Original Research Article

Assessing employee empowerment implementation in popular hotels in Sunyani, Ghana

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The study was undertaken to assess Employee Empowerment as a management tool and its challenges in hotels in the Sunyani Municipality. The main objective was to assess whether the hotels in Sunyani practice employee empowerment and challenges faced by implementers. Descriptive survey design was employed with the use of structured interview. Analysis of responses was done descriptively. A sample of 68 respondents comprising 8 managers/supervisors (2 from each of the selected hotels) and 60 employees from the 4 selected hotels. The findings revealed that employee empowerment concept is being implemented in the selected hotels which all the 8 managers representing 100% and 58 employees representing 96% agreed. This study is the first to empirically test how hospitality employees are empowered in Ghana. It was therefore recommended that hotel managements have to give reasonable level of autonomy to the employees to decide on the service they are rendering. This helps the employee to give prompt service to the customer by solving their problems and attending to their needs. The results indicate that though Employee Empowerment is not found in Ghanaian hospitality research, the concept is being practiced in some hotels in Sunyani therefore this study is setting the pace for other researchers to find out what is happening in other regions in Ghana. In conclusion the concept of Employee Empowerment is useful in hotel operation as it creates a conducive atmosphere for both employee and guests.

Key words: Employee, empowerment, hotel business, Ghanaian hospitality

INTRODUCTION

Employee empowerment has been hailed as a management technique which can be applied universally across all organizations as a means of dealing with the needs of modern global business and across all industrial sectors (Barry, 1993; Johnson, 1993; Foy, 1994). However, the service sector is said to involve a unique cluster of tension which managers, employees and customers have to address (Heskett et al., 1990) and the empowerment of employees is an approach which has been advocated for managing the service sector (Sternberg, 1992; Lockwood, 1996). The notion of empowerment involves the workforce being provided with a greater degree of flexibility and more freedom to make decisions relating to work schedules. This contrasts markedly with traditional management techniques that have emphasized control, hierarchy and rigidity (Kay, 2005)

The concept of empowerment is defined through its different aspects in period of improving the decision making ability of the employees through cooperation, sharing, training, education and team work. Moreover, researchers identify empowerment as the activity of assigning appropriate responsibility to employees and making them gain abilities. It is understood from the definitions that not only the cognitive aspect of empowerment that contribute to the improvement of the capacity of the employee within the organization, but also behavioural aspects in which employee's satisfaction is revealed. So if employees are involved in decision making and assigned on a certain level of responsibility in management, it leads to the participative style of management.

Empowering an employee is an essential managerial tool
which can be used to guide staff in increasing efficiency. In order to successfully implement the concept of empowerment, changing the existing organizational culture is eminent. As a matter of fact, in all ages, human resources have always been considered as the most important factor to achieve development (Rajaeipor et al., 2007). Previous researchers Karen (2006) and Kay et al. (2005) have examined employee empowerment; Karen suggests that employee empowerment creates an environment where people are encouraged to explore, discover, take risk and develop trust. However, the result of Kay et al. (2005) established that employee do not recognize the term empowerment nor do they reference the term power but rather are able to relate to associated concepts such as personal responsibility control over work. The argument is that if they are able to explore, take risk by taking decisions and get results then it does not matter whether it is personal responsibility of work or empowerment.

Another study by Melindi et al. (2005) revealed that employees who feel empowered in their work environment tend to have higher levels of interpersonal trust in their managers. This psychologically would boost the employee loyalty to the managers and also to the organization at large.

This notion was confirmed by Morad et al. (2011) asserting that there is a relationship between employee empowerment and organizational effectiveness.

It was also established by Sitaram (2011) that, employee performance inspire change, increases individual commitment and achievement of organizational goals which is found to be closely linked to organizational performance outcomes and employee empowerment. (Mark and Sridev, 2010)

These multi-dimensional perspectives of the empowerment literature reviewed conclude that an empowered workforce will lead their organisation to achieving a competitive advantage. Empowerment must involve management practices that adopt an open communication and sharing of knowledge, power and rewards throughout the organisation.

When Employee empowerment is taken into a broad sense to include its implication on service giving industry, the importance of its effect on service quality and customer satisfaction may be seen as playing a vital role in the formation of relationship between employee empowerment and customer satisfaction. According to Looy et al. (2003) with reference to the specific nature of service delivery, “empowerment” becomes a very important issue to organizations producing services.” In that, the customers and the employees are engaged simultaneously in the production of the service.

**Employee Empowerment in Ghanaian hotels**

The growth of hospitality and tourism in developing countries has created an immediate demand for personnel who are committed to the activities of the industry. The tourism and hospitality industry is said to have moved from the sidelines to the centre stage of socio-economic strategies and is emerging as a key component of what is known as non-traditional export sector with potential for foreign exchange, employment and income generation (Akyeampong, 2006). Theoretical evidence had proven that quality of the employee is one major factor that can set an organization apart from its competitors especially in the hospitality industry. This is true because the patronage of the service industry depends on trust in the service provider which is customer service and customer care. In other words, in the competitive environment people make the difference. (Mintah et al., 2014). It is therefore clear that empowering the employee will go a long way to make a hotel business gain competitive edge over the other.

It is also documented that among the challenges facing Ghanaian hotel industry is lack of adequate and quality skilled personnel. One very pertinent problem in the hotel industry in Ghana is the general lack of skilled personnel in various positions at our hotels. Although the relatively bigger hotels employ highly trained and skilled personnel in management, marketing, food and beverage etc. to take care of the operations of these hotels, the very small ones usually pay less attention to this detail. This affects them as interpersonal relationships with guests as well as technical know-how for marketing and general management becomes a problem. In the end, avoidable mistakes are made and this hampers the growth of the individual hotels and in the long term, the development of the entire industry. (Travel & Tourism | 9 May 2016 23:22 CET)

It was evident that some in a recent study of hotels in Kumasi that the hotels do not invest in training to meet the standard of the hospitality industry. This was clear in one of the three star hotels where a manager confided that the director does not allow him to do his work and that most of the workers are untrained family members.

Employee empowerment is one of the reflections of this modern approach to Human management. The inability of the management to control the service encounter makes the employees responsible for the quality of service delivered to the customers. In order for the management to trust that the employees are successful in dealing with their customers, the management has to give the employees the authority and necessary support to succeed at it, which is referred to as employee empowerment. A developed, competent and empowered workforce will give company an edge over its competitors. Studies on empowerment have shown that it has a strong relationship to employee performance in terms of higher productivity, job satisfaction and reduction in staff turnover in organisations especially the hospitality industry. Studies on the impact of empowerment on employee performance and its effect on patronage in the hospitality industry, however, is still lacking in the Ghanaian context.

**Problem Statement**

In spite of the numerous studies on employee empowerment and its impact on employee, little research
has been conducted on empowerment in the Ghanaian context. Much of the literature reviewed so far on employee empowerment has been found to focus on the service industry in developed countries. Literature search revealed that different types of managerial skills for empowering the employee in the service industry firms such as hotels have increased because of competitive advantage through improved services. But research material in Ghanaian publication was found lagging behind. The researcher therefore was wondering whether this important concept is being practiced in Ghana or not. And if they practice it to what extent and what are the challenges faced by hotels who try to implement this important concept? The researcher therefore decides to begin this search from the region where she works, hotels in Sunyani, Brong Ahafo region of Ghana.

Main Objectives

The main objective of the research was to assess whether the hotels in Sunyani practice employee empowerment as a management tool.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the factors of employee empowerment and use it as an assessment tool to measure its implementation in the selected hotels.
2. To assess the level of employee empowerment in the selected hotels.
3. To ascertain the challenges, faced by hotels in implementing employee empowerment.

Literature Review

The term empowerment has been defined in relationship to leadership and independence of the employee regarding service encounter and is compared to the opposite approach referred to as the production line method which is the traditional method of delegating authority to subordinates by their superiors. Different types of managerial skills for empowering the employee in the service industry firms such as hotels have increased because of competitive advantage through improved service (Karthik, 2013).

The literature on employee empowerment is examined on two fundamental approaches; the behavioral dimension (Honold, 1997), dealing with the role of top management in employee empowering and the psychological dimension. (Kim et al., 2012) This encompasses the perception of employees towards the behavior of and the conditions prepared for them by superiors (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Gkorezis, 2012).

According to Looy et al. (2003) “empowerment means providing employees with enough autonomy to allow them handle unforeseen challenges and situations such as complaints”. It also refers to employees being more proactive and self-sufficient in assisting an organization to achieve its goal (Herrenkohl et al., 1999; Phyra, (2015). Empowerment means encouraging people to make decisions with the least intervention from higher management (Handy 1993; Gilbert, 2010).

In the researcher’s view Employee empowerment in this study refers to the level of autonomy given to the frontline staff of a hotel to enable them attend promptly to guests request and problems without going through a long process of permission and delay from management. Hospitality industry curriculum takes care of giving sufficient training to people on the best way to treat the guest. In view of this, management of hotel facilities will do well if they give enough power to the employee to relate freely with the guest. However, before they do this, in-service training is needed to make sure the employee is representing management in handling situations as they emerge. This is empowerment.

Empowerment dimensions

Various service literature Looy et al (2003) and Zeithaml et al (2006), describe employee empowerment as having many dimensions ranging from the individual employee level to the organization level of empowerment. Researchers point out that the most important reason for empowerment at the individual employee level is the belief that autonomy motivates people, they further argue that people are willing to take initiatives and make decisions rather than being dictated to regarding their jobs. With reference to Looy et al. (2003), there are five dimensions as a driving force behind individual work motivation. According to him individual level empowerment comprises Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, Strategic autonomy and Impact. At the organization level, Looy has categorized them into Sharing information, Knowledge and competence development and rewards. According to Scott and Jaffe (1991), morale, recognition and teamwork, participation and healthy environment can be taken as dimensions of employee empowerment.

Benefits of Employee Empowerment

The supposed benefits of empowerment can be broadly divided into two areas: benefits to the organization and benefits to the individual. Much of the empirical research into empowerment has focused on organizational benefits assuming these are the driving force behind attempts to engender empowered working (Cunningham et al., 1996). Certainly the motivation for managerial adoption of empowerment is typically driven to help managers manage and improve work organization and job performance, not to primarily create an environment that is beneficial to the employee (Psoinos and Smithson, 2002 and Marchington et al., 1992). Many service management literatures suggest empowerment benefits as related to both customer and employee satisfactions. Grönoos (2001:347-348) identified; quicker and more direct response to customer
needs, quicker and more direct response to dis-satisfied customers in service recovery, treating customers more enthusiastically empowered employees can be a valuable source of new ideas and Creates good word of mouth referrals and increases customer retention as some of the benefits of empowering employees. Researchers such as Lasley (1999) and Spreetzer et al. (1997) have indicated the importance of employee empowerment.

Employee empowerment critics

Despite the benefits of employee empowerment spelt out by some researchers, the concept has been criticized in varying stages – Koch and Golden (1997) proclaim that employee empowerment is unworkable arguing that empowerment is incompatible with strong leadership and is an inefficient way to control an organization. Some researchers have raised cases where employee empowerment have failed. However, five experts critiquing the cases suggested that the effort failed because management did not implement it well but not because empowerment was unworkable.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey design with semi-structured interviews to collect data from managers or supervisors as well as other employees on four popular hotels in Sunyani the capital city of the Brong Ahafo Region. Descriptive survey research design is usually used to gather information about the respondents’ feelings, attitude, opinion, interests, and problems (Orodo and Njeru, 2004). The reason for the choice was that it presents a picture of the specific details of a situation and collects data, test hypotheses, or answer research questions concerning the status of the subject of study. Managers and supervisors were interviewed to explore their perception of empowerment, intention of initiative and challenges faced by those who practice it. The employees of the selected hotels were interviewed to explore their perceptions of changes and effect on themselves and the guests. Purposive and convenience sampling technique was used to sample 68 respondents for the study. There are 59 registered hotels in Sunyani with majority of them in 2 and 1- star rating.

Study Area

The study covered four popular hotels in Sunyani Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The Sunyani Municipality was selected because it is known as the “heart of conference centres” that serves as the pull factor mainly for international tourists visiting the country. The municipality also has a number of hospitality facilities(Figure 1).

Population

The target population for the study consisted of managers and other workers in the hotel industry in Sunyani. But the accessible population was estimated to sample workers in four popular hotels in Sunyani.

Sampling procedure

The sample for the study was made up four popular hotels in Sunyani. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 60 participants for the study because it was deemed by the researcher that they have the capacity and knowledge to provide the needed information based on their respective positions and willingness to participate. A total of 60 staff out of 107 from the 4 hotels were interviewed. Among the four one is the only 3-star hotel the rest are 2 star. The 3-star hotel has a total of 25 employees, the rest have 37, 20 and 25 respectively. Sampling was purposefully done based on the availability and willingness to participate. Managers of the 4 hotels or their representatives were also interviewed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As a way of assessing the implementation of the Employee Empowerment concept in Sunyani hotels, 4 popular hotels were selected purposively and 60 workers and 8 managers were interviewed. This section presents and analyses on the data collected to draw conclusions and make feasible recommendations towards best practices in the hospitality industry in Ghana.

Bio-data of respondents

Table 1 shows the bio data of respondents and the results shows that 18 respondents representing 70% were males with 3 male managers, whiles 42 of the respondents that is about 30% were females with 5 managers. 8(13.3%) are below the 30 years, 23(38.3%) respondents were between the ages of 30 – 49 years whilst 27(45) of the remaining respondents were between 30 and 39. The rest 2 are between 50 and 59 years and above representing 9.8% of the total responds rate. This indicates that the female dominated the respondents as the number of workers were mainly men.

On the educational background of the respondents, 6 managers’ have diploma and two are degree holders. 38workers are high school graduates, 20 diplomas and 2 degree holders. Indicating majority of workers are high school leavers. On work experience the distribution indicates the majority of workers have between 5 and 7 years’ experience.

Table 2 shows the dimensions of employee empowerment and factors the researcher used as a checklist to measure the implementation of employee empowerment in the selected hotels. These factors guided
the study as components were used for the interview guide.

The above Table 3 clearly shows that the selected hotels have adapted to change and are using the principles of employee empowerment as the majority of the workers and management agreed that the dimensions are being used in their facilities. However, both management and employee expressed the fact that there are challenges they face in adopting the concept.

Challenges faced by hotels on employee empowerment implementation

When employees were asked of the challenges they face in their work surprisingly they mentioned that communications are not available or rather comes too late for them to act efficiently. Also employee stated that there is ambiguity in role which reduces individual empowerment in the organization. Management must therefore allow free flow of information and also avoid rigid formalities in solving customers’ complaints

Major Discussions of Results

SECTION A: Identifying the Factors That Contributes To Empowerment

It could be deduced from the study that creating on job education have rightful effect on employee empowerment which 75% and 86% affirmed and it was in agreement with Naderi and others (2008) which found that creating on the job education would have positive effect in empowering employees. It suggests that employees must have in-service
Table 1. Background Data of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>8 Managers/Supervisors</th>
<th>60 Staff</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 30 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASSCE/NVTI</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND/Diploma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 2 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researchers’ Fieldwork, 2015

Table 2. Factors that contribute to employee empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contextual factors</td>
<td>Creativity, Knowledge, skills and Responsibility,</td>
<td>Conger and Kanungo (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Employee interaction with superiors,</td>
<td>Sparrows, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Interaction with peers and subordinates,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Organizational culture,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Top level support, Relationship between leaders and subordinates,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader-Member-Exchange,(LMX)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team-Member-Exchange (TMX)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Dimensional Factors</td>
<td>-Leadership focused on the development of the individuals</td>
<td>Arad and Psininos and Smithson, (2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Personal responsibility for performance exemplified in job autonomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Structure that is decentralized, has controls based on checks and balances,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Contingent reward system with such components as employee stock option programs, pay for performance, and win-win strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four dimensions of psychological state of the subordinate</td>
<td>(1) Meaningfulness: the meaning of a value of a task goal or purpose judged in relation to an individual’s own ideals or standards.</td>
<td>Lee and Koh (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Competence: an individual’s belief in his/her capability to perform task activities skilfully.</td>
<td>Thomas and Velthouse (1990) Cognitive model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Self-determination (or choice): autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work behaviours and processes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Impact: the perception of the degree to which an individual can influence certain outcomes at work.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Research work 2015

training to enhance their skills and also get abreast with technological changes in the service environment.

In this respect, training and continual development of work enhances employee empowerment and also that self-directed work team enhances employee’s empowerment. This was in agreement with Caudron (1995) who found that self-directed work teams; free flow of information about company goals and directions; training and continual development of work management, and leadership skills by all employees; managers who are more like coaches and who empower gradually; employee control of needed resources, provision for performance measurement;
continual positive feedback and reinforcement on performance are all vital for organizational success. This was affirmed by all the managers and majority of the employees.

SECTION B: Assessing the Level of Employees Empowerment

In response to questions which sought to identify training on empowerment and involvement of employee in decision making majority (86%) agreed whilst 95% agreed that they are allowed to handle customer complaints of which Grönroos (2001) argued that when employees are empowered and involved in decision making, they are more likely to feel good about the company and this was confirmed by Grönroos (2001) who suggested that if employees are not satisfied with their jobs, achieving customer satisfaction will be difficult.

It was clear that customer requests are handled at the front desk and employees are willing to serve customers as they wrap up the responsiveness of the hotel's service. Employees are responsive in terms of promptness and willingness on the service. Looy et al. (2003) describes responsiveness as the willingness on the part of the service supplier (employee) to assist the customer and provide prompt service.

As touching whether employee can fix customers minor problems independently in the front desk majority 80% of the employee agreed as according to Bowen and Lawler 1992, cited in Kebede et al. (2012), one of the benefits of employee empowerment is that employees will have confidence that they have all what they need to send back their customers fully satisfied. They will be active in responding for customers unplanned and immediate requests without delaying till they approve it from their supervisors.

With respect to rewarding it was found that employees are rewarded beside their monthly salaries which confirm the assertion by Zeithaml et al. (2006) that if employees have a sense of responsibility and reward at work, the result is that they will hold themselves responsible for the outcome of their work in the organization.

On decisions regarding customer service, the study agreed that respondents are allowed to make decisions regarding customer service and method they used to handle them was to give solution on their own. This was in agreement with Looy et al. (2003): which points out that employees cannot be empowered without the necessary organizational support that are required to stimulate actions such as taking initiatives and acting independently. For employees to be successfully empowered, the organization needs to create the environment where such attitudes and behaviours can be developed.

Regarding whether performance was directly related to empowerment or not, findings agreed that Employee's impact over service quality through their performance is an inevitable fact if he or she is empowered enough. With reference to Looy et al. (2003), on the five dimensions as a driving force behind individual work motivation impact, it is the degree of influence an individual has on the direct work environment.

SECTION C: Challenges faced by implementers of employee empowerment

With regard to challenges faced by employee, majority complained that communications are not available or rather comes too late for them to act efficiently. Also employee stated that there is ambiguity in role which rather comes t

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>8 Managers/Supervisors</th>
<th>60 Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which an individual can influence certain outcomes</td>
<td>6 75.0</td>
<td>58 96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on Empowerment</td>
<td>6 75.0</td>
<td>52 86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow to make Decisions</td>
<td>7 87.1</td>
<td>56 93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed to handle Customer Complain</td>
<td>8 100</td>
<td>57 95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward for excellent service</td>
<td>8 100</td>
<td>53 88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and Availability of Information</td>
<td>7 87.1</td>
<td>54 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the hotels Developments Process</td>
<td>7 87.1</td>
<td>56 93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixing of minor problems</td>
<td>8 100</td>
<td>48 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams and collaborative working arrangements</td>
<td>8 100</td>
<td>52 86.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researchers Fieldwork, 2015
weak communication and role ambiguity reduces employee empowerment as found by Menon (1995) in a research which was done on 311 employees that weak communications, ambiguity in role reduce individual empowerment in the organization. Management must therefore allow free flow of information and also avoid rigid formalities in solving customers’ complaints.

Majority of the respondents asked on the training issue responded that they did not get training timely; most of them said that training is offered to them once a year.

Majority of the responses reflected on the assessment of employee on general service quality at which they confirmed that, access to and availability of information to make a good decision is very limited.

Despite all the positive points given by employees which suggest that empowerment concept is being implemented, the submissions given by employees when asked about challenges they face seems contradicting. Management is therefore advised to make clear the level of autonomy given to the employees and the employee are also advised to work within their limit so that the full benefit can be enjoyed by both the employee and the organization.

Conclusions

This study assessed the implementation of Employee Empowerment on the selected hotels in Sunyani Township. Data was obtained from respondents (8 managers and 60 employees) using semi structured interview.

Based on the result of the findings, employee empowerment is being practiced in the selected hotels. This research confirms that employee empowerment improves quality of service. The employees are empowered to deliver quality services to customers. Empowerment has much to offer organizations operating services. Empowered employees react to customer needs as they arise, they respond quickly to complaints and take personal pride in ensuring that service encounters are a success. Importantly, they feel pride and concern for the customer experience. These are all experiences workers of these popular hotels had to share. However, despite all the positive points given by employees which suggest that empowerment concept is being implemented, the submissions given by employees when asked about challenges they face seems contradicting. Management is therefore advised to make clear the level of autonomy given to the employees and the employees are also advised to work within their limit.

A more reflective consideration suggests that claims for employee empowerment need to take account of different definitions and meanings used by managers. These different managerial meanings will be shaped by perceptions and concerns about the needs of the particular operation in question. Managers are to encourage more participation in the service interaction by the employee and the researcher hereby conclude that empowering employees is the best thing to do to gain an edge over competitors. However the challenges these hotels expressed are common organizational problems that need to be resolved by intensifying education on effective practice of the concept of employee empowerment.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the findings obtained and conclusion drawn from this research, the researcher recommends the following points.

Training of Employees

As to the importance of training, employees need to be updated to be knowledgeable and resource full to give full-fledged service to the customers they are rendering service. According to Zeithaml et al. (2006). Training for technical and interactive skills: for employees to deliver service quality they need an on-going training in the necessary technical skills and knowledge and in- process or interactive skills.

Employee empowerment/ Authority

The hotels managements have to give a certain level of autonomy to the employees to decide on the service they are rendering. This will help them to give prompt service to the customer by solving their problems.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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