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Research Article

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Communication management: strategy for measuring hotel performance in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract: Communication plays a very critical role in ensuring that hotel staffs render better and efficient service through a mutual sense for job satisfaction, career growth and service performance. This study, therefore, aims at evaluating the relationship between the strategies of communication and performance of hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were sourced. Further, quasi-experimental research design was used for this study, while 180 questionnaires were distributed to sampled hotel staffs within the study area. This was achieved using a random sampling technique for questionnaire administration. It was hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between communication strategy and hotel performance in Port Harcourt. Meanwhile, Spearman rank order correlation coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to test and analyse the data collected. The output of the analysis reveals a positive correlation between communication strategy and hotel performance. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis was accepted and the null discarded. It was, therefore, fit to conclude that effective communication strategy will enhance the level of competitiveness and performance of the hotels in a general perspective.

Keywords: Communication; Profitability; Hotel; Competitiveness; Performance

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1 Introduction

Historically, hotel products and services have, in recent times, been upheld due to their significance and contributions to the economy of many countries in the world, especially those with a vast tourism potential. It is worth noting that hotel efficiency can be influenced by two principal indicators, namely, external and internal factors. External communications entail the employee–guest interaction and the hotel's communication with external factors, and are anchored basically on sales and marketing functions.

More so, internal communication connotes the process of obtaining hotel service- and product-related information and distributing the same within hospitality industry. External, because sectorial competition abounds in hotels as well as makers who influence strategy and results, while internally, hotels have to decide on a daily basis on the most correct way to operate and to also allocate resources in order to achieve and reach the local goals (Bresciani et al., 2012).

Communication is a coordinated activity aimed at constituting a framework to convey salient information as one of the fundamental pillars of social life and organisational structure, as well as the activity of building lasting relationships between organisations and customers. In this case, effective communication enhances customer retention in tourism sector vis-à-vis hotel industry. A healthy communication is needed for people to know and understand each other better, to create an enabling environment for proper functioning in hotel hubs and to market their products and services to existing and potential customers easier (Ruck & Welch, 2012).

An effective communication is indeed a good communication is the general term that sums up the sending and receiving of messages. The manner in which the employees communicate can go a long way in boosting high customer traffic, patronage, profitability and service sustainability in the hotel industry. Since we communicate so much, we ought to be pretty good at it; but badly,

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we do not because there are probably as many opportunities to be misunderstood as there are people with whom we communicate. For example, different people interpret what we say in different ways and not really what you mean, and sometimes we do the same to what they say to us too. Effective communication is very profitable in the hotel business because supervisors spend most of their time communicating, as well as directing people at work, giving instructions, developing, training, interviewing, hiring and firing.

Communication efficiency is very widespread, as most organisations develop human resource to facilitate effective communication to their customers. Without having a strategy that effectively reaches the predetermined target audiences, there is absolutely no way that the hotel industry can attract patronage which would lead to increase in turnover. If an organisation is going to spend time to figure out its key messages, it will be best to develop a strong communication strategy to market its products and services using modern communication models.

In the hotel industry, two inter-related communication models must be upheld by tourism and hospitality stakeholders when creating a communication strategy: branding and the internet (visual presentation). Branding is an integral part of communication strategy because it helps relate your organisation to an image or an idea (Hill & White, 2000). Once the image or idea is recognisably related to the organisation, any client, customer, guest or service user who sees the brands will think of that organisation. Internet, on the other hand, contributes significantly to the marketing of hotel products and services to customers if the organisation is targeting those born in the computer generation.

Hotel establishments have to operate in the highly competitive accommodation industry, which is highly susceptible to external factors and ever-changing customer expectations. Additionally, the need to accurately anticipate and fulfill the needs and expectations of guests means that it is a complicated task to manage a hotel. Therefore, effective communication strategy needs to be adopted for the sustainability of hospitality industry. Due to these and many other factors, managing a hotel invariably differs from other enterprises. Specifically, the personal aspect of the production process, characterised by labour-intensive service and simultaneous consumption, results in a higher importance of management functions of a more personal nature.

Communication and personal interaction are probably the most essential functions in hotel industry. Besides the importance of external communications with potential guests (marketing), competitors and other external factors have ease of access to salient information about its products and services. The hospitality industry is a very fast-paced sector that deals with people on a daily basis. Employees in the hotel industry, such as receptionists, front desk managers, food and beverage personnel and security, among others, are well trained with the rudiments of effective communication with customers during customer–staff interaction. The expectations of every customer on the product and services of a hotel must be sustained through effective communication on the part of hotel employees.

Imagine how frustrating it would be for a tourist during adventure who is not privy to information about existing tourist sites he or she intends to visit. The same is applicable to a guest who visits a hotel and he or she is not effectively communicated on the products and services of the hotel. The hospitality industry is a very fast-paced environment that deals with people on a daily basis and so, customers expect to receive exceptional services and products during their stay in the hotel.

It calls for concern that despite the derivable benefits and the role hotel plays towards the sustainability of hospitality industry, communication strategy has overtime being plagued with a lot of challenges, especially in the sampled hotels within Port Harcourt. Some sampled hotels still depend on the use of outdated media communication to market their products and services. Further, it was sad to observe that in some selected hotels, the staffs were not adequately trained on the use of visual presentation, print and social media as a medium of marketing, promoting and gaining repeat patronage from customers. Regrettably, some of the sampled hotels in Port Harcourt city do not have active communication unit that is equipped with modern facilities to aid effective communication with existing and potentials customers. With this investiture, it is, therefore, a call for concern to examine communication management as a strategy to measure hotel performance in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical framework

2.1.1 Media richness theory

Media richness theory, also known as information richness theory, is regarded as a tool used in explaining dif-

ferent communication media used in decimating salient information about products, services and brands. This theory was propounded by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986 as an annexure of information processing theory (IPT). The essence of the media richness theory was basically used for ranking and evaluating the richness of certain communication media adopted by any organisation. These include, but are not limited to, phone calls, video conferencing and email. For example, a phone call cannot reproduce visual social cues such as gestures, which makes it a less-rich communication medium than video conferencing, which affords the transmission of gestures and body language. Based on contingency theory and IPT, the theory further explains that richer personal communication media are generally more effective for communicating equivocal issues in contrast with leaner, less-rich media.

The proponents of media richness theory posited that relying on IPT for its theoretical foundation, media richness theory was originally developed to describe and evaluate communication media within organisations. While presenting media richness theory, Daft and Lengel (1986) sought to help organisations cope with communication issues such as ambiguous or confusing messages, or conflicting presentation of messages. Media richness theory has been retroactively adapted to include new communication media such as video telephony, online conferencing and online coursework.

According to Blau et al. (2017), although media richness theory relates to media use, rather than media choice, empirical studies of the theory have often focused on what medium a manager would choose to communicate over and not the effects of media use. Dennis and Kinney (1998) reported that media richness theory states that all communication media vary in their ability to enable users to communicate and to change understanding. Dennis and Valacich (1999) argued that the degree of this ability is known as a medium's 'richness'. Media richness theory places all communication media on a continuous scale based on their ability to adequately communicate a complex message. Carlson and Zmud (1999) posited that media that can efficiently overcome different frames of reference and clarify ambiguous issues are considered to be richer, whereas communication media that require more time to convey understanding are deemed less rich.

To this end, the theory of media richness is adopted in this study as being fit to give an insight into communication management as a strategy for measuring hotel performance in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. It could also harness the development of effective communication platforms such as visual presentation, print media and social media to foster competition and profitability among sample hotels in Port Harcourt. However, the application of modern communication media by hotels aids to boost customer's traffic with a corresponding increase in income. Media richness as a theory plays a multifaceted role in marketing of hotel products, services, customer retention/loyalty, patronage as well as profitability. The media richness theory was adopted to show the impact of communication media in measuring hotel performance within Port Harcourt.

2.2 Literature review

In these contemporary times, effective communication plays a significant role in enhancing successful functioning of hotel industry. Hotel industry, which is an integral part of the tourism industry, is pluralistic in nature as it accommodates employees and customers, irrespective of their socio-cultural affiliation. Hotel industry is patterned as a service hub which is characterised by employee–customer interaction and experience.

In the hospitality industry, specifically the hotel industry, effective communication means effective handling of the organisation's concerns. The hotel industry also must have a coordinated communication strategy for speedy and effective information management within the industry in order to achieve its desired aims and objectives. The barriers like semantic barrier and the psychological barrier are more closely linked with the employees, which affect their communication in English among the employees of food and beverage service department. Semantic barrier arises due to the wrong interpretation of a word with a connotative and denotative meaning.

In a related study, Aradhna (2015) argued that semantic barrier arise when there exists indifference in language, culture and education levels. The hotel guests who come from various geographical and cultural diversities with different accents or slang create a communication issue in hospitality industry. Sneha (2017) in a study on semantic barrier in communication asserted that effective communication with the guest always builds up friendliness and professionalism between the guest and employees. Nektaria and Charalabos (2009). It was also argued by Demin (2011) that in hospitality industry, it can be said that finding creative solutions in a short time and also creating opportunities to improve skills are possible with effective organisational communication. In particular, high-quality communication is reflected by pay raises, opportunity for advancement and feelings of accomplishment among employees (Chiang et al., 2008).

According to Eren (2002) and Shimizu et al. (2006), strategy in this context implies the art of reaching certain pre-defined targets in the most effective and rapid way through the usage of optimal methods and means, while communication is the process of conveying a message containing information from a source to a recipient through a channel, as supported by Okay and Okay (2005). Strategic communication measures the effectiveness of the vital messages to be shared with the public, identifies perception levels and assesses the level of damage when there are discourses that create misunderstandings or do not provide the desired impacts and results. As mass media (visual presentation) have developed and diversified in this modern era, some significant changes have occurred both in the form and content of the messages to be conveyed to public (Vural & Bat, 2010). From field study, it is evident that communication strategy is an effective tool for measuring hotel performance at a global scale and in Port Harcourt in particular. Thus, from existing literature, the role of communication strategy in hotels is very significant. Therefore, the need to assess the communication strategy adopted by hotels in the study locale as a measure of their overall performance is deemed very pertinent.

2.3 Methodology

A sample population of 352 staff was selected, from which the Taro Yamen's formula for finite population was adopted to determine the sample size for the study. Thus, a sample size of 180 was drawn from the total sample population. Ten sample hotels were purposively selected within the study locale as shown in Table 1. A questionnaire was structured to capture the medium of communication used in marketing, informing and relating with the customers in the sampled hotels, showing specifically their use of virtual presentation, print and social media as an instrument to enhance competitiveness among other hotels within the study vicinity, and it was administered to the staffs and customers in selected hotels in order to elucidate information on communication management strategy adopted by the hotel human resources unit.

Further, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was structured to buttress the workability of the communication strategy adopted by sampled hotels. More so, existing literature on related subject matter had been reviewed before the questionnaire was developed and administered. Key informant interview (KII) was conducted with the 10 human resource managers (HRMs) on the effectiveness of the communication strategy adopted with regards to customers' level of patronage, loyalty and rate of financial turnover. The data collected were put together through a structured questionnaire and subjected to detailed analyses, and the results were interpreted comprehensibly.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

In order to ensure reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was adopted to obtain the reliability index 0.70, which is appropriate for this study (Nunnally, 1978), and the variables are indicated in Table 2.

In order to validate the data collected, five hypotheses were stated as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between virtual presentations and competitiveness of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between virtual presentations and profitability of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Hotels

S/No.	Name of hotels	No. of staffs
1	Presidential Hotel	58
2	Habitat Hotel & Suits	30
3	Helena Haven Hotel	28
4	Larritel Hotels Limited	20
5	Le Meridien Hotel	55
6	Lotus Hotel	23
7	Marriot Garden City Hotel	25
8	Mass Central Hotel	20
9	Swiss Spirit Hotel	38
10	Voyage Ranch Hotel	45
	Total	342

Source: Field survey (2019).

Table 2: Reliability statistics

Items	Cronbach's alpha value
Virtual presentations	0.70
Print media	0.79
Social media	0.72
Competitiveness	0.79

Source: SPSS version 22 (2019).

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between print media and competitiveness of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between print media and profitability of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between social media and competitiveness of hotels in Port Harcourt.

The five hypotheses were stated and tested using the Spearman's rank order correlation and the formula used is:

$$n = \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

where $\sum d^2$ is the the sum of the squared differences of two variables, n is the number of subjects being ranked and rs is the rank of correlated coefficient. To measure the significance of relationship, we used the Z-test. The formula used for calculating the Z-test statistic is given as $Z = rs\sqrt{n-1}$.

2.5 Discussion of Findings

2.5.1 Virtual presentations and competitiveness

The important finding of this research is that there was a significant and positive relationship between virtual presentations and competitiveness. This was revealed using the Spearman's order correlation coefficient which indicated r = 0.651. This means that training is relatively associated with competitiveness at such hotels need to use television broadcasting as a communication strategy to enhance hotel performance. This is in line with Burg's (2013) report who stated that most business presentations today still depend on conference calls and email chains, which make it challenging to get to know your partners. To buttress the result from the analysis of Table 3, KII was conducted on the use of visual presentation by the hotel as a tool to foster competition among other hotels. The questions that were related to visual presentation and competiveness were 'To what extent do you use visual presentation to compete with other hotel proprietors? Does the adoption of visual presentation as a communication strategy yield optimal result in terms of competition with your contemporaries?' an excerpt from the response of the manager from Presidential Hotel, Mr. Tonye Waribo, was:

> Our hotel has employed every form of modern communication strategy to market our product and services. And beside we even engage our old and new customers on a video call to sustain our customer–management relationship. If even send them videos of both diurnal and nocturnal activities that takes place in the hotel such as our night club, karaoke, and birthdays. With this strategy, we have been able to gain our customers' loyalty and attract repeat patronage. With these we have been able to compete with other hotels within Port Harcourt. On your second question, I want to say emphatically that since the I took over as the manager of this noble hotel, I have adopted major communication strategies such as the once you mentioned (visual presentation, social and print media) and I have even created a link where all our customers can contribute their idea on how to serve them better. The use of these communication strategies has yielded tremendous result in terms of increase in patronage, high level of turnover and general improvement in the level of customer–management relationship.

An excerpt from the response of HRM of Habitat Hotel and Suite (Mr. Williams Jaja) on the same questions is as follows:

> Apart from reaching our customers through our mobile phone, we sincerely do not use visual presentation in our hotel. Though we are making plans to do that by first of all planning to show all football matches with the use of a large projector screen. Once that is achieved, we will then improve in our visual presentation by adopting other methods. The absent of visual presentation has in a way affected our level of patronage and turnover overtime compared to other hotels who are using modern medium of communication with their customers. But I can assure you that very soon we will match up with other hotels.

From the responses of the hotel managers, it is evident that there is a strong relationship between visual presentation and competitiveness. It implies that with the effective use of visual presentation as a communication strategy, hotels can compete efficiently with other hotels and increase their turnover by increasing customers' patronage.

2.6 Virtual presentations and profitability

Details from the second analysis as presented in Table 4 revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between virtual presentations and profitability in the sampled hotels in the study vicinity. The result was evident in Spearman's order correlation coefficient which indicated r = 0.690. This shows that the sampled hotels that wish to sustain the loyalty and gain repeat patronage from their customers must adopt efficient and effective communication strategy in order to improve their profitability. Virtual presentations happen when the presenter uses one slide for every explanation or data point and the

Table 3: Correlations

		Virtual presentation	Competitiveness
	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.681”
Visual presentation	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	n	180	180
Spearman’s rho			
	Correlation coefficient	0.681”	1.000
Competitiveness	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	n	180	180

Table 4: Correlations

		Virtual presentation	Profitability
	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.690**
Visual presentation	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	n	180	180
	Correlation coefficient	0.690”	1.000
Profitability	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	n	180	180

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

audience zones out. A dynamic presentation is an impressive presentation, so use a variety of media, images and graphics to keep your audience’s attention (Vogel, 2006).

Excerpts are given below from the responses of two managers from Swiss Spirit Hotel and Helena Haven Hotel. They both had this to say about using visual presentation to enhance their profitability. Thus, the manager of Swiss Spirit Hotel, Mrs. Excel Tamuno, stated:

> This hotel has made so much profit through use of visual presentation from our esteem customers by high traffic to our facility. This is because we advertise all our products and services through visual presentation within the hotel premises and social and print media platforms.

While the manager of Helena Haven Hotel, Mr. Saviour, posited thus:

> Without the use of visual presentation in any hotel, the level of profit will definitely reduce drastically, because the world has metaphors into a visual era. I can say very vividly that our hotel never made huge financial returns before the use of visual presentation. Therefore, with the implementation of visual presentation, we have made so much profit.

From the foregoing, therefore, it is fit to assert that with effective use of visual presentation, there is bound to be an increase in the profit accrued by hotels not only in the study area.

2.7 Print media and competitiveness

Output from analysis on the relationship between print media and competitiveness revealed that the print media is related significantly to competitiveness. Using the Spearman’s order correlation coefficient which indicated r = 0.654, it was evident that the relationship between the two variables was positive and strong. This connotes that as the use of print media increases, hotels have incentives to invest resources into their management and the aim to reduce risks and capitalise on competitiveness (Matyushchenko, 2006). Hence, hotels need to enhance their use of print media in order to be competitive in their industry and achieve the expected turnover.

Table 5: Correlation

		Print media	Profitability
	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.868”
Print media	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	n	180	180
Spearman’s rho			
	Correlation coefficient	0.868”	1.000
Profitability	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	n	180	180

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Correlation

		Print media	Competitiveness
	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.654**
Print media	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	n	180	180
Spearman’s rho			
	Correlation coefficient	0.654**	1.000
Competitiveness	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	n	180	180

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2.8 Print media and profitability

Finally, details from analysis of Table 5 revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between print media and profitability. This result was further buttressed using the Spearman’s order correlation coefficient which indicated –0.868. This same result was as well supported by Tuna (2004), who in his study discovered that there is a significant positive correlation between the quality of print media and the volume of profit. It is, therefore, fit to conclude that adoption of effective communication strategy will enhance the hotels’ profitability directly or indirectly. Details from Table 6 were further buttressed by the views of hotel managers from KII. The question asked was: Can you rate the profit we made through the use of print media and how effective the media has been in achieving high profit margin? The response of the manager of Mass Central Hotel was:

> The use of print media as a communication management strategy is not very effective compared to visual and social media in terms of drawing customer to our hotel. That is why we engage more in using both social media and visual presentation to inform our customers of services and products on daily basis.

Details from the analysis of Table 7 revealed that the most used communication strategy by hotels in relating with the customers is social media, which was upheld by 45.5% of sampled respondents, while 31% argued that print media was the most used communication strategy, followed closely by 23% of sampled population who were of the opinion that visual presentation was mostly used. From the results, it can be inferred that social media platform is the most preferred communication strategy used in marketing hotel products, services and activities.

How satisfied are you with the communication strategy your preferred hotel uses in reaching out to you?

Very satisfied	116
Fairly satisfied	64
Fairly dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	6
Do not know	-

Table 7: The most used communication strategy by sampled hotels

Most used communication strategy by hotels	Frequency	Percentage
Virtual presentation	42	23
Print media	56	31
Social media	82	45.5
	180	100

Source: Field work 2019.

To ascertain the satisfaction level of customers on the communication strategy used by hotel proprietors, the Likert scale questionnaire was used, which showed the responses from sampled respondents on their level of satisfaction on the communication strategy adopted by hotel proprietors. It revealed that 64% of respondents representing 116 respondents were very satisfied with the communication strategy used, while 35% representing 64 respondents were of the opinion that they were fairly satisfied. Meanwhile, a total of 5% of respondents were both fairly and very dissatisfied with the strategy used by hoteliers. From the foregoing, it is can be attested that the communication strategy adopted by hotel management in the study area is good enough to sustain customers' loyalty and enhance repeat patronage.

2.9 Social media and competitiveness

As evident from the results of data analysis presented in Table 8, the correlation between social media and competitiveness suggested that the use of social media as a communication strategy to measure hotel performance is significantly positively related to competitiveness. Again, using the Spearman's order correlation coefficient which indicated r = 0.347 revealed a strong relationship between the two variables. The results of the analysis further affirmed the results obtained by Duncan and Moriarty (1998), which upheld that social media as a communication tool is the human activity that links people together and creates relationship. (This means that individuals* relate with each other by means of communication; it is the glue that binds the hotel managers and customers together in the hotel industry.)

2.10 Social media and profitability

The results presented in Table 9 show evidently a strong and significant relationship between social media and profitability. This was revealed using the Spearman's order correlations coefficient which indicated 3.910. This

Table 8: Correlation

Correlation coefficient		**0.568"**	**0.814***	**1.00 0**	**0.724"**	**0.910"**
Social media	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	n	180	180	180	180	180
Spearman's rho						
	Correlation coefficient	0.681"	0.654**	0.347**	1.000	0.492"
Competitiveness	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0		0
	n	180	180	180	180	180

Table 9: Correlations

		Social media	**Profitability**
	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.910"
Social media	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	n	189	180
Spearman's rho		0.910**	
	Correlation coefficient		1.000
Profitability	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	n	180	180

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

is also supported by Sener (2001), who in his study argued that with effective communication, customer satisfaction is bound to be ensured. It can, therefore, be asserted that the hotel proprietors can personally improve their communication strategy to ensure a corresponding increase in hotel patronage and profitability.

Summary of the findings shown in Table 10 reveals that of all the relationships existing among the variables studied within the sampled hotels, the relationship between social media and profitability is the strongest, followed by the relationship between print media and profitability which is strong. This is to say that there is a need for hotels to channel their focus on ensuring that employees put in more effort to increase profitability. This can be achieved by making their jobs more interesting and less complex in nature with the help of various communication strategies as it is an important factor in determining hotel performance. Therefore, it is important that hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria should understand how these variables influence each other.

3 Conclusion

The study analysis and results showed that for hotels to improve their performance in terms of quality service delivery and patronage, the hotel proprietors must take into account the uniqueness of communication strategies in hotel development. Customers' retention, loyalty and trust are mostly gained through the staff–customer relationship, which is improved through effective communication strategy. These modules give room for extreme gratification besides advanced performance.

However, it is specifically deduced from the study analysis and results that virtual presentation has a significant and positive relationship with competitiveness and profitability among sampled hotels in the study vicinity. The result was evident in the Spearman's order correlation coefficient which indicated r = 0.690. It is, therefore, evident that improvement in the use of visual presentation by not only hotels in the sampled study area, but also at the national and global scale will foster increase in cus-

Table 10: Correlation matrix

			Virtual presentations	Print media	Social media	Competitiveness	Profitability
	Virtual presentations	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.719**	0.568**	0.681**	0.690”
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0
		n	180	180	180	180	180
	Print media	Correlation coefficient	0.719”	1.00 0	0.814*	0.654”	0.868”
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0	0
		n	180	180	180	180	180
Spearman's rho	Social media	Correlation coefficient	0.568”	0.814*	1.00 0	0.724”	0.910”
		Sig. (2-tailed)					
		n	0	0		0	0
	Competitiveness	Correlation coefficient	180	180	180	180	180
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.681”	0.654**	0.347**	1.000	0.492”
		n	0	0	0		0
	Profitability	Correlation coefficient	180	180	180	180	180
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.690”	0.868*	0.910**	0.492”	1.000
		n	0	0	0	0	

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

tomers' traffic with a corresponding increase in the turnover accruable to hotel industry.

Further, it was also discovered that there is a strong bond between the print media and competitiveness with profitability. From the Spearman's order correlation coefficient which indicated r = 0.654, it was evident that the relationship between the two variables was positive and strong. It could be affirmed that there is actually a strong relationship between the two variables. Nevertheless, the level of dependence and usage of print media by hotels for communication with their customers is very low compared to the use of social media platform as a tool in enhancing effective communication and marketing their products, services and activities.

Finally, the results on the analysis of social media as a communication strategy revealed a positive relationship with competitiveness and profitability among the sampled hotels in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria. This is evident in the test of hypothesis which showed using the Spearman's order correlations coefficient which indicated 3.910 and output from Table 5 analysis, as majority of the sampled respondents posited that social media platform is the most effective communication strategy for both communication and marketing of hotel products and services. This assertion was further affirmed from the result derived from the KII with sampled hotel proprietors/managers who stated categorically that the use of social media yielded more dividend than other forms of communication.

4 Recommendations

From evidence gathered in the study findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- Hotel proprietors should keep communication with their employees at regular intervals using different communication platforms such as face-to-face contact, telephone, social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter). With these, there is bound to be an increase in customers' patronage with a corresponding boost in hotel revenue.
- Hotel proprietors should conduct on-the-job training on effective communication strategies to enhance their service delivery and performance in general perspective. Emphasis should be laid more on social media platforms as the world is upturning to a digital era.
- Customer relation unit should be established in every hotel to facilitate the customers in getting the required information about the hotel services, facilities and products. Customers will also use this unit as an avenue to appreciate or criticise the quality of service that was rendered to them. This unit will not only serve as a marketing force, but also as strength to the hotel.

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