 4, 'Strongly Agree". Section C contained eight items (8) to assess the important nutrients to be included in the restaurant menu using a scale ranging from 1 with "No Important at all "and 4 "Very Important". To create a balanced keying for both sections B and C, that is an equal number of positive and negative statements, no neutral response was added to the Likert scale (Bansah et al., 2018). Prior to data collection, approval was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researchers' institution. Also, letters were sent to all restaurants seeking approval for research data collection around the vicinity of the restaurants. With the approval of restaurant managers, research assistants were located at the entrances of the restaurants to seek information as to whether customers were employees of the University and also were Senior Members. If customers' responses were affirmative to these questions, and were willing participants survey instruments were given to them to take into the restaurant for completion. Since it took an average of fifteen (15) minutes to complete the survey, it was expected that participants will complete the survey while waiting for their food order. Completed questionnaires were returned while exiting the restaurant.

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS statistic version 25.0. was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used for analysing answers to research questions 1 and 2. An independent sample t-test was also used to answer research questions 3 and 4. Based on the four-point Likert scale, a mean score of 2.5 or above was considered a positive perception, with scores lower than 2.5 representing negative perceptions of the respondents. As is the convention, an a priori selected p-value < .05 served as the benchmark to identify statistical significance.

RESULTS

Demographic Information

Majority of the respondents were males (n = 164, 36.9%). Table 2 summarizes the rest of the demographic information.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Participant

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	96	36.9
Male	164	63.1
Area of Training		
Non-science	159	61.2
Sciences	101	38.8
Age		
20 – 25	64	24.6
26 – 30	45	17.3
31 – 35	38	14.6
36 – 40	65	25.0
41 - 45	32	12.8
46 - 50	15	5.8
Above 50	1	0.4

Perceived Utility of Nutritional Information

The overall mean score, (M = 3.04), indicated that University employees had some form of perceived knowledge of nutritional information (Table 3). The majority of the University staff perceived the provision of nutritional information as vital (M = 3.35, 75.7%) and also expected the information to be truthful (M = 3.29, 79.2%)

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics For Restaurant Menu Nutritional Information Items

Item No.	Item	n	M	% in agreement
1	Providing nutritional information in the menu is important for me (e.g., calories consumed, food groups).	260	3.35	75.7
2	I believe nutritional information helps me to determine the nutrition intake when I dine at a restaurant.	260	3.04	63.0
3	I am interested in looking for nutritional information of menu items in a restaurant	260	3.25	66.5
4	I intend to pay attention to nutritional information while choosing a menu item in a restaurant.	260	3.07	63.1
5	I could not care less whether the restaurant has nutritional information or not.	260	2.04	21.6
6	I am quite knowledgeable about nutritional information.	260	3.02	59.6
7	I feel confident about my ability to comprehend nutritional information on the menu.	260	3.26	75.3
8	I am confident in using nutritional information.	260	2.73	51.2
9	I will always be looking for nutritional information of menu items in a restaurant in future.	260	3.36	76.0
10	I would like to see additional nutritional information about menu items in a restaurant in the future.	260	3.33	78.5
11	I would not buy the product without high nutritional information in the future.	260	3.13	64.3
12	Restaurants should accurately tell nutritional information in the menu	260	3.23	80.8
13	I believe nutritional information should not be misleading.	260	3.29	79.2
14	Percentages on nutritional information could be sufficient to provide how much of a given ingredients a food product contain.	260	3.01	64.7
15	I believe it is quite costly for a restauranteur to include nutritional information in the menu.	260	2.56	49.7
	Overall Mean		**3.04**	

Participants also perceived that nutritional information could help to determine their nutritional intake (M = 3.04, 63%) as well as accurately providing nutritional information in the menu by restaurants (M= 3.23. 80.8%).

Subsequent responses to support the assertions above were further strengthened by the University employees agreeing to being interested in looking for nutritional information on menu items in a restaurant (M= 3.25, 66.5%), intention to pay attention to nutritional information while choosing a menu item in a restaurant (M = 3.07, 63.1%), and a feeling of confidence about their ability to comprehend nutritional information on the menu (M = 3.26, 75.3%). As a result, their perceived determination to always look for nutritional information about menu items in a restaurant in future (M= 3.36, 76.0%) and the expectations to see additional nutritional information about menu items in a restaurant in the future (M= 3.33, 78.5%) and, percentages on nutritional information based on given ingredients a food product contains (M = 3.01, 64.7%) were also highlighted.

Nutrition Information deemed important by participants

Information on cholesterol (M = 3.75), calories (M = 3.71), salt (M = 3.62) and dietary fibre (M = 3.42) in descending order were identified as the most important to be included in the restaurant menu (Table 4). Proteins, fat, carbohydrates and sugar all appear to be significant information perceived by the University employees to be on the restaurant menu. The overall mean score (M = 3.33) appear to suggest that, generally, University employees are of the opinion that the provision of the eight listed nutrients on the menu could be informative.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics For Important Nutrient Items on Restaurant Menu

Item No.	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	Calories	260	3.71	.562
2	Protein	260	3.00	.711
3	Fat	260	3.02	.819
4	Dietary Fiber	260	3.42	.717
5	Carbohydrates	260	3.00	.708
6	Cholesterol	260	3.75	2.603
7	Sodium	260	3.62	.599
8	Sugar	260	3.08	.749
Overall			**3.33**	

Comparison perception based on gender

Of the fifteen (15) items, thirteen (13) showed statistically significant differences between female and male University employees (Table 5). It is worth noting that, item 5 (I could not care less whether the restaurant has nutritional information or not, M = 1.73, p = .000, as compared to M = 2.22) which the female University employees responded in the negative, suggesting that females do care more than males as to whether restaurants have nutritional information on menus or not. This outcome might have contributed to females responding in the affirmative to the other 12 items that showed statistical significance between females and males.

Comparison perception based on area of training

The study found differences in perception by area of training. From Table 5 it is observed that respondents with science background had significantly different perceptions from their counterparts in the non-science fields. Ten (10) of the fifteen (15) items yielded statistical significance differences between respondents with science and non-science backgrounds (Table 6). Most notable among the items was item 5 (I could not care less whether the restaurant has nutritional information or not, M = 1.84, p = .000, as compared to M = 2.36 for non-science) which suggests that University employees with science backgrounds cared more about having nutritional information on restaurant menu compared to their on-science counterparts.

Table 5: Differences in Restaurant Menu Nutritional Information Items Reported Based on Gender

Item No.	Items	Gender[1]	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig (2-tail)
1	Providing nutritional information in the menu is important for me (e.g., calories consumed, food groups).	F M	3.56 3.23	.662 .916	3.154	.002
2	I believe nutritional information helps me to determine the nutrition intake when I dine at a restaurant.	F M	3.39 2.84	.851 1.096	4.180	.000
3	I am interested in looking for nutritional information of menu items in a restaurant	F M	3.44 3.15	.856 .954	2.464	.014
4	I intend to pay attention to nutritional information while choosing a menu item in a restaurant.	F M	3.25 2.97	.906 .923	2.281	.018
5	I could not care less whether the restaurant has nutritional information or not.	F M	1.74 2.22	.943 .839	- 4.256	.000
6	I am quite knowledgeable about nutritional information.	F M	3.36 2.87	.896 .928	4.648	.000
7	I feel confident about my ability to comprehend nutritional information on the menu.	F M	3.64 3.04	.600 .895	6.739	.000
8	I am confident in using nutritional information.	F M	2.90 2.63	1.044 1.035	2.007	.046
9	I will always be looking for nutritional information of menu items in a restaurant in future.	F M	3.83 3.08	.451 1.057	7.273	.000
10	I would like to see additional nutritional information about menu items in a restaurant in the future.	F M	3.61 3.16	.686 .942	4.088	.000
11	I would not buy the product without high nutritional information in the future.	F M	3.81 2.73	3.180 .887	4.094	.000
12	Restaurants should accurately tell nutritional information in the menu	F M	3.28 3.20	.691 .815	.807	.421
13	I believe nutritional information should not be misleading.	F M	3.45 3.20	.663 .913	2.377	.018
14	Percentages on nutritional information could be sufficient to provide how much of a given ingredients a food product contain.	F M	3.47 2.74	1.005 1.145	5.192	.000
15	I believe it is quite costly for a restauranteur to include nutritional information in the menu.	F M	2.43 2.64	1.203 1.208	- 1.375	.170

[1] = Gender. F = Female. M = Male.

Nevertheless, in terms of the ability to comprehend nutritional information, both groups of respondents shared the same views.

There was no statistical significance between the science and non-science employees as both sects of employees affirmed their confidence about their ability to comprehend nutritional information on the menu (item 7), a reflection of the expectation to always look for nutritional information on menu items in a restaurant in future (item 9), the provision of accurate nutritional information in the menu (item 12),

Table 6: Differences in Restaurant Menu Nutritional Information Items Reported Based on Area of Training

Item No.	Items	AT[1]	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig (2-tail)
1	Providing nutritional information in the menu is important for me (e.g., calories consumed, food groups).	N S	3.26 3.49	.868 .795	-2.06	.040
2	I believe nutritional information helps me to determine the nutrition intake when I dine at a restaurant.	N S	2.75 3.50	1.077 .808	-5.926	.000
3	I am interested in looking for nutritional information of menu items in a restaurant	N S	2.58 3.85	.830 .357	-9.626	.000
4	I intend to pay attention to nutritional information while choosing a menu item in a restaurant.	N S	2.58 3.85	.830 .357	- 14.574	.000
5	I could not care less whether the restaurant has nutritional information or not.	N S	2.36 1.84	1.078 .716	-4.639	.000
6	I am quite knowledgeable about nutritional information.	N S	2.64 3.62	.924 .630	-9.445	.000
7	I feel confident about my ability to comprehend nutritional information on the menu.	N S	3.22 3.33	.862 .826	.740	.460
8	I am confident in using nutritional information.	N S	2.34 3.35	.956 .864	-8.367	.000
9	I will always be looking for nutritional information of menu items in a restaurant in future.	N S	3.31 3.44	.948 .963	.170	.865
10	I would like to see additional nutritional information about menu items in a restaurant in the future.	N S	3.18 3.57	.952 .698	-3.630	.000
11	I would not buy the product without high nutritional information in the future.	N S	2.94 3.43	.880 3.198	-1.799	.073
12	Restaurants should accurately tell nutritional information in the menu	N S	3.20 3.28	.778 .763	-.773	.440
13	I believe nutritional information should not be misleading.	N S	3.25 3.35	.827 .854	-.892	.373
14	Percentages on nutritional information could be sufficient to provide how much of a given ingredients a food product contain.	N S	2.64 3.55	1.235 .666	-7.167	.000
15	I believe it is quite costly for a restauranteur to include nutritional information in the menu.	N S	2.11 3.27	1.096 1.029	-8.472	.000

[1] = Area of training N = Non-science S = Sciences

and expectation that nutritional information should not be misleading (item 13). However, University employees with science backgrounds were of the perception that it is quite costly for a restauranteur to include nutritional information in the menu (item 15, M = 3.27, p = .000) as compared to their non-science counterparts (M = 2.11).

DISCUSSION

This current study sought responses from employees of a public University with the goal of soliciting their perception on the provision of NI on restaurant menus. This study's results were generally consistent with the existing knowledge. Particularly, the finding about the utility of menu information in helping customers make healthier eating choices is similar to earlier findings by (Mhurchu, et. al, 2018; Roberto & Khandpur, 2014). Similarly, the study's finding about respondents' expectations of finding nutrition information blends with findings from earlier studies (Din et al., 2012a; Fakih, et. al., 2016).

Of the fifteen items, only two items (items 5 and 15) had a mean score below 2.60. It was not surprising that participants had negative perceptions on the statement I could not care less whether the restaurant has nutritional information or not about not (Item 5, M = 2.04). This could perhaps be due to the fact that participants were relatively highly educated. The study focused on respondents who were Senior Members. Such persons by default are holders of a minimum of a master's degree. This study's results are generally consistent with the existing knowledge about nutrition knowledge and demographic such as educational level (Bharath & Foster, 2008; Campos, et al., 2011; Walters & Long, 2012). This further suggests that restaurant outlets situated within a higher education need to consider nutritional information on menus as a significant factor while planning menus (Ambardar & Ghai, 2013). This strong support for information to be made available was reinforced by the low mean scoring for item 15 (M=2.56) which suggested that it is quite costly for a restauranteur to include nutritional information in the menu. Stated differently, respondents felt the cost was not a strong enough excuse for nutritional information to be excluded from the menu. This finding reflects Krešić, et. al's (2018) observation in a similar study. This perception is not far-fetched as prices for menu items within the restaurants in this current study area could be between $3-6 depending on a selected meal.

The relationship between perceived knowledge about nutritional information (item 6, M = 3.02) and confidence in using nutritional information (item 8, M = 2.73) was further highlighted with the participants responding in the affirmative. Even though various reasons could be cited for the paucity of data related to nutrition knowledge and food behaviour (Miller, et al., 2013; Quaidoo, et al., 2018; Wardle, et al., 2000), in a study to determine the relationship between knowledge and intake of fat, fruit and vegetables using a well-validated measure of nutrition knowledge, knowledge was significantly associated with healthy eating, and, the effect persisted after controlling for demographic variables (Wardle, et al., 2000). This study concluded by reiterating the importance of nutrition knowledge as a vital component when promoting healthy eating (Wardle et al., 2000). This assertion was further strengthened by Spronk, et al. (2014), and Noronha, et al. (2020) who are of the view that nutrition knowledge is vital and as such, recommends it for health literacy/education.

The preference of respondents on nutritional information on fat or cholesterol is supported by earlier findings (Clifford & Kozil, 2020; Din, et. al. 2012b). The mean score of 3.75 for fat-related information suggests that respondents are generally aware of fat and its deleterious effects on health. Indeed, fat-related information is foundational in nutrition and is often the first issue to be discussed by clinicians and dieticians with patients (Harvard Medical School, 2020; U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2020). Even though there was a positive perception (M = 3.71) on the importance of calories on a restaurant menu, a reported systematic review and meta-analysis that determined the effect of restaurant menu labelling on calories and nutrients chosen in laboratory and away-from-home settings indicated that menu labelling had no effect on calories, carbohydrates, fat (total and saturated), and sodium ordered and consumed away from home (Cantu-Jungles, et al., 2017). It is furthermore reported that calorie labels do not have the desired effect in reducing total calories ordered (Kiszko, et. al., 2014) even though fat, saturated fat, and trans-fat (Bharath & Foster, 2009) and sodium (Wu & Sturm, 2012) menu information are of concern to consumers.

The finding that females were more concerned with nutritional information (Table 4) resonates with the general literature (Chen, et al., 2015; Din et al., 2012a; Din et al. 2017; Krešić, et al., 2018; Krieger, et. al., 2013). Both genders, however, share the same consent on the need for accuracy (Item 13, Table 5) and the use of cost as an excuse to exclude nutritional information from the menu (Item 15, Table 5) as there was no statistical significance (p>0.05) difference with these assertions.

In relationship with the perception based on area of training, the statistical significance difference based on the cost involved for a restauranteur to include nutritional information in the menu (Item 15, Table 6) might be as a result of employees with Science background perceived knowledge of the cost implication of nutrient analysis for restauranteur. Thus, the fundamental underlying this difference in the view of the authors could be the application of procedural knowledge by the non-science participants.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to determine University employee's general perception toward nutritional information on the restaurant menu. The findings are consistent with earlier literature. Overall, findings from this study suggested that University employees had high expectations of the provision of nutritional information in the menu of restaurants on campus. Therefore, supporting the popularity of the provision of nutritional information on the menu as customers become conscious of making informed nutritional decisions. While all the nutrients were expected to be showcased on the restaurant menu, University employees placed more importance on calories, cholesterol and sodium which represented common nutrients showcased on food retail products. The outcome of this study further reiterates other studies that have reported females showing more interest in nutritional information than their male counterparts. This further strengthens the argument that females are not only particular about food but also have a keen interest in what goes into family meals. University employees with science backgrounds showed more expectancy for the provision of nutritional information on restaurant menus as compared to their non-science counterparts. With the paucity of data in this regard, this is a significant contribution to nutrition knowledge literature among University employees.

However, from a long-term perspective for these restaurants, one can purchase software that can estimate the caloric and other nutrition content of items for as little as $200 (Center for Science in the Public Interest [CSPI], 2015). Alternatively, restaurants can partner with organizations to assist in providing nutrition information through analysis of menu items (CSPI, 2015). In this case, pricing is dependent on the number of menu items, the complexity of the menu item, and the status of membership (CSPI, 2015). According to CSPI (2015), costs per menu item analysed could range from \$36–\$245, an opportunity these restaurants within the University can access at lower rates as the University can boast of two science-related Colleges.

Finally, the outcome of this study suggests that, overall, participants might have employed declarative knowledge in responding to the items. Indicating that declarative knowledge was used through the application of usage situations (types and constituents of food), desired consequences (health benefits of consumption), desired higher-order product attributes (healthy or nutrition nature of the food) and subsequent shopping scripts (seeking product information) to make informed decisions. This reiterates Grunert and Colleagues' (1993) assumption that lifestyle links products to self-relevant consequences and subjective perceptions, based on information and experience and, learned procedures concerning how to obtain, use, or dispose of products.

Implications for the Study Area

This research provides additional insight into the present body of literature on hospitality. The concept of providing nutritional information on restaurant menus within the University setting will be new to the service providers and employees, however, it is more likely to be accepted by them in the future. The effort needed to have them reach this pinnacle requires collaborative endeavours. According to Grunert et al. (1993), even though lifestyles transcend individual brands or products and may be specific to a product class, lifestyles in a way defined, change slowly and will always frame behaviour. However, any single act can always be modified at will by constructing ad hoc chains linking that act to the attainment of value(s). Managing customer needs has become an essential component of service provision over the past decade and as such restaurants within the University must begin to consider sensitizing themselves with nutritional knowledge, to complement their profit-making aim. Currently, all the restaurants within the University campus that employees patronize are solely managed by the Department associated with the restaurant. The University management does not have control of the direct management of these restaurants apart from one. For starters, it is paramount to have the University set up a Hospitality Directorate that can oversee food production and safety activities of the restaurants within the University. Upon the successful establishment of the Directorate, the initial phase of the Directorate's activity would be to embark on educating the management and staff of the restaurants on the importance of healthy eating and its impact on the productivity of the employees within the University. Soliciting resource persons within the University to aid in this endeavour should be at little or no cost to the Directorate. The second phase will entail a more collaborative approach with the Directorate working with Departments (resource persons), such as biochemistry, nutrition and dietetics, vocational and technical education and, hospitality and tourism management to help to determine and provide the nutrition content of a meal served at a restaurant. It behoves on a renowned University like the one studied to seek the well-being of its employees and as such collaboratively work with the researchers. This will go a long way in promoting the well-being of employees through access to healthy meals.

This study was conducted in a specific location cross-sectional design and as such future studies should employ multiple locations on the basis of longitudinal study. Secondly, the sample was drawn from University employees which might have been composed of a disproportionate number of highly educated respondents and as such responses might have been swayed as a result. An outcome the authors suggest might have resulted in the statistical significance differences that have been recorded between science and non-science University employees for the remaining nine (9) items.

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4 EMOTIONAL REACTIONS OF INBOUND TOURISTS TOWARDS SOUVENIRS IN CAPE COAST, GHANA

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Abstract

Souvenirs are tangible reminders of the experiences of tourists and hence an important component of the tourist product despite their centrality to tourists' experiences. Generally, there have been empirical studies on tourists' attitudes toward souvenirs. A few studies on souvenirs have concentrated on the cognitive aspect while neglecting the affective and conative components of attitudes toward souvenirs. The research used a cross-sectional survey and collected data from 387 international tourists using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The emotional reactions of tourists were measured using mean scores and standard deviations. Findings from the study revealed that respondents had positive emotions towards the souvenirs they purchased. It was recommended that Organizations like the Centre for National Culture and Aid to Artisans Ghana should periodically organize workshops and on-the-job training for local artisans to enhance their skills to help revive and inculcate extinct designs in the production of souvenirs.

Keywords: souvenirs, inbound tourists, emotional reaction, post-purchase behaviour, Cape Coast

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry offers a variety of services to create and sell travel experiences (Go & Kang, 2023). Tourism experiences are gained from the consumption of attractions, accommodation facilities, transport services, food services, entertainment, and souvenirs. Quality service delivery is key in connecting tourists and destinations through experience (Luo, Fan, & Shang, 2022; Taheri, Chalmers, Wilson, & Arshed, 2021).

These experiences are intangible and transitory which touches tourist's emotional needs. Future travel decisions in relation to destination and product are influenced by these experiences; therefore, souvenirs serve as a tangible reminder of intangible experiences (Wang, 2022). The current trend of souvenir shopping in modern society has become overly focused on materialism and consumption to the extent that, people are not just buying items for practical, everyday use nonetheless, also purchase souvenirs to remind them of their visits.

Therefore, people can be inspired to travel in the first place due to souvenir shopping which enriches the travel experience (Huang, Wang, & Yan, 2020; Amaro, Morgado Ferreira, & Henriques, 2020).

Tourism and shopping are inseparable activities for today's tourists. Shopping is one of the crucial aspects of tourism which influences travel (Cornell, Separa, & Torreon, 2022). Nonetheless, some tourists travel purposely for shopping (Lee, Hunter, & Chung, 2020) making shopping a very common tourist activity (Shoo, Mtui, Kimaro, Kinabo, Lendii, & Kideghesho, 2021; Rashid, 2020). Tourist shopping makes up a significant portion of travel expenses (Irfan, Ullah Razzaq, & Adebayo, 2023). According to Abdulsalam and Dahana (2022) and Jin and Sparks (2017), a third of tourists' total expenditure is on shopping. Parasakul (2020) also maintained that tourists' spending on souvenirs outweigh their spending on food and accommodation. Travelling experience cannot be complete without shopping activities (Sthapit, Björk, & Rasoolimanesh, 2024).

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According to researchers, a tourist destination that manages shopping experiences well can create a positive image and economic benefits (Ruiz, De la Cruz, & Vázquez, 2019). Souvenirs are used to express economic, social, and cultural values and they can transform local culture into desirable products for tourists. (Meitiana, Setiawan, Rohman, & Irawanto, 2019). Thus, distinctive souvenirs that are unique to a place can give the destination a competitive edge (Sthapit et al., 2024).

Souvenir is an important component of tourism which has generated a market for the handicrafts industry. The sale of souvenirs serves as a vital source of revenue for tourism communities especially those communities that solely depend on tourism for survival. This creates job openings in an economy (Shoo et al., 2021; Rashid, 2020) and can enhance the destination's image, sharing of experiences and patronizing and giving gifts to family and friends (Liu, & Li, 2021).

In Ghana, the concept of souvenirs revolves around art and crafts which are marketed as such. An enormous number of souvenirs can be purchased anywhere. Souvenir centres have sprung up across major attraction sites in the country like Manhyia Palace, Cape Coast Castle, Art Centre, Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, Mole National Park, Elmina Castle, and the craft market in Bolgatanga.

Cape Coast Metropolis is another hub of a variety of high-quality souvenir items in the country. Tourists can look forward to a wide range of exciting opportunities to explore indigenous handiworks, fabrics, ornaments, pieces of jewellery and antiques, including modern items. The area around the Cape Coast Castle houses many shops which specialise in souvenir products. Cape Coast metropolis is home to eclectic shopping outlets. The metropolis is a great place in Ghana to discover souvenirs, partly because tourists enjoy sightseeing, trying local cuisines and exploring the natural beauty of the area concurrently. Seashells, jewellery, and batiks are popular examples of handcrafted souvenirs. These souvenirs seem to signify the emblem of Cape Coast. Artworks (pictures), pieces of jewellery, sea shells and some souvenirs from beads are also produced in Cape Coast.

Souvenirs are seen as additional ways to improve tourists' travel and shopping experiences. souvenirs are generally connected with travel and shopping experiences as take-home mementos of the trip (Harris & Magrizos, 2023). Souvenir shopping is a very popular travel activity, yet hardly stated in most tourism discussions (Jin, Moscardo, & Murphy, 2020). People including tourists like to have physical reminders of memorable times in their lives and to be reminded of those moments. Research on tourism in Ghana included souvenirs when measuring tourists' expenditure, choice and the reasons behind patronizing souvenirs without considering the perceptions and emotional reactions of tourists toward souvenirs (Azipagrah, 2022; Kugbonu, Mensah, & Nti, 2020). There have been studies that have looked at the relationship between souvenirs and tourism. Many of these studies on souvenir consumption behaviour only look at the knowledge (cognitive) aspect of attitude, though theoretical and empirical evidence shows that attitude is formed by the interaction between cognitive, affective and conative components (Zong, Liu & Gao, 2023; Wu, Zhang, Lu, Zhang, Zhang & Cai, 2022)

Research on tourism and souvenirs has been conducted in countries like the USA (Kuhn, 2020) China (He & Timothy, 2024; Yuan, Xie, Li & Shen, 2022), and Indonesia (Suhartanto, 2018), with little focus on Ghana. These and many other studies focused on evaluating the cognitive aspect of attitude by examining retailers' knowledge of tourists' souvenir purchase behaviour while visiting the area and perceived satisfaction of shopping. The concentration has been on one aspect of attitude (cognitive) neglecting the other components (affective and conative). The study, therefore, seeks to examine international tourists' emotional reactions toward souvenirs and also analyze their post-purchase intentions of international tourists toward souvenirs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Tri-Component Attitude Model

The Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) Tri-component Attitude Model proposes that the attitude model consists of three major components when the attitude is formed: a cognitive component, an affective component and a conative component. These components are intertwined and if one changes, the other components might change or will be affected as well (Mucha, Vámosi & Totth, 2022).

The individual's opinions, understanding, and familiarity with the relevant items and their characteristics are reflected in the cognitive component of an attitude. The knowledge and information a person has about an object makes up the cognitive component. The knowledge and perceptions that a person has are those that they obtained from a blend of personal interaction with the attitude-object and information about it from diverse sources. Nguyen (2022) maintains that a person cannot have an attitude toward an object if it does not exist in the natural or social environment. Attitudes are oriented toward phenomena that are known to exist. The possibility of an attitude change is frequently determined by one's thoughts about certain things. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), A person's emotional responses to a certain object or situation are represented by the affective component. These emotional feelings influence brand preferences. When people are asked to share their feelings regarding certain phenomena or objects, this is the aspect that is mostly used. The emotional components involve the person's feeling or affection (positive, neutral or negative) about an object. Emotions arouse either approval or disapproval of an object. Varan (2020) recognizes that personality factors, motivations, and norms of society may all have an impact on these emotions.

The third component of the Tri-component Attitude model is conative. Conative recounts the person's intention or actual behavioural response toward a particular object. Conation according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) is interested in the tendency that a tourist will accept a specific action or behave in a particular way about an object (purchase or not purchase or choose an alternative object). This is the stage where the person makes a behavioural action. This is the outcome of the collaboration of a person's cognitive (beliefs) and affective components (the emotional strength of those beliefs) as they relate to the given object. The propensity to react in a particular way towards an object or activity is the behavioural component of an attitude. Customers are asked to offer an opinion about their tendency to use, purchase, or act in a particular way in the future. (Mehrolia, Alagarsamy, & Solaikutty, 2021). A sequence of choices regarding whether to purchase an item or refer other brands to friends would demonstrate an attitude's behavioural component.

This model has been criticized for the inconsistency of the behavioural component with the affective and cognitive components. Many researchers argue that the irregularity in a person's behaviour is the reason for the critique of the affective and cognitive components of the model. Again, research has found discrepancies between attitudes and behaviour. Majority of psychologists today hold that a person's attitudes and behaviour are not always consistent and may occasionally be unrelated or merely tangentially related. Although the affective, cognitive and behavioural components of an attitude have been defined unconnectedly, the tri-component model proposes that all three components must exist before it can be said that an attitude is present.

Concept of Souvenir

Memories from tourists' travel experiences remain long after they return home. The origin of the word souvenir is Middle French, where souvenir means "to remember" Sthapit et al., 2024. It refers to items that bring back memories of persons, places, and occasions, bring back the past, and then act as a connection toward the past and to the "other," enabling tourists to swoop into daily life (Kugbonu et al., 2020). Over the years, several authors have defined souvenirs in different ways which revolve around the idea of remembrance and memory contextualized to suit the environment under study.

Some authors view a souvenir as any object that brings special memories to tourists. Thus, souvenirs can be tangible or intangible based on an individual's perception (Soukhathammavong, & Park, 2019). Some authors view tangibles that communicate the intangible experience from encounters rather than intangibles as souvenirs as such, their definitions reflect only the tangible aspects of a souvenir (Kugbonu et al., 2020; Gregorash, 2018).

Ali, Mohamed, & Alakhras, (2020) noted that souvenirs can refer to the political and social dynamics of the geographical area, the setting for the manufacture of the memento, authentication, and display of items on the side of the seller.

Souvenirs are sometimes disseminated as unbranded goods sold in stores using common names. In other circumstances, artefacts are traded because of the place or attraction. Tourist who patronizes a souvenir at attraction sites may have diverse drives for travel. Moreover, souvenir prices differ from least-priced antiques to fine art, clothing or jewellery (Masset, & Decrop, 2021).

Gordon (1986) developed the initial five categorizations of souvenirs as native products (food and clothing), piece-of-the-rock (seashells and rocks), markers (T-shirts), symbolic shorthand such as a miniature of London Bridge, and pictorial image.

According to Amaro et al. (2020), the range of features that are common among sellers constitutes the souvenir product assortment. Kowalczuk, Siepmann & Adler (2021) argue that choices about product assortment are among the most crucial ones that retailers must make to support this notion. Additionally, shops must decide on the depth, breadth, and quality of the products they will carry. Customers' existing demands can be satisfied, preferences can be shaped, and purchases can be made depending on the selection and presentation Kowalczuk et al. (2021). The right selection of souvenir items can influence a visitor's decision to buy a souvenir, influence their choice of souvenirs, and ultimately satiate their desire to bring home a memento of their trip. The viability of the retail sector in tourist destinations is also crucial.

But, for this research, souvenirs shall be defined as objects available for tourists' consumption regardless of their symbolic implications that are reasonably sized and tourists can easily take back home.

Tourists' Emotional Reactions toward Souvenirs and the Destination Emotional Scale

Consumer behaviour can be best understood without undermining emotions according to studies. Emotions are considered as occurrences of deep feelings related to a particular referent and stimulate definite response behaviours (Agyeiwaah, Adam, Dayour & Badu Baiden, 2021). Consumer reactions and experiences are best defined by emotions.

According to Yi, Yung & Hiang (2022) and Shtudiner, Klein, Zwilling & Kantor (2019), tourists' desire to buy tourism and leisure products is affected by their emotions. At the post-consumption stage, the emotional reactions of tourists influence souvenir attachment, trust, commitment and loyalty (Santos, Ramos, Sousa, Almeida & Valeri, 2022).

Tourists’ emotional responses are directly linked to their post-purchase behavioural intention to either commend, repurchase or review the products positively or negatively for others. Tourists with positive emotional responses towards souvenirs have positive repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth recommendations (Balakrishnan & Dwivedi, 2021; Suhartanto, Dean, Sosianika & Suhaeni, 2018) posit that tourists who dislike souvenirs purchased or have negative emotions have an unfavourable post-purchase intention (repurchase and recommendation). However, Zhou, Liu, Hu & Cao (2023) and Zong et al. (2023) found that the post-purchase behavioural intentions were indirectly influenced by pleasant emotions, and Suhartanto et al. (2018) reported no significant association between negative emotional reactions and repurchase intentions.

Studies like Zhou et al. (2023) and Suhartanto et al. (2018) found that tourists who had positive reactions were more inclined to suggest souvenirs to their loved ones. Zhou et al. (2023) and Afshardoost & Eshaghi (2020) also found that satisfied tourists were more likely to repurchase souvenirs.

The Destination Emotion Scale (DES) was created by Hosany and Gilbert (2010) to measure the variety and intensity of tourists' emotional responses toward a phenomenon. The DES is made up of three sizes (joy, love, and positive surprise). The DES is a positive emotional scale. Tourists seek gratifying and unforgettable experiences through the consumption of tourism products (Nugraha, Setyawati, Awaloedin & Tshania, 2024; Dixit, 2020). However, some studies have shown that some products have evoked negative emotions such as sadness, depression and empathy (Karagöz, & Uysal, 2022; Moon & Han, 2019)

This study adapted Hosany and Gilbert's (2010) conceptualization of tourists' emotional responses which takes into consideration both positive and negative affect dimensions that are beneficial in understanding tourists’ emotional reactions towards souvenirs.

Post-Purchase Behaviour

Consumers' expectations for the quality of goods and their real perceived pleasure after using products have an impact on post-purchasing behaviour (Phung & Tran, 2024). To put it differently, consumers’ post-purchasing attitudes are highly influenced by the cross-interaction between products expected and actual performance. Consumer satisfaction has been linked to improved post-purchasing, higher purchase intentions, and brand loyalty. Unhappy customers, on the other hand, often exhibit behaviours like a negative public reputation, a low post-purchase, and low or no purchase intentions.

In a study conducted by Balakrishnan, & Dwivedi (2021) in Mashhad, the results indicated that international tourists will recommend souvenirs to family and friends, repurchase souvenirs any time they go back to the destination and also give great reviews about souvenirs. Jog, Gumparthi, & Jena (2024); Azmi, Zubir, Lahap, Hashim & Wahab (2022) also affirm that international tourists who like or are satisfied with souvenirs will recommend them to families and friends and repurchase them.

There is enough proof to suggest that satisfied patrons are more inclined to repeat the same decision and also to recommend to others through positive word of mouth. (Sofia, Pangaribuan, & Sitinjak, 2020; Wibowo, & Roostika, 2019). Zhou et al. (2023) found that satisfied tourists would purchase a souvenir again.

Previous studies have used three variables to operationalize post-purchase behavioural intentions namely; willingness to recommend, a desire to return, and word-of-mouth (Balakrishnan & Dwivedi, 2021 & Leri, & Theodoridis, 2019). According to Wang and Li (2022); Ramkumar and Jin (2019), tourists' emotions have a direct influence on post-purchase intentions. Sofia, et al., 2020 and Suhartanto et al. (2018) confirm that there is a relationship between positive emotional reactions and willingness to recommend; positive word of mouth (Wang & Li, 2022); repurchase intention (Slack, Singh, & Sharma, 2020).

DATA AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was carried out in the Cape Coast Metropolis in Ghana's Central Region. Due to the numerous tourist attractions and services, the city is the "hub" for tourism in the region. (Richmond & Cornelius, 2021; Kumi, 2019). Central Region also has the most variety of attractions that draw most tourists to Ghana (Imbeah, Khademi-Vidra & Bujdoso, 2020). Osei, Mensah & Amenumey, 2018) and the metropolis is also a major commercial centre which connects to other major attractions of the region. This region is located on the coast of Ghana stretching about 168 kilometers along the Atlantic Ocean. It occupies a land area of about 9,826 square kilometres and shares boundaries with the Western, Greater, Ashanti and Eastern regions with a population of 1,593,823 (GSS, 2012). Cape Coast, sometimes known as Cabo Corso, is the capital of Ghana's Central Region and a fishing town. It is located 30 kilometres south of Kakum National Park near the Gulf of Guinea, south of Ghana.

The Cape Coast Centre for National Culture, the *Oguaa Fetu Afahye*, Cape Coast Castle, shrines of Asafo companies (*pusuban*), the annual Emancipation Day celebration, and the biennial PANAFEST festival are just a few of the city's attractions. According to the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA, 2018) visitor record, the major attraction in the Cape Coast Metropolis (Cape Coast Castle) and its adjoining attractions (Kakum National Park and Elmina Castle) attracted 271,930 tourists of which 65,285 were international and 206,645 domestic. However, Kakum National Park and Elmina Castle are adjoining attractions and any tourists who visit Cape Coast are likely to visit because of their popularity. In addition to these numbers are the unknown number of tourists who visit the annual Emancipation Day celebration, Cape Coast Centre for National Culture (CNC) and the *Oguaa Fetu Afahye* in the Metropolis. This large number of tourist arrivals in the Metropolis has resulted in the high demand for souvenirs in the Metropolis.

Tourism contributes to the socio-economic life of the people of Cape Coast (Boakye, 2022). The attractions in the Metropolis have attracted souvenir shops to market and sell their merchandise to tourists. This has employed a lot of locals in the Metropolis who either own or serve as shop assistants. Tourism has helped greatly to stimulate growth in the local economy.

Research Design and Data

This study was also embedded in the quantitative approach because the researcher wanted to be isolated from the respondents. This study dealt with a large number of respondents and as such ensures representativeness and generalization of the research outcomes (Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni & Lehmann, 2018). This provides information in an unbiased manner so that researchers can use the information derived to make scientific assumptions. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design for the study. According to Płaszewski, M., Krzepkowska, Grantham, Wroński, Makaruk & Trębska (2022), cross-sectional research design allows the researcher to study current beliefs, practices and attitudes at a given point in time.

Data was primarily collected with questionnaires from respondents was the source of data for this study. The questionnaire was distributed to international tourists to Cape Coast at the time of data collection to fill out.

Target Population

Data was gathered from foreign tourists to the Cape Coast Metropolis between the period of January - March 2018. This segment is found suitable for the study because the arts and crafts in Ghana are alien to them and as such is likely to engender some emotional reaction from them. Information attained from the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB), Cape Coast office indicated that international tourists' arrivals to Cape Coast Castle stood at 2,914 between October and December 2017.

Sample size and Sampling Procedure

The size of the population being studied was unknown to the researcher, the sample size was calculated using the formula proposed by Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend (1998) for unknown population size; therefore, the sample size was derived by computing the minimum sample size required for accuracy in estimating proportions by considering the standard normal deviation set at 95% confidence level (1.96), percentage of picking a choice or response (50% = 0.5) and the confidence interval (0.05).

The formula is:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \text{ pq}}{\text{d}^2}$$

Where-:

n = the desired sample size when the population is greater than 10,000 or unknown.

z = the standard normal deviation, set at 1.96, which corresponds to 95% confidence level.

p = the proportion in the target population estimated to have similar characteristics is equal to 50%

q = 1.0 – p

d = the degree of accuracy desired, here set at 0.05 corresponding to the 1.96.

In substitution,

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0.50)(1-0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384$$

To sample the respondents, convenience sampling was used because tourists are transient respondents, it is difficult to sample and keep track of them making this method the most appropriate alternative. The researcher visited various souvenir shops and attraction sites in the Cape Coast Metropolis and administered questionnaires to international tourists who had patronized souvenirs that were readily available.

Research Instrument

A well-structured research instrument will produce accurate data from respondents over time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). With the help of a five-point Likert scale, respondents were required to tick their level of agreement with some statements on their emotional reactions. These included statements "like I feel a sense of pleasure toward the souvenir(s)", "I love the design of the souvenir(s)" and "I feel inspired by the souvenir(s)". This was to ascertain the meaning tourists attach to souvenirs, how they felt about the souvenirs they had purchased and whether they liked it or not.

The decision to employ a questionnaire was because it was more effective, accessible to the respondents, and standardized in terms of question format (Buschle, Reiter, & Bethmann, 2022). It was deemed appropriate for the study since it made it possible to quickly acquire a significant amount of data from respondents. Because they are simple to answer and facilitate data processing for researchers, closed-ended questions were employed in the questionnaire (Nardi, 2018).

Pre-testing of the instrument was conducted in Elmina as it targeted international tourists who visited Elmina Castle Elmina Castle. This exercise was important because it aided the researcher in assessing the feasibility and reliability of the research instrument. Ambiguous, double-barrelled and the instrument's incorrectly written questions were found, and the appropriate modifications were made. The pre-testing also allowed the researcher to experience first-hand the difficulties that would inevitably arise during the actual fieldwork.

Statistical Analysis

Data was edited and coded into Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 22 for analysis. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. To remove incomplete surveys, non-responses, and errors that might have compromised the validity of the findings, the field data was thoroughly edited. The data was then coded and entered into the SPSS software for analysis.

Descriptive statistics was employed and data was presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistical measures like the independent sample T-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to explore the variations in socio-demographic characteristics and their emotional reactions toward Ghanaian souvenirs.

Ethical Consideration

Approval was obtained from the management of hospitality and tourism-related facilities to talk to their clients. Participants were not coerced to take part in the study and they were free to withdraw from the study at any point. Respondents' consent to participate in the study was sought before responding to the survey. Ample information regarding the study was supplied, which aided respondents in making their participation decisions. Again, participants' anonymity was highly ensured. As a result, the identities of respondents were kept away from the study. Employing questionnaires ensured respondents' anonymity because identities and other identifiable data were not connected to the individual answers provided. The study conformed to confidentiality. The confidentiality of any information provided was assured to the respondents. They received assurance that the information would be used by the researcher only for the study and that people who were not related to this study would not have access to it for any other purpose or reason. Appropriate guidelines were put in place to preserve the rights of each and every participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and gives a picture of their background. This study consisted of 64.3% females and 35.7% males. This shows that there were more females in the study than males. This result is in line with other studies in Ghana which also found that Ghana as a destination is mostly patronized by females (Agyeman & Antwi-Bosiako, 2022).

The educational level of respondents is one characteristic of the essential that influences inbound tourists' attitudes towards souvenirs (Allaberganov & Preko, 2022). More than half of the respondents (59.2%) had attained a university or college education, postgraduate education (22.5%) and High School qualification (18.3%). This infers that the population understudy had received some level of formal education.

Marital status has the potential to influence tourists' attitudes toward souvenirs. The majority (78.8%) of the respondents were single while 21.2 percent were married. The majority of the responders were young between the ages of 18 and 30, which may have contributed to this outcome.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=387)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	138	35.7
Female	249	64.3
Level of Education		
High school	71	18.3
University/college	229	59.2
Post graduate	87	22.5
Marital Status		
Single	305	78.8
Married	82	21.2
Age (years)		
<21	77	19.9
21-30	197	50.9
31-40	69	17.8
41-50	23	5.9
>50	21	5.4
Religion		
Christian	202	52.2
Islam	8	2.1
Atheist	140	36.2
Hindu	10	2.6
Traditionalist	27	7.0
Continent of origin		
North America	122	31.5
Europe	236	61.0
Africa	6	1.6
Australia	23	5.9
Occupational status		
Employed	230	59.4
Unemployed	157	40.6
Annual income (USD)		
<20,000	143	41.1
20,000-39,999	92	26.4
40,000-59,999	44	12.6
60,000+	69	19.8

This conclusion could also be attributed to the availability of discretionary time as well as the fact that this group is less responsible for household tasks than married people.

Age is an essential variable that influences a person's desires, aspirations, perceptions, and attitudes toward various subjects (Gadzali, 2023). With specific reference to tourists' attitudes toward souvenirs, age is a key factor that influences a person's perception as mentioned. In terms of age distribution, it was found that the sample was mostly youthful with over half of the respondents (50.9%) falling within 21-30 years. The lowest percentage was 5.4 percent representing tourists who were above 50 years. This result supports the assertion that youthful tourists between 18 to 35 years dominate international tourists' arrival in Ghana (Agyeiwaah, Pratt, Iaquinto & Suntikul, 2023; Agyeman & Antwi-Bosiako, 2022).

Respondents who professed Christianity dominated the sample with 202 responses representing 52.2 percent. Atheists, traditionalists and Hindus constituted 36.2%, 7.0% and 2.6% respectively with Islam accounting for 2.1%.

In terms of continent of origin, a number of respondents (61.0%) were from Europe with Africans forming the least number of respondents (1.6%). This finding is consistent with the findings of Agyeiwaa et al. (2022) that foreign tourists' arrival in Ghana is dominated by Europeans. These figures are also consistent with the Ghana Tourism Authority's (2023) report on the country's yearly incoming visitor numbers. The statement expressed by Amelung, Martens, Rotmans, and Rothman (2021) that Africans rarely travel for tourism-related activities is supported by the fact that the African continent makes up the lowest percentage of the flow.

This study reveals that 59.4% of respondents were employed while the remaining 40.6% were unemployed. Tourists' level of income influences their attitudes towards souvenirs. Less than half (41.1%) of the respondents earned less than US$20,000. The lowest percentage was 19.8 representing those who earned above US$60,000. It can be assumed that tourists who visited Ghana during the study period were economically viable and were likely to purchase more souvenirs.

The evidence from Table 2 suggests that Love and Positive surprise emotions mostly influenced international tourists' purchase intention (mean = 2.43 each) with the least emotion being Joy (mean = 2.20). A review of the responses from the individual items under the Love domain indicates that feeling warm-hearted toward souvenirs (mean = 2.48) was the most influential emotion. This was followed by loving the design of the souvenir (mean = 1.97). However, international tourists were neutral about feeling tender toward souvenirs purchased (mean = 2.52). This is similar to the works by Ahuvia, Izberk-Bilgin, and Lee (2022) and Junaid, Hou, Hussain, and Kirmani (2019) which stated that tourists develop a sense of love towards souvenirs.

In relation to the Positive Surprise, the most agreed upon emotion amongst the international tourists was feeling amazed (mean = 2.45), the next most agreed emotion was feeling inspired by souvenirs (mean = 2.40) and the least was feeling fascinated (mean = 2.38). Under the Joy construct, the most approved emotion was feeling delighted (mean = 2.24), followed by feeling cheerful (mean = 2.19). the least agreed emotion that influenced souvenir purchase was feeling pleased (mean = 2.18). This result is similar to the findings of Deng, Lu, Lin and Chen, (2021) that international tourists exhibit joyful emotions towards souvenirs. The implication of these findings could be attributed to the fact that most of the participants were first-time visitors and Ghanaian souvenirs could have been alien to them hence seeing them for the first time, tourists felt positive emotions (were delighted, loved the design and were amazed) towards the souvenirs they purchased.

Table 2: Emotional Reactions of International Tourists towards Ghanaian Souvenirs (N= 387)

Variables	A	N	D	M	Std. D	Cronbach alpha
Joy (overall)	71.6	22.2	6.2	2.20	0.80	0.92
The souvenir(s) arouse(s) a sense of pleasure in me	70.8	23.0	6.2	2.18	0.81	
The souvenir(s) make(s) me cheerful	71.3	22.2	6.5	2.19	0.83	
The souvenir(s) delight(s) me	68.0	24.5	7.5	2.24	0.84	
Love (Overall)	55.0	35.7	9.3	2.43	0.89	0.86
I love the design of the souvenir(s)	76.0	18.6	5.4	1.97	0.91	
I feel a sense of tenderness toward the souvenir(s)	47.5	41.1	11.4	2.52	0.93	
I feel warm-hearted toward the souvenir(s)	52.7	36.7	10.6	2.48	0.90	
Positive surprise (Overall)	57.4	30.2	12.4	2.43	0.91	0.91
The souvenir(s) fascinate(s) me	60.2	28.2	11.6	2.38	0.92	
The souvenir(s) inspire(s) me	58.7	28.2	13.2	2.40	0.93	
The souvenir(s) amaze(s) me	55.0	32.3	12.7	2.45	0.91	

Scale:10-1.49 = strongly agree, 1.50-2.49 = agree, 2.50-3.49 = neutral, 3.50-4.49 = disagree, 4.50-5.0 = strongly disagree

Post-Purchase Intentions towards Souvenirs

Evidence from Table 3 suggests that international tourists who purchased Ghanaian souvenirs during the study period had positive post-purchase intentions towards the souvenirs with a mean of M= 1.89 representing 82% as against 18% of respondents having negative post-purchase intentions.

A review of the individual items under the post-purchase intention specifies that international tourists will say positive things about souvenirs in Ghana to their families and friends (mean = 1.17), buy souvenirs in future when they revisit Ghana (mean = 1.95) and will recommend souvenirs in Ghana to their families and friends (mean = 1.92). This study confirms the work conducted by Balakrishnan, & Dwivedi, (2021) in Mashhad which indicated that international tourists will introduce souvenirs to their families and social networks, repurchase souvenirs anytime they visit again and also spread positive word of mouth about souvenirs to family and friends. Azmi et al., (2022) also posit that international tourists will recommend, say positive things (word of mouth) and repurchase souvenirs. With an overall score of 82 % positive behavioural intentions towards Ghanaian souvenirs, it can be assumed that the art and craft industry in Ghana is assured of a favourable post-purchase intention which is good for business and sustainable economic yields.

Table 3: Post-Purchase Intentions towards Souvenirs found in Ghana (N= 387)

Variables	L	U	M	Std. D	Cronbach alpha
Post- purchase intentions (Overall)	82.2	17.8	1.89	0.85	0.87
I will say positive things about Ghanaian souvenirs to my family and Friends	85.0	15.0	1.79	0.85	
I will buy Ghanaian souvenirs in future when I revisit Cape Coast.	77.3	22.7	1.95	0.90	
I will recommend Ghanaian souvenirs to my family and friends.	79.3	20.7	1.92	0.86	

Scale:1.0-1.49 = most likely, 1.50-2.49 = likely, 2.50-3.49 = unlikely, 3.50-4.0 = most unlikely.
L=Likely, U=Unlikely, M=Mean

Emotional Reactions and Post-Purchase Intentions

In this section, the relationship between emotional reactions and post-purchase behavioural intentions were explored. It has been established in the literature that there is a significant relationship between positive emotional reactions and post-purchase behavioural intentions (Santos et al., 2022; Balakrishnan & Dwivedi, 2021). To verify this assertion, the Chi-Square Test of Independence was employed as shown in Table 4.

Evidence from Table 4 reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship between the joy emotions and post-purchase behavioural intentions towards Ghanaian souvenirs (χ^2= 67.313; P= 0.000). The results further show that 89.5% of the respondents who agreed to have joyful emotions towards souvenirs had positive post-purchase behavioural intentions while 10.5% did not. Among the respondents who were uncertain, 74.4% had positive post-purchase behavioural intentions while 25.6% had negative post-purchase intentions. Again 25% of respondents who disagreed to having joyful emotions were likely to recommend, say positive things and or repurchase souvenirs in future. This implies that as tourists express joyful emotions toward souvenirs, their post-purchase behavioural intentions in relation to spreading positive word of mouth, recommending to families and friends and repurchasing in future will be positive.

Additionally, Table 4 suggests a significant relationship between love emotions and post-purchase intentions towards souvenirs (χ^2= 72.414; P= 0.000). The majority (88.3%) of respondents who agreed that they loved the souvenirs they purchased during the study period had positive post-purchase behavioural intentions. A little above 86% of those who were ambivalent about love emotions had positive post-purchase intentions while 13.8% had negative post-purchase behavioural intentions. Moreover, among respondents who disagreed to loving Ghanaian souvenirs, 30.6% had positive post-purchase behavioural intentions however, 69.4% had negative post-purchase intentions. This suggests that as tourists agree to have love emotions towards souvenirs, they will recommend, spread positive word of mouth to families and friends and repurchase souvenirs in future.

Table 4: Relationship between Emotional Reactions and Post-Purchase Behavioural Intentions.

	Post-purchase behavioural intentions		χ^2 Value	P-value (P≤0.05)
Emotional reactions	Likely (%)	Unlikely (%)		
Joy (Overall)	82.2	17.8	67.313	0.000**
Agree	89.5	10.5		
Neutral	74.4	25.6		
Disagree	25	75		
Love (Overall)	82.2	17.8	72.414	0.000**
Agree	88.3	11.7		
Neutral	86.2	13.8		
Disagree	30.6	69.4		
Positive surprise (Overall)	82.2	17.8	40.489	0.000**
Agree	88.7	11.3		
Neutral	82.9	17.1		
Disagree	50	50		

*Significant difference exists at p≤0.05; ** Significant difference exists at p≤0.01

Regarding positive surprise emotions, Table 4 shows a significant relationship with post-purchase intentions towards Ghanaian souvenirs with (χ^2= 40.489; P= 0.000). The results further indicate that 88.7% of respondents who agreed to have positive surprise emotions toward the souvenirs they purchased had positive post-purchase behavioural intentions like recommending to family and friends and saying good things about souvenirs but 11.3% had negative post-purchase intentions. It also shows that 82.9% of respondents, who were uncertain about having a positive surprise agreed that they would recommend, say positive things and repurchase Ghanaian souvenirs. Lastly, half (50%) of respondents who disagreed to having positive surprise emotions had positive post-purchase behavioural intentions. This is an indication that as tourists agree to have positive surprise emotions, they will recommend and spread positive word of mouth to families and friends and also repurchase anytime they revisit Ghana.

The result from Table 4 suggests that international tourists who had positive emotional reactions (joy, love and positive surprise emotions) towards Ghanaian souvenirs were likely to say positive things about the souvenirs to families and friends, repurchase in future and recommend them to families and friends. This confirms the work of Zhou et al. (2023) which revealed a statistically significant association between joy, love and positive surprise emotions and post-purchase behavioural intentions. This finding is also consistent with the study by Azmi et al. (2022) and Suhartanto et al. (2018) that tourists who liked and had positive emotions towards souvenirs will recommend, say positive things (positive word of mouth) and repurchase. The findings from this study confirm previous studies that tourists with positive emotional reactions were more likely to recommend souvenirs to families and friends. Word of mouth is not only free, but it is the most resourceful form of marketing and promotion of souvenirs (Leri, & Theodoridis, 2019). Balakrishnan & Dwivedi (2021) and Zhou et al. (2023) also found that satisfied tourists were more likely to repurchase souvenirs.

Also based on the conceptual framework that underpinned this study coupled with other empirical findings, the variations of post-purchase intentions across the emotional international tourists were explored. The results buttressed the conceptual framework in the sense that significant differences were observed in post-purchase intentions across emotional reaction variables. Other studies submitted that tourists with positive emotions about souvenirs are likely to make the identical choice again and also bring in innovative business through positive word of mouth (Sofia et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2018).

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis presented above, it is concluded that international tourists had a favourable attitude towards souvenirs; they loved the souvenirs and were joyful and pleasantly surprised by the souvenirs they purchased in Cape Coast, Ghana. Also, the decision to recommend, say positive things and repurchase Ghanaian souvenirs was found to be dependent on the tourist's emotional reactions towards them. Lastly, it could be deduced from the results of the study that international tourists will continue patronize souvenirs in Ghana and have positive post-purchase behavioural intentions towards them.

Theoretical Implications

This research adds to knowledge and concepts on the attitude of tourists toward souvenirs at tourist destinations. There are inadequate studies on souvenirs in Ghana. This study also contributes to knowledge on the inbound tourists' source of information about souvenirs, their feelings towards souvenirs and the repurchase intention of tourists at destinations. Because not much work has been done on souvenirs in Ghana, this study might be used as a foundation for other scholars to build upon and as a resource for future researchers. the attitude of international tourists towards souvenirs at destinations.

Practical Implications

The findings of this research are projected to offer valuable insights to tourism practitioners, government, and academic researchers concerning decision-making in tourism and the marketing of cultural products (souvenirs) produced at the destination. This has become practically important given the tangible nature of souvenirs and the travel restrictions introduced as a result of the emergence of COVID-19.

Also, it has valuable information for producers of souvenirs (artisans) to modify their work to include features that would meet tourists' needs and specifications that would influence their spending on souvenirs whilst considering its safety and ease of traveling with, during this pandemic era. The information would also guide producers to tailor products to suit tourists' desires to enhance satisfaction and help predict tourists' future course of action concerning the repurchase of souvenirs at destinations.

Lastly, this study provides information that would enhance vendors' and management's understanding of tourists' souvenir consumption behaviour which would guide in market segmentation. Tourists can be segmented based on their preference for souvenirs, motives and factors that attract them to purchase souvenirs. Tourists would be well served when they are segmented as their needs can be recognized and well met. This may influence how a product is best positioned and how producers can encourage increased consumption by understanding the "how and why" of demand for souvenirs.

Recommendations

It is recommended that there should be a collaboration between the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), the local artisans and shop owners to advertise local souvenirs to the outside world via GTA's website, Facebook and other social media platforms to help promote local souvenirs, which will give potential tourists information about local souvenirs and what to expect in Ghana.

It is important that the GTA in partnership with the Centre for National Culture (CNC) should educate locals in Ghana, such as souvenir vendors and tour guides on the symbolic and cultural meanings of souvenirs. The training will help in providing the right information on souvenirs and enable tourists to better appreciate the souvenirs they purchase and or intend to buy.

Producers, retailers and vendors should have adequate knowledge on the emotional reactions of tourists toward the souvenirs they sell. This can be done by engaging more with tourists to understand how they feel about the souvenirs they buy. This will in the long run enable artisans and vendors to produce and sell souvenirs that meet tourists' emotional needs.

Producers of souvenirs (artisans) should be creative and innovative to produce a wide range of diverse souvenirs without compromising on authenticity and quality. Organizations like the Centre for National Culture (CNC) and Aid to Artisans, Ghana should periodically organize workshops and on-the-job training for local artisan to enhance their skills. GTA in collaboration with local artisans should consult traditional leaders like chiefs to help revive and indoctrinate extinct designs in the production of souvenirs. These designs will best depict Ghanaian culture and values.

Producers should endorse their products (souvenirs) as a prove of a brand or an original product not compromising on the packaging. Packaging these souvenirs to meet international standard makes them more appealing to these tourists hence marginal income to these artisans.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

Future research at the destination could focus on a section of international tourists like the backpackers relatively to concentrating on conventional international tourists or inclusion of domestic tourists would not limit the universality of results. As such future studies may consider the perspective of local tourists. A comparative study on both domestic and foreign tourists could be used to draw comparisons between this segment and the domestic tourists in order to further the literature.

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5 INNOVATIVE UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN HOTELS: PERSPECTIVES OF MANAGERS OF STAR-RATED HOTELS IN THE KUMASI METROPOLITAN AREA

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Abstract

Even though information and communication technology provide an important role in hotel service and aid service efficacy in customer satisfaction, little literature exists on it in the study area. The study assessed managers' perception of innovative utilization of ICT in star-rated hotels in the Kumasi metropolitan area. Emphasis was laid on the relevance and reasons for the innovative use of ICT in hotels. A qualitative approach was adopted for the study and 50 hotel managers were sampled. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data solicited. Results of the study established that managers were of the view that the innovative use of ICT in hotel service was relevant and reasons for which the hotels have innovatively used ICT in their service delivery were achieved. However, the innovative use of ICT in hotels may create problems such as high cost of initial investment, cost of training employees and poor employer-employee relations. The study discovered that the hotels have made good use of ICT innovatively to sustain their business. The study unearthed that hotels must be abreast with ICT use as it has become a tool for attracting guests to hotels.

Keywords: innovative, utilisation, ICT, hotel manager, star-rated hotels, Kumasi.

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) according to Adebisi and Adekola (2016), is perceived as a term that encompasses all communication devices such as mobile phones, televisions, satellite systems, radio, computer software and hardware. Agboh, (2015) was of the view that ICT is a term that encompasses all communication devices such as mobile phones, televisions, radio, computer software and hardware, satellite systems, handheld devices as well as wired or wireless internet. In the view of Deo and Farik, (2016), ICT constitutes software such as enterprise software, spreadsheet, data and security as well as network security.

The influx of ICT has turned the world into a global community. The use of ICT has become a great global imperative due to its contribution to human development and enhanced socio-economic development (Mokaya, 2012). ICT has emerged as one of the most important instruments that influence businesses in various sectors for which hotels are not exceptional (Alotaibi & Khan, 2022; Gulbahar & Yildirim, 2015). This notwithstanding, hotels have adopted different forms of ICTs that include; Wi-Fi, digital conference facilities, mobile communication, fax machines and voice mail (Akaba, 2015; Adebayoo, Balogun & Kareem, 2013; Kiveu & Ofafa, 2013). Others include in-room modems, robots, interactive websites and Automated Teller Machines (ATM) Claridades, (2020). The innovative utilization of ICT has gained success in the hotel industry since ICT is used to manage human resources which includes organizing databases, communication, training, developing reward programs and getting customers informed of services rendered by hotels (Law, et.al, 2014; Chahal & Kumar, 2014; Kim, et. al., 2008). The various forms of ICT innovated by hotels

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facilitate competitive advantage, improved productivity, enhanced financial performance, and guest service expansion (Collins & Cobanoglu, 2008).

In Ghana, the intense competition among hotels has compelled managers to use ICT innovatively since the success of a hotel's business depends on its ability to acquire and utilise current and updated information to assist its management and marketing processes (Asabere, et al., 2014). ICT has become a strategic tool for business development in the hotel industry (Ansah, et al., 2012; Petre, et al., 2012). Globally, hotel managers have become expectant of ICT for enhanced customer service and operations (Law, et al., 2014). Notable studies on the innovative use of ICT in the hospitality industry in Sub-Sahara Africa include: (Mwai, 2016; Nkosana, et al., 2016; Mupfiga, 2015; Salim, et al., 2013). Some studies carried out in Ghana include Akaba (2015), Asabere, et al. (2014), Quarshie (2013), Quarshie and Amenumey (2018) and Ansah et al. (2012). However, all these studies paid little attention to managers' perceptions of the innovative use of ICT in hotels. Meanwhile, managers are the major stakeholders that influence the innovative use of ICT in hotels. This study therefore sought to assess managers' perceptions of the innovative use of ICT in hotels. Specifically, the study analyzes managers' perceptions of the relevance of ICTs in hotel service delivery and assesses their reasons for the use of ICT in hotel service delivery.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Review

Technology acceptance model (TAM)

The TAM measures individuals' and organizations' behavioural intentions to adopt and use any form of ICT. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) unveiled that measuring the actual system is difficult hence, behavioural intentions emphasize the prediction of the actual use of an ICT. It could be deduced that behavioural intention is influenced by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Luarns &Lin, 2005) Again, Venkatesh & Davis (2000) opined that perceived usefulness contributes to how ICT increases the efficiency of a person's work process whereas perceived ease of use describes the extent to which an ICT is used with less effort by an individual. These variables are linked by external variables like system design features, user characteristics, task characteristics and training and demonstration (Mun & Hwang, 2003).

The study adopted the Theoretical Extension of TAM 2 propounded by Venkatesh and Davis (2000) due to the fact that it took into consideration the three domains of learning. These domains comprise the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. A cognitive domain talks about how an individual thinks, understands, analyses, synthesizes and evaluates an adopted information technology (Greenhalgh et al., 2017). Also, the individual can critique and give a conclusion on how well an adopted ICT can aid the execution of functions within an organization (Fitzgerald, et al.,2014). These variables can be equated to objective one of the study. The affective embraces attitudes, motivation, intentions and in general terms, willingness to accept a behaviour (Yazdanpanah, & Forouzani, 2015). These variables when related to the use of ICT focus on the individuals' attitude and intention to adopt and use an ICT and these ICTs are used to achieve the purpose for which they have been adopted. This can well be equated to the second objective of the study. Lastly, the psychomotor domain talks about the individual's ability to manipulate the ICT system with his or her skills (Hoque, 2016). It focuses on performing a sequence of activities by different means of using ICT in an organization and this is related to usage behaviour (Ramalingam, et al., 2014).

TAM 2 has been adopted in many studies which continuously focus on substantial aspects of the variance in usage intentions and a variety of ICT (Sharifzadeh, et al., 2017). More so, the direct effect of subjective norms and behavioural intention yielded mixed results in the past (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

The study is also based on the technology, Organization and Environment (TOE) Framework propounded by Tornatzky et al. (1990). The theoretical framework emphasizes three aspects of an organizations perspective that influence its adoption of ICT. These main aspects are the technological factors, Organizational factors and environmental factors. Technological factors comprise system quality, availability of infrastructure, types of technology, power supply, and internet connectivity. Organizational factors on the other hand include type of hotel, size of hotel, organizational structure, category of employees, stakeholders and management support whilst environmental factors involve competitors, suppliers, and government regulations such as taxes, interest rate, change in government, change in government policies and inflation. (Farmaki, 2019; Viscusi et al., 2018)

Forms of ICT Used by Hotels

Hotels use different forms of ICT in their service delivery. The choice of these ICTs depends on the hotel policy and the kind of services rendered to customers. The literature revealed that automated teller machines, smart cards, information processing systems and the internet are some forms of ICT used by hotels (Leung, 2019; Sharma, & Gupta, 2021). Bayram (2020). Postulated that the commonest forms of ICT used by hotels include, software application, computers, internet, e-mail, printers and websites. Neuhofer, et. al. (2015) in their study indicated that property management systems were used purposely for financial modelling. Akaba (2015) in a related study opined that hotels use e-mail, websites and social media. Ayeh et al. (2012) on the other hand established from their study that hotels used telephone lines, fax machines, scanners, printers, photocopiers and computers. Others include websites, internet and software applications. Issahaku (2012) wrote on the adoption of e-business and stipulated that only 23 hotels adopted and used active websites in Ghana.

Managers' Perception of the Relevance of the Innovative Use of ICT in Hotel Service Delivery

The relevance of ICT is the significant role it plays in the execution of tasks within the hotel sector. Studies have revealed that ICT adds to the guest experience (Buhalis et al, 2017). Also, Nwakannna et al. (2014) argued that innovative use of ICT by hotels must enable the delivery of enjoyable and stress-free experiences as this to an extent will be the most relevant aspect of a business guest's experience in the innovative use of ICT while lodging in a hotel. In addition, using ICT innovatively influences the hotel guest's overall satisfaction and perceived quality of service experience (Lemy et. al., 2019). One study found that ICT gives both employees and guests real-life world experience hence the possibility of revisiting (Goh & Sigala, 2020). ICT fundamentally affects the management of hotels and the overall guest experience (Mandi & Garbin Pranicevi, 2019) especially when it is used innovatively.

Reasons for Innovative Use of ICT in Hotel Service Delivery

Some studies have investigated the reasons why hotels adopt ICT tools in their service delivery and came out with varying views. Law et al. (2014) stated that ICTs are adopted in hotels to enhance strategic management, communication, collaboration and access to information. They further opined that hotels innovatively use ICTs to facilitate decision-making, data management as well as knowledge management. Teferi (2021) also posits that hotels use ICT because it serves as a powerful strategic and tactical tool which aids in the promotion and strengthening of competitive advantage. In contrast, Lee et al. (2021) argued that most hotels innovatively use ICT purposely to enhance service quality, as ICTs enable hotels to cut costs and increase capabilities by assisting them in shaping inter-organizational coordination.

Hotels innovatively use ICT to replace paper (manual) work, to improve customer service and to ensure other functions within the hotel are executed effectively (Lee & Singh, 2016; Li et al., 2019). In addition, Nwakanma et al. (2014) revealed that hotels innovatively use ICT tools to protect guests. Buick (2003) in his study stated that cameras assist in improving security measures in hotels. Further, the findings of Nwakanma (2014) put across that, hotels use ICT tools innovatively to push slower activities which do not move very fast thereby providing better service, improved decision making and increased revenue.

In the Ghanaian context, the results of a study by Akaba (2015), pointed out that, hotels innovatively use ICTs for marketing strategies, enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, customized service and effective competition with their competitors. Mokhtarian, et.al. (2017) discovered from their study that hotels adopt ICTs for information gathering, handling correspondence, storage, communication, advertisement as well as buying and selling. Also, Chevers and Spencer (2017) emphasized that hotels have used ICT innovatively to improve operation efficiency and enhance customer satisfaction. The study established that hotels use the Internet specifically to market their goods and services, receive reservations, and evaluate customer complaints and suggestions. Ansah, et al. (2012) in a related study found that hotels use ICT innovatively as a means of sharing information across chain hotels. They further put across that, computers were used by hotels purposely for typing documents, keeping and retrieving information as well as sending and receiving information.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The study area for this research was Kumasi Metropolitan area in Ghana. Kumasi is located in the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Saliu, 2016). The Metropolitan area shares boundaries with Atwima District, Kwabre East District and Ejisu-Juaben Municipality (Rufai, 2014).

An imaginary triangle of the Kumasi, Cape Coast and Accra which are the three points of intersection is described as the Tourism Triangle in Ghana (Boakye, 2010). Kumasi is one of the most industrialized cities with many tourist attractions. It is a hub of heritage and culture some of which are; the Kumasi. Zoological Gardens, Komfo Anokye Sword Site, Manhyia Palace, Kejetia Market, Centre for National Cultural and Armed Forces Museum (Adam, 2012). The Kumasi Metropolis has 57 star-rated hotels (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2015). The number of star-rated hotels is depicted in Table 1.

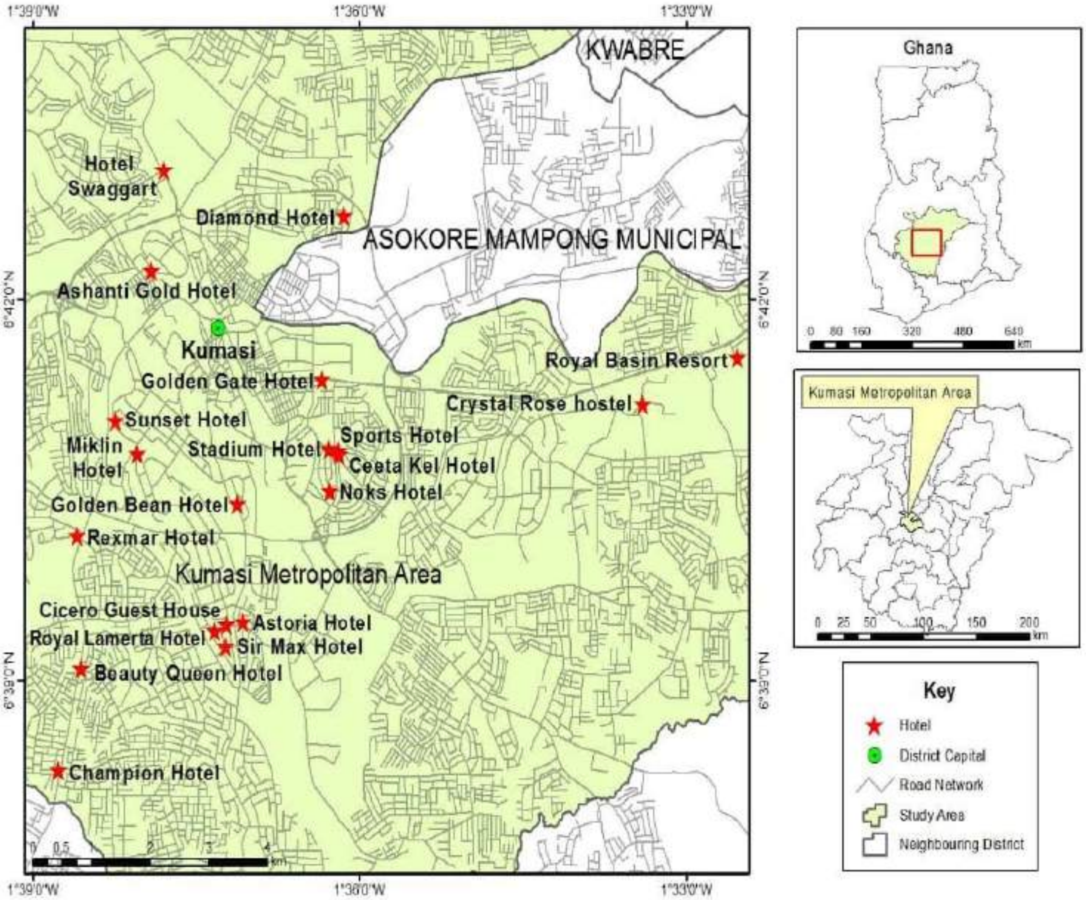

Figure 1: Map Showing Star-rated Hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis.

Source: Cartographic Unit of University of Cape Coast, (2019).

Table 1: Number of Star-Rated Hotels within Kumasi Metropolis

Star-Rating	Number of Hotels
Four	1
Three	7
Two	26
One	23
Total	57

Source: Ghana Tourism Authority, (2020).

Study Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design which enabled the researcher to collect data on a one-time basis. The qualitative approach which aims at bringing out the meaning and perceptions of respondents in relation to a phenomenon under study was employed for the study (Berger, 2015). The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for the study since it helped the researcher to interview managers concerning their informed decision-making about the use of various forms of ICTs in hotels within the study area. Qualitative research helps to explain complex issues, within the natural settings of the research phenomenon and is also the best in the representation of views and perceptions of respondents in a study (Opoku et.al., 2016).

Study Population and Sample

The study targeted 57 hotel managers. Managers were targeted because they are in charge of operations and also have an influence on the use of ICT and can therefore give valid information concerning the topic under study. Purposive and convenient sampling approaches were used to select the hotel managers for the study. Out of the 57 hotel managers, 50 were used for the study. This was because they were the only managers who availed themselves to be interviewed.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from respondents. Items in the interview guide were grouped into four namely, the forms of ICTs used by the hotels, managers' perceptions of the relevance of innovative use of ICT and reasons for which the hotels use ICT innovatively. The last section was on sociodemographic characteristics of respondents.

Data and Analysis

Consent was sought from managers and the intention for the data collection was explained to each of them. Interviews were scheduled at times that were convenient to the managers. The maximum number of interviews conducted in a day was three and the minimum was two. The average duration for an interview was between 40-50 minutes. In all, interviews were conducted within three weeks.

Data from the study was analyzed using thematic analysis. Raw data from indepth interviews were transcribed, coded manually and grouped under two themes taking into consideration the objectives of the study. Data derived from interviews in relation to the main themes were further classified into sub-themes as indicated in the analysis. The researcher read through the extracts interconnected to the codes to certify that they were in line with the themes. In order to establish the validity and reliability of the coding, the peer briefing technique was used. According to Nowell et al. (2017), data within themes should fit together meaningfully. Some tutors of one of the Colleges of Education, with masters degrees read through the transcripts and also listened to the audio record of the interview and compared the codes to the themes. It was established that the codes collaborate with themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=50)

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents were male. This may be because hotel work is tedious and involving hence most women shy away from it as they may not have adequate time to cater for their family. With regards to the age of respondents, half were between the ages of 20-30. It could be deduced that these categories of employees are at their youthful age.

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=50)

Characteristics	Number of respondents
Gender	
Male	30
Female	20
Age of respondent	
20-30	25
30-40	15
40-50	10
Educational level	
Higher National Diploma	12
Vocational Training	18
University Degree	20
Nationality	
Ghanaian	50
Employment tenure	
Below 5 years	13
6-10years	20
Above 10 years	17

In terms of educational level, those with university degrees were in the majority. Concerning, employment tenure, the majority of the respondents had been at their post for between six to ten years.

Relevance of Innovative Use of ICT in Hotel Service Delivery

The main idea behind this objective was to assess managers' opinions as to whether the innovative use of ICT is relevant in hotel service delivery. All the hotel managers interviewed confirmed that the innovative use of ICT in hotel service delivery is indeed very relevant. The themes emanating from the responses were accessibility of information, improvement of communication, making work easier and improving productivity.

Accessibility of information

Managers were of the view that access to information in the hotel business is an important aspect of service provided by hotels to satisfy and sustain customers (Martínez, et al., 2019). Further, managers based their understanding of access to information not only on the benefit to hotel guests but also on other important roles to the hotel establishment (Sørensen, & Jensen, 2015).

One of the managers noted that:

> *Gone are the days when guests just walk into hotels based on word of mouth or experience as a result of repeat visits. With the latest development of ICT, guests get access to information about hotels on their websites. Since our services are intangible, it is necessary we keep in touch with our guests, and get them informed about things they should know so that they are not turned away from us and snatched by our competitors* (41-year-old manager of a 3- star hotel).

Another respondent observed that:

> *In the past, customers of hotels had to order catalogues or travel to physical facilities before they could compare prices, services and attributes. Today, the innovative use of ICT has enabled our hotel to introduce electronic catalogues and web pages for guests with updated information in relation to services and prices. Our guests are always pleased to retrieve information from our website wherever they want and request for clarification* (38 -year-old manageress of a 3-star hotel).

One manager remarked that

> *White men lodged in our hotel a lot until somewhere last two years when a white man who came to lodge in the hotel saw a cockroach in his room. All of a sudden, the number of whites visiting the hotel reduced drastically. But thank God I was browsing on my phone when I came across this information on the net that our rooms are full of cockroaches hence, even access to our website was blocked. I will say, had it not been for ICT I wouldn't have come across such information so easily. Then after, employees have been educated to always be cautious of carrying out their daily activities especially when it comes to cleaning of our rooms and other surrounding areas* (36 -year-old manager of a 2- star hotel).

In the hotel industry, information services like websites and the internet, for example, aid in sharing and disseminating information to guests as well as staff of the hotel. This relates to the study of Law, et al., (2015) whose findings established that internet technology in the distribution of tourism products of utmost importance. Information helps these guests or customers at least to have a fair idea about services available at the hotels. Guests are, therefore, able to make choices to suit their standards and do not become disappointed upon reaching hotel premises to reduce the risk involved in the intangibility of service. This affirms the study of Berezina, et al., (2016), where it was revealed that satisfied hotel customers willingly recommend hotels to others based on the hotel's intangibility. Further, it is of utmost importance that guests have a fair idea of the services provided by a hotel since services in hotels are intangible. This aligns with the studies of (Issahaku, 2012; Mupfiga, 2015), who postulated that individuals and organizations use ICT as an informative channel to create the awareness of products and services they provide Nonetheless, hotel staff are well informed in advance of emergencies and other activities aside their normal work schedules which are affirmed in the Technology, Organization and Environmental Framework (Balsiger, et. al., 2023). Similarly, as revealed in the literature, management of hotels can get feedback from either guests directly or from the website, internet or any other form of ICT concerning their (guests) satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards services provided as stated in the works of (Ansah et.al, 2012; Mokhtarian, et.al., 2017).

Improves communication

Interactions with managers revealed further that good communication is one of the cardinal reasons hotels innovatively use ICT in service delivery. They were also of the view that innovative use of ICT is an effective channel of communication with suppliers and guests, and thus enhances efficiency and effectiveness, unlike the manual system that delays communication so much.

In this vein, one respondent highlighted that:

> *Initially, the hotel relied on a manual system where we used only the telephone and sent documents by posting which caused a lot of delays. In order to prevent this occurrence, the hotel now uses a website and e-mail. Presently we communicate with our suppliers and guests online and we are aware of when new stock will be brought so we make necessary arrangements to receive them* (26 -year- old manageress of a 2- star hotel).

Similarly, this view is captured in the following text from one of the managers:

> *We have purposefully used ICT to aid easy communication across departments within the hotel and, reach out to sister hotels. ICT actually facilitates easy access to our guests. We send wish well messages to our loyal guests as a way of building cordial relationships so they don't switch to sister hotels* (36- year-old manager of a 3- star hotel).

Effective communication in hotel management attracts guests and the public to the services rendered in hotels. On the other hand, communication with sister hotels is easier and awareness is created towards the future. This result relates to the literature of Abraham et al. (2015) which established using ICTs to facilitate two-way communication between the hotel and its stakeholders so, they influence hotel promotions and sales. Also, Law et al. (2019) and Mokhtarian, et.al. (2017) argue in their study that, improvement in communication aids fruitful discussion during reservation thereby eliminating reservation errors that can create a negative guest experience.

Makes work easier

Another relevance of the innovative use of ICT that the interviews revealed relates to how innovative use of ICT makes hotel service delivery easier. It was revealed that the innovative utilization of ICT in hotel service delivery has significantly replaced works that were done manually.

In this vein, a manager remarked that:

Using ICT innovatively is very relevant in the hotel business because it helps employees carry out their duties easily. For instance, preparing vouchers, check-in and check- out of guests as well as billing with the computers is very easy, unlike the manual system where employees had to be extra careful as the process is difficult. The manual system takes a lot of time and energy to accomplish. Even the process sometimes is full of mistakes. With the use of computers, some mistakes are underlined which draws the attention of the operator (27 –years-old manager of a 1-star hotel).

Yet another respondent added that:

ICT helps us to manage the hotel's operation easily. Without ICT, work is very difficult. For instance, if the hotel has to run photocopies for guests during conferences, it is easier since the hotel owns a photocopier. The hotel does not go through stress and uses other resources like time, energy and money for photocopies outside its premises. We are also sure we keep such information confidential for our customers (30-year- old manageress of a 2-star hotel).

Hotel reservation activities such as billing, payment, and check-in and check-out become easy to deal with using ICT innovatively. This confirms the study of Han, et al., (2021) who were of the view that the hospitality industry's core value of service delivery has been significantly influenced by smart technologies. Moreover, Buhalis, & Moldavska, (2022) unearth that the more employees make use of ICT innovatively, the more it becomes user-friendly. In addition, Bayram, (2020), stated that employees accept devices that make their work easier as errors are reduced during the process of task execution.

Improves productivity

Interviews held with managers further revealed maximizing productivity is what the hotel industry strives for. They were of the view that the innovative use of ICT serves as a major catalyst for improving hotel productivity (Schaufeli, 2017). Companies, including hotels, that use advanced ICT innovatively increase productivity and profitability compared to non-ICT users. These were confirmed in the statement of one respondent who remarked that:

The integration of ICT in the work we do as service providers increases employees' productivity. I have realized that subordinates work better with ICT tools. They are able to cater for quite a number of guests when our computers are in good condition. With ICT tools and power available, the volume of work and customer turnout is great. (27 -year- old- manager of a 1-star hotel).

Managers explained that in the absence of ICT tools, customer turnout and productivity are relatively low. One manager lamented that:

Because of the inconsistent power supply nowadays, we cannot use our computers throughout working hours. As a result, our hotel has not made any progress in the work we do. Employees who need a source of electricity to perform their duties come to work and sit idle as if they have nothing to do. Hmmmm my sister, customers also do not turn out but we hope things will turn around for better productivity. (28- year- old manager of 1star hotel).

As stated by Schaufeli, (2017), companies, including hotels, that use advanced ICT innovatively increase productivity and profitability compared to non-ICT users. Another school of thought, Abd Rahman et al., (2021), confirms that using ICT innovatively enhances productivity since employees only feed machine systems with information and the processing is done by the machine being used. Moreso, the procedure of executing tasks is accelerated thereby increasing productivity. This is affirmed in the work of Daria (2016), who opines that ICT has a quantifiable influence on hotel productivity since it enhances employees' performance and facilitates management procedures. Likewise, the organizational factors of a hotel such as management support as cited in the organization, technology and environmental framework by showing the interaction between their subordinates boosts the morale of employees whereby they put in their best which in effect increases productivity (Kaydos, 2020).

Reasons for Innovative Utilization of ICT in Hotel Services Delivery

This aspect of the study also sought to examine the reasons why hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis innovatively use ICT in their service delivery. Marketing, competitive advantage and quality of service were the themes that emerged from the responses.

Marketing

Hotel managers revealed that marketing hotel products was one main reason for the innovative use of ICT in service delivery. They argued that marketing enables hotels to achieve their target of advertising and promoting services offered to their clients.

For instance, one manager stated:

> *ICT serves as an essential marketing tool in the hotel business. With the use of ICT tools like the television, the website and radio, our hotel has been able to market our products by creating avenues for customers on our website to value our services. As we market our services, guests send us their complaints which we are able to handle by providing services that satisfy them (guests)* (22-year-old manager of a 1-star hotel).

Similarly, another respondent indicated that:

> *ICT is a fundamental tool used to market hospitality services. Specifically, our hotel uses radio and television stations to market our products and services. Formerly, guests walk to the hotel without knowing much about the hotel hence, some turn away when they are not satisfied with our facilities and services. Now due to the marketing strategies and innovative use of ICT, we are able to educate our clients before their visit to the hotel.* (34-year-old manager of a 2-star hotel).

Marketing is the means by which business entities strive to find strategies to sell out their products to potential customers (Armstrong, et al.,2014). The hotel industry is not exceptional in this phenomenon. With the modern trend of adoption and use of ICT, hotels are able to attract customers to their establishments. ICTs such as online reservation systems, teleconferencing facilities, automated teller machines, Skype MySpace, websites, e-mail and the internet used by hotels, create an avenue for customers to become aware of products and services hotels have on sale. Gupta, (2019), and this helps to eliminate disappointments of guests. Mupfiga (2015) asserted that ICT is used by organizations to promote their products and services to potential customers.

Competitive advantage

Managers opine that the emergence of ICT has made the world a global village and further explained that, new hotels all over the metropolis have developed strategies to stand at a competitive advantage. The managers argued that hotels which do not make good use of ICT to the expectation of guests lose even their loyal customers to hotels with sophisticated ICT facilities.

A respondent observed:

> *ICT has made the world and the hotel industry look like a small village where members of the village know each other very well. The same applies to hotels that use ICT to get into contact with their guests. These guests become part of such hotels and will hardly lodge in any other hotel. So, it is important that all hotels use ICT if the hotels want to be able to compete with sister hotels. In fact, work in the hotel industry has become very competitive here in Kumasi since hotels are many in the city. If you do not adapt to the current trend you will be left behind*. (32 –year-old manager of a 2-star hotel).

Again, another interviewee added her voice that:

> *Due to the latest developments in ICT worldwide, every hotel must endeavour to adopt and use ICT in order not to be left behind. Some years back, we had only telephones and televisions in our hotels. This caused us a lot because our sister hotels always had more guests on their premises than we had. This prompted us to also adopt new forms of ICT which has enabled our business to boost.* (29-year-old- manageress of a 1-star hotel).

It is established in the literature that extensive management of ICTs helps to build a competitive advantage by maintaining price leadership in a market and differentiating products and services (Akaba, 2015). In effect, most hotels have switched to innovative use of ICT to compete with growing competition in the hotel sector (Khan, & Hossain, 2018).

Quality service

Further discussion with managers revealed that quality of service is of utmost importance in the hotel business. Besides, hotels encounter high demand from guests since the requirement for quality grows with an increased use of hotels' services.

A respondent observed:

> *We try as much as possible to maintain our guests by providing them with quality services. Since the guest might have finished payment for a service to be rendered, we ensure they (guests) are provided with the best quality of service. We do this by keeping a clean environment, our décor is of standard, and there is consistency in the supply of ICT facilities for guests' use. Also, front office employees with the aid of computers attend to guests promptly* and *handle guests' complaints tactfully while complaints which are above their control are referred to a higher authority.* (25-year-old-manager of a 1-star hotel).

On the contrary, an interviewee lamented:

> *Oh! My sister, it is a problem having loyal customers of late. We are surrounded by hotels of higher standards who provide the*

> *same services. Even though our rates are lower, some of our guests have started switching to these sister hotels as we are not able to meet their demands. I mean because we don't have the facilities those hotels have and can therefore not provide the kind of service guests demand. We are thinking of creating a website and internet so we have contact with our customers online* (27-year-old-manager of a 2-star hotel).

The loyalty of existing customers is more important. Likewise, the attraction of new customers is more crucial than retaining existing customers in any kind of business (Sharma, & Srivastava, 2018; Oliveras-Villanueva, et al., 2020; Mmutle, & Shonhe, 2017). The consequences of neglect of quality of service may impact the hotel's business objectives, and influence customers' purchasing behaviour, since customers select among hotels' service offerings like accommodation, facilities, location, and visiting season, compare and consider quality as a differentiating feature as highlighted by Rhee and Yang (2015). In a related study, it was revealed that messages sent via multimedia attract customers. Also, ICT use in hotels allows hoteliers to establish recognition for guests' profiles and these enable them to improve customised services (Chevers, 2015; & Neuhofer, et al, 2015).

Unfortunately, faster communication associated with the use of ICT in hotels can be detrimental (Gonzalez, et.al., 2020) as employees in various hotels quickly learn about the better working conditions their colleagues enjoy and ask for the same conditions. Employer-employee relations may deteriorate when employers fail to grant those demands for similar or better conditions. This may therefore cause a fall in productivity.

Skilled and experienced workers may resign, forcing the hotel to employ new and probably inexperienced people (Mohsin, Lengler, & Kumar, 2013). This leads to high labour turnover. Costs of on-the-job training may increase. Hotels may incur extra costs to acquire more ICT tools in an attempt to reduce the number of employees and to avoid higher wage and salary demands (Ivanov, & Webster, 2019). Costs of maintenance may also rise. Yet, hotels which are unable to acquire and use ICT for service delivery and maintain their employees will lag behind their competitors and eventually be out of business. The implication of findings relating to reasons for the innovative use of ICT in hotel service implies that hotels that were able to attain their target must endeavour to remain in business. To this effect, there is the need for these hotels to consistently provide services to meet guests' standards (Purohit, & Purohit, 2013).

On the other hand, hotels which were unable to meet their target must adopt the necessary ICT facilities and collaborate with their employees by giving them the required training to equip them with the requisite skills so that they will be able to provide guests with the required services. Another implication of the study relates to the fact that face-to-face interaction which is an important aspect of the hospitality service will be eliminated if every single hotel decides to adopt innovative use of ICT in all aspects of service delivery (Brandon-Jones, Lewis, Verma, & Walsman, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

All managers who participated in the study had employed ICT innovatively in the service delivery processes in their hotels. Accessibility of information, improved communication, ease of work, improved productivity, marketing, competitive advantage and quality of service, were some of the reasons behind hotels' innovative use of ICT in service delivery in the Kumasi Metropolis. This means that managers of hotels have noticed the important role ICT plays in service delivery in the hotel business and therefore have integrated ICT as a tool towards achieving organizational objectives. The result reinforces the assertion that perceived usefulness motivates individuals and business entities to adopt and use ICT to provide services.

It is recommended that hotels should invest in ICT since it helps to improve productivity, accessibility of information, and communication and makes work easier as well as assisting with marketing, improving competitive advantage and quality of service. The innovative use of ICT also helps to improve employer-employee relations. When employers fail, for any reason, to grant employees' demands for similar or better conditions as that provided to employees of competing hotels, that may cause a fall in productivity. Hotel managers should therefore provide their employees with the best conditions of service to boost their morale, reduce the rate of labour turnover and improve the level of productivity. Managers of hotels that were able to achieve the target of using ICT should maintain such standards and continue to motivate their employees to work with enthusiasm so that they do not lose their loyal customers to other hotels.

Limitations and Future Research

Generalization of the results may be limited as the result pertains to only hotels in the Kumasi Metropolis. Similarly, the study did not emphasize counterfactuals as a basis for causal inference since the study was descriptive. Based on the limitations and findings of the study, a detailed study on hotels' innovative utilization of information and communication technology in a wider study area is deemed appropriate. Further, future studies should seek to validate the results of this study in a cross-sectional survey employing a larger sample size.

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