

THE ROLE OF CONTRACT SERVICE PERSONNEL ON QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY

Fashakin Juliette. F; Iyiade Adedamola. T; Osho Adegbeniga. S; Jammal Taiwo M; Olorunfemi Adewunmi A; Awotimayin Opeyemi E; Osholonge Adeyinka M

Lagos State University of Science and Technology, Ikorodu, Lagos, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author Email: oshoadegbeniga@yahoo.com

Abstract

The continuous decline in the performance of hotels due to humongous responsibility and the associated cost of hiring the right and qualified staff calls for urgent attention of researchers. The study examines the role of contract service personnel on quality service delivery. The specific objectives are to determine the role of contract service personnel on quality service delivery; and to ascertain the difference in the cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel. The study uses a descriptive cross-sectional approach where data was collected at a particular point in time from different staff of the hotels under study. Regression Model and independent t-test was employed using quantitative data. Arisen from the analysis of this study, it was revealed that contract service personnel propel more customer patronage in the hotel industry; and the cost of engaging contract service personnel is cheaper compared to the cost of recruiting full time staff. Arisen from the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that management of hotels should ensure that contract service personnel are encouraged and engaged because they are vital mechanisms for patronage of hotel products; and Hotel management should consider engaging contract service personnel in the aspect of interpersonal relation, communication to the customers, and allow the contract service personnel to mediate between the hotel and their customers.

Keywords: *Contract Service, Personnel, Quality Service Delivery*

Introduction

All over the world, the role of contract service personnel otherwise referred to as outsourcing or contract service personnel cannot over emphasized to its acceptance in all industries, including the hotel and hospitality industries in promoting patronage (Keiningham, Cooil, Aksoy, Andreassen, & Weiner, 2020). Globally, the assessment of contract service personnel activities in promoting patronage of hotel services as remain on the front burner, especially in the five stars hotels. Phenomenon of contract service personnel is not new but has been occurring for a long time. Traditionally it is clear that enterprises provide services in the developed countries for their counterparts in developing countries. In hotel operation, contract service personnel can be recognized in various hotels and their activities such as human resource, housekeeping, food and beverage and so on.

In the Nigeria hotel industry, outsourcing or contract service personnel is one of the most important management ideas and practices of the past 75 years (Heung, Mok, & Kwan, 2022). The broad objective of the study is to develop an understanding of factors affecting contract service personnel in the hotel industry and also the role played by management accounting in hotel outsourcing or contract service personnel. Following the lead of a growing number of management accounting researchers, transaction cost economics project work is drawn upon in the study (Heung, Mok, & Kwan, 2022). Other theories informing the work are agency theory, contingency theory and labour process theory. Triangulation of theories and research methods have been used as part of a strategy to develop a relatively comprehensive understanding of hotel outsourcing or contract service personnel.

The cost of employing full time staff could equally outweigh the profit that such employee generates, hence the need to engage contract service personnel. Hotel industry in Lagos state is faced with the challenges of engaging qualified staff for the right job, hence the need to outsource such responsibility to the experts but the contract service personnel allow management of hotels to focus on core hotel functions when they can provide professional suppliers with greater expertise to the system of service operation. Therefore, studying hotel contract service personnel is one of the significance fields that should be well investigated in context of Nigeria hotel industry, hence, this study examines the Role of Contract Service Personnel on Quality Service Delivery.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of study is to examines the Role of Contract Service Personnel on Quality Service Delivery. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the Role of Contract Service Personnel on Quality Service Delivery.
2. Ascertain the difference in the cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel.

Statement of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Contract service personnel does not significantly promote patronage in hotel industry.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel.

Literature Review

Contract Service Personnel

According to business dictionary, contract service personnel is “Contracting, sub-contracting, or 'externalizing' non-core activities to free up cash, personnel, time, and facilities for activities where the firm holds competitive advantage” (Zeithaml & Bitner,

2022). The dictionary defines contract service personnel further as: “Firms having strengths in other areas may contract-out data processing, legal, manufacturing, marketing, payroll accounting, or other aspects of their businesses to concentrate on what they do best and thus reduce average unit cost. contract service personnel are often an integral part of downsizing or reengineering. Also called contracting out” contract service personnel definition in the encyclopedia is “The practice of having certain job functions done outside a company instead of having an in-house department or employee handle them; functions can be outsourced to either a company or an individual (Zeithmal, Berry & Parasuraman, 2022).

Contract service personnel has been viewed as a form of predetermined external provision with another enterprise for the delivery of goods and/or services that would previously have been offered in-house (Ha-Jang, 2021). Contract service personnel can be defined in simple terms to describe a situation where one organization gives work to other firms, which can execute this work more efficiently, usually for lower costs, and whose capabilities complement or supplement their own (Hyun, 2021). Contract service personnel defined by Kim, Suh and Eves (2021) as “a form of predetermined external provision with another enterprise for the delivery of goods and/or services that would previously have been offered in-house” (Kim, Suh & Eves, 2021). Contract service personnel are defined as “the process of transferring the responsibility for a specific business function from an employee group to a non-employee group” (Akbar & Parvez, 2020).

Patronage and Contract Service Personnel

One the main drives of contract service personnel of a product and service is consideration of scale and costs aiming to save on overhead or to cause short-term cost saving (Peri, 2019). Global competitive pressure has pushed service organisation to search for efficiency and therefore contract service

personnel their requirements for components and business services have increased considerably (Motar, Jakki & John Nehin, 2022). The research shows cost-savings and freedom to focus upon core business are major reasons for contract service personnel (Rosenfeld, 2019).

Sloan (2019) discussed changes that were occurring in hotel contract service personnel while addressing main drives of contract service personnel. Sloan (2019) stated that one of the main drives of product and service contract service personnel is consideration of scale and costs. "Firms use contract service personnel in order to satisfy any one or more of three strategic intents, namely strategic improvement [cost reduction and enhancement of efficiency], strategic business impact [improving contribution to companies' performance within existing lines of business] and strategic commercial exploitation [focus on leveraging technology-related assets]" (Anderson & Narus, 2018).

Theoretical Review

Contract Service Personnel Theories

Theory signifies "contract service personnel support functions to outside suppliers can achieve better, faster and cheaper outcome. Reviewing articles showed that majority of hotels that have outsourced such supporting operations are satisfied with result (Hide, 2018). Majority of studies regarding hotel contract service personnel claimed that hotel performance improves when hotel enhances focus on a firm's core competencies and outsource non-core activities (Soriano, 2018). Owing to this fact that these noncore activities are among the core activities of the outsource company since high capabilities of such organisations are result of great investment and attention to related technology, methodology, experience with different customers (other hotels) and human resources that have been developed over time contributing to hotel service quality (Jin, & Kim, 2018).

To conclude, there are certain drivers of strategic contract service personnel that can be recognized as supports for theory including but are not restricted to cost cutting, increase of efficiency, and enhancement of hotel core competency while contract service personnel hotel supporting activities to suppliers that have expertise. Contract service personnel are able to save money for hotels and is able to perform a business function better than organisations' employees by economic of scale, process expertise, access to capital, and access to expensive technology (Lee & Feick, 2018). Studies show that there are certain steps for the development of strategic contract service personnel that should be implemented as hotels intend to achieve the most out contract service personnel relationship with outside suppliers (McAlexander, Kaldenberg, & Koenig, 2018).

Methodology

The study also uses a descriptive cross-sectional approach where data was collected at a particular point in time from different staff of the hotels under study. The population for this study consisted of all the staff of Purple Crown Hotel and Posh Apartments Metro in the Ikeja Metropolis of Lagos, Nigeria. From this population, the study sample was drawn. The population for this study was 150 staff of all the hotels. Using Krejcie and Morgan of 2010 (Kotler & Keller, 2019), the sample size for this study was 140 staff of Purple Crown Hotel and Posh Apartments Metro. Simple random sampling technique was used to pick the required number of hotels from each stratum without replacement in the case of missing values.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data provided by the respondents constituted the main source of data. As stated earlier, the respondents for this study comprise of Hotels' Staff. Also, the data were collected using questionnaire which deals with the same sample units of population over a period of time.

Reliability of the Instruments

For internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficients was used because it is regarded as a suitable measure of reliability. As could be

seen in table1 below, all the variables have Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.7. Thus, confirming reliability of the instrument for the study.

Table 1: Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach alpha (α)	Scale
Contract service personnel	0.811	1 – 5
Customers' patronage	0.798	1 - 5
Cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel	0.787	1 – 5

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Validity tests of the study instruments

Validity is a critical identity in research construct application. The basic question on the mind of scholars is whether or not the instrument(s) measure accurately what it is meant to measure? Wanous and Reichers delineate validity into content, criterion-based, and construct validity modes. To establish this, the following validity tests were conducted in our pilot study: Face validity Content: that is whether content cover the concept correctly. Construct (Convergent, i.e. whether common items loaded together and Discriminant, i.e. variables dully separated). These are discussed in details

Content Validity

The instruments (questionnaire) were designed on a 5-point Likert scale (1= not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = quite relevant, 4 = relevant, 5 = very relevant). To evaluate the relevance and suitability of the measurement items. After developing the instruments, it was issued out to ten (10) experts who include: experts in marketing, practitioners, consultants and psychometrics. Expert evaluation was used to rate the instruments and modified based on their comments. Comments made were incorporated in the final questionnaire. This was consistent with previous research work who emphasized that it is beneficial to do so as it enables a researchers to assess its internal consistency, inter-item correlations and factor structure. Table 2 shows the results reflecting Content Validity Index (CVI) for the questionnaire all above 0.7 taken as acceptable basing on.

Table 2: CVI for Questionnaire

Variable	Experts										Mean CVI
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Contract service personnel	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.9	0.9	1	1	0.78
Patronage	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.87	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.81
Cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.75	0.86	0.88	0.91	0.71	0.74	0.77	0.79

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

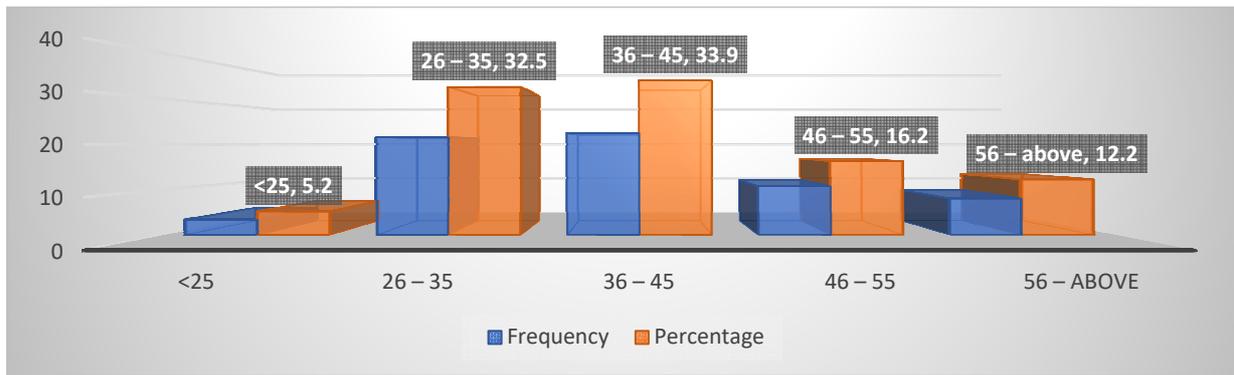


Figure 1: Age of Respondents
 Source: Field survey, 2022.

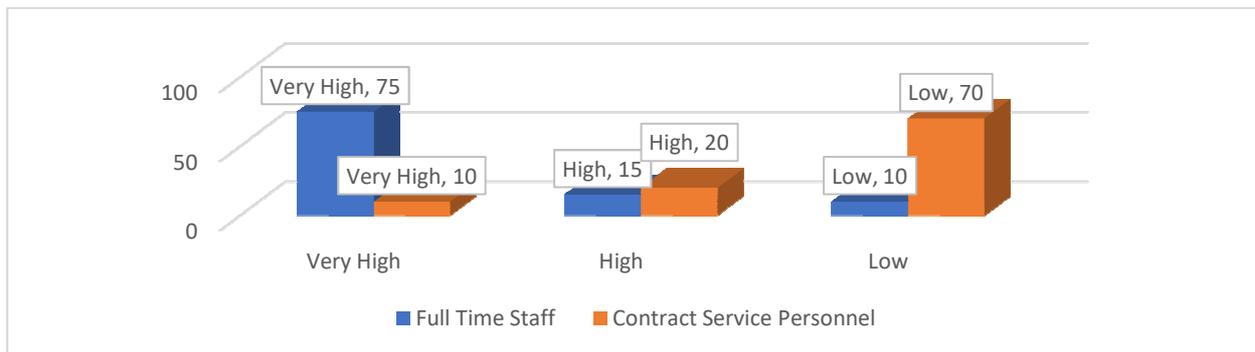


Figure 2: Cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel
 Source: Field survey, 2022.

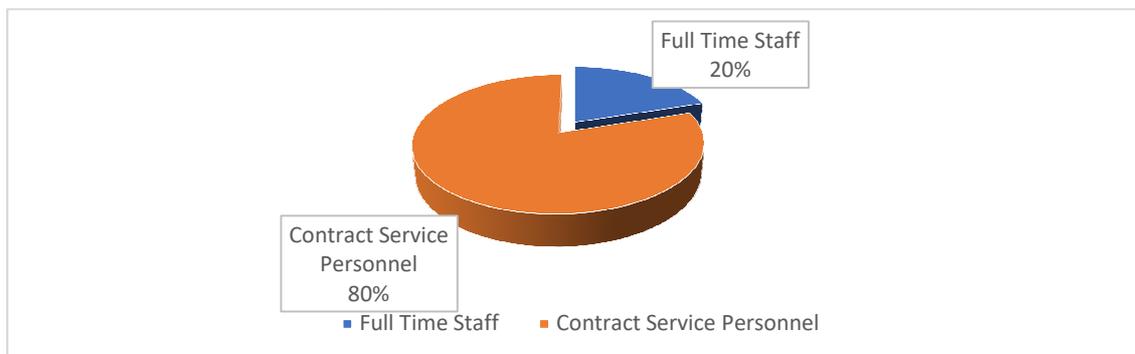


Figure 3: Patronage/Productive between full time staff and contract service personnel
 Source: Field survey, 2022.

Considering who promote better patronage and the level of production between full time staff and contract service personnel. The above figure 4 shows that contract service personnel contributed more (80%) in promoting patronage and productivity, this could be because contract service personnel pay is tied

to their productivity and level of patronage. The study equally shows that full time employees contribute on about 20% to the total patronage. This could equally be because they had already secured employment and their payment is guaranteed whether they performed or not.

Table 4: Multi-collinearity Results Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Collinearity Statistics
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	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.775	.305		2.543	.012		
Contract service personnel	.160	.070	.187	2.276	.024	.365	2.740
Patronage	.115	.074	.110	1.563	.020	.498	2.007
Cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel	.121	.077	.122	1.251	.001	.321	2.511

a. Dependent Variable: Customers patronage in hotel industry

Source: Field survey, 2022.

KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test

To evaluate the feasibility of the study, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy index and Bartlett's sphericity test were conducted; both methods suggested the existence of an acceptable inter correlation considering the criteria suggested by George and Mallery (2021). The Maximum extraction method was performed because it best reproduces the population values when the data has normal, multivariate distribution and the statistical significance of the extracted factors can be calculated. The results for all the five variables show the KMO values are above 0.7 (table 6). This implies that the items in our questionnaire correlate well with other items within their respective clusters to measure the underlying dimension, hence, adequate to continue with further analysis.

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's Results

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's test			No of factors
		χ^2	df	Sig	
Contract service personnel	0.934	600.823	15	.000	2
Organizational performance	0.936	898.198	21	.000	2
Customers' patronage	0.844	674.211	21	.000	1

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Contract service personnel does not significantly promote patronage in hotel industry

Table 7 Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.698 ^a	.487	.377	.40605	1.008

a. Predictors: (Constant), Contract service personnel

b. Dependent Variable: customer patronage

Source: SPSS version 25 output.

Table 8 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.021	.181		5.639	.000
Good communication by contract service personnel	.384	.210	.362	1.828	.009
Checking up on customers by contract service personnel	.370	.195	.368	1.895	.009

Ethical conduct by contract service personnels	.342	.212	.323	1.616	.008
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a. Dependent Variable: customer patronage

Source: SPSS version 25 output.

The model summary indicated that there is about 70% (.698) relationship between Contract service personnel and customer patronage. R square also revealed that about 50% (.487) of changes in customers' patronage can be determined by Contract service personnel. The ANOVA table shows that at 5% level of significance, Contract service personnel are potential propellers of customer patronage (Sig. = 0.022 < 0.05). The coefficient table revealed that good communication by contract service personnel has about.384 unit effect on customer's patronage. This implies that whether any customer will have returned for another patronage will be determined by the activities of contract service personnel. The coefficient table revealed that checking up on customers has about.370 unit effect on customers patronage. Lastly, the coefficient table also revealed that ethical conduct by contract

service personnel plays a Significant role in determining customers' patronage (B =.342, t = 1.616, p = 0.008 < 0.05).

Decision: Since p value (0.022 < 0.05), we hereby reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Contract service personnel has significant impact on patronage in hotel industry.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel.

Table 9 shows the group statistics for test of difference between Cost of recruiting full time staff and Cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector. This hypothesis was tested using Independent t-test in table7.

Table 9 Summary of Group Statistics for Hypothesis Two

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Cost of recruiting full time staffs	4	4.14	1.54	2.31
Cost of engaging contract service personnel	4	2.22	1.14	1.44

Source: SPSS Version 25, 2022.

Table 10 shows the Independent Samples Test revealing the significant difference between Cost of recruiting full time staff and Cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector. The table shows that at

0.05 level of significance, there is significant difference between cost of recruiting full time staff and cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector.

Table 10: Summary of Independent Samples Test for Hypothesis Two

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.301	.008	4.669	3	.002	45735.52	97954.84	68324.18	23147.85

Equal variances not assumed			4.669	3	.002	45735.52	97954.84	68473.34	22998.69
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Source: SPSS Version 25, 2022.

The Independent t-test compares the means of two independent groups in order to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the variable means (Cost of recruiting full time staff and Cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector) are significantly different.

Table 9 shows the group statistics and revealed that the mean value of Cost of recruiting full time staffs in the accommodation sector was 4.14 while the mean value of Cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector was 1.22. There is a clear difference in the mean value of the mean value of Cost of recruiting full time staff and Cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector. The output in the Independent Test table 10 includes two rows: Equal variances assumed and Equal variances not assumed. If Levene's test indicates that the variances are equal across the two groups (i.e., p -value large), we will rely on the first row of output, Equal variances assumed, otherwise, we assume no equal variance. From table 9, the p (sig.) value is .002 which is lower than 0.05, the researchers hereby assume no equal variance among variable. This simply means that there is a clear difference between Cost of recruiting full time staff and Cost of engaging contract service personnel in the accommodation sector.

Decision: Since the p value is less than 0.05 ($0.001 < 0.05$), the researchers hereby reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference between cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel.

Conclusion

This study examines the role of contract service personnel on quality service delivery. The broad objective of this work is to develop an understanding of factors affecting outsourcing or contract service personnel in

the hotel industry and also the role played by management accounting in hotel outsourcing or contract service personnel. Following the lead of a growing number of management accounting researchers, transaction cost economics project work is drawn upon in the study. The continuous decline in the performance of hotels due to humongous responsibility of hiring the right and qualified staff. Hotel industry unlike the manufacturing industry, do not have the expertise in engaging contract staff to attend to some vital role in the hotel organisation. The cost of employing full time staff could equally outweigh the profit that such employee generates, hence the need to engage contract service personnel. This study concluded that contract service personnel propels customer patronage; and there is significant difference in the cost of recruiting full time staff and engaging contract service personnel. The cost of engaging contract service personnel is cheaper compared to the cost of recruiting full time staff.

Recommendations

Arisen from the findings of this study, the researchers recommended that:

1. Management of Hotels should ensure that contract service personnel are encouraged and engaged because they are vital mechanisms for patronage of hotel products.
2. Hotel management should consider engaging contract service personnel in the aspect of interpersonal relation, communication to the customers, and allow the contract service personnel to mediate between the hotel and their customers.

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