



CUSTOMER CARE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN HOTELS

A CASE STUDY OF SHERATON HOTEL

BY

NATUHWERA CHRISTINE

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SUPERVISOR: MR. TIBAINGANA ANTHONY

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DECLARATION

I, Natuhwera Christine hereby declare that *customer care and customer satisfaction in hotels* is entirely my own original work and has never been presented for any award of degree in any other institution of learning.

Signature.....

Date.....

NATUHWERA CHRISTINE

APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidates'

University supervisor

Signed.....

Date.....

Supervisor: Mr TIBAINGANA ANTHONY.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my beloved parents Mr & Mrs Mugumya Keleth

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God the almighty for the strength, knowledge and good health throughout my studies.

I thank my supervisor Mr. Tibaingana Anthony for his inspiring efforts in guiding me through the course of producing this dissertation. I wish to acknowledge his interest, encouragement and task of scrutinizing this report.

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ABSTRACT

The study was intended to investigate the relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry a case study of Sheraton hotel. The objectives of the study were to examine to examine customer care strategies used by Sheraton hotel, to establish the customer care service level at Sheraton hotel, to examine the relationship between customer care services and customer satisfaction

To achieve the above objectives, the researcher collected primary data and secondary data. The researcher used descriptive analysis and SPSS and used a sample of 100 respondents, 50 hotel customers and 50 Sheraton hotel employees who were selected using purposive sampling and simple random technique. The research findings showed that customer care services and activities at Sheraton hotel are generally good. Activities such as parking space, security, front desk services, hotel guides, and customer attention services increase customer care satisfaction.

It's concluded that there exists a strong relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction. It's recommended that employee motivation and employee training should be increased to improve customer care services and so customer care satisfaction

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study and the significant of the study

1.1 Background of the study

Customer care was defined by Kotler (1998) as a service that one can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything but brings about customer delight and satisfaction. In other words, customer care is a service that seeks to acquire new customers, provide superior customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty. As times change so do customers care aspects. The hospitality industry is one that is constantly undergoing change and because of this, the customer care service programme must be kept constantly updated as well.

Customer care services in organization include reliable services, security, parking space, front desk services, attractiveness, speed in service delivery, after sales services, customer attention and sensitivity to their needs, honesty, and good attitude towards customers. Customer care services are focused on making the customer comfortable, creating memorable interaction in the minds of the customers and making them feel better, satisfied than they were before the transaction and stimulate customer retention. The motive of any business is to create and serve their customers, but the biggest challenge is how to satisfy them for the life time of a business. Businesses should always look for ways to serve their customers more than they expect. In doing so, it helps them to know you care and it will leave them with the feel “Feel Good Factor”.

Customer care plays an important role in an organization's ability to generate income and revenue therefore customer care should be included as part of an overall approach to systematic improvement. A customer service experience can change the entire perception a customer has of the organization.

Customer care includes putting systems in place to maximize customers' satisfaction with the business. It should be a prime consideration for every business because sales and profits depend on keeping customer happy. Customer care is more directly important in some roles than others, for receptionist, sales staff and other employees in customer facing roles, customer care should be a core element of their job description and training a core criterion when you are recruiting.

A huge range of factors can contribute to customer satisfaction but customers both consumers and other business are likely to take into account the following;

- How well your service matches to customer needs
- How well you keep your customers informed
- The professionalism, friendliness and expertise of your employees
- The after sales service you provide.

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how products or services supplied by a company meet customer expectations. It refers to the extent to which customers are happy with the products and services provided by a business. Gaining high levels of customer satisfaction is very important to a business because satisfied customers are likely to be loyal, make repeated orders and use a wide range of services offered by a business.

The need to satisfy customer for success in any commercial enterprise is very obvious. The income of all commercial enterprises is derived from the payments received for the products and services to its external customers. Customers are the sole reason for the existence of commercial establishments. For customer satisfaction, it is necessary to establish and maintain certain important characteristics like quality, fair prices, good customer handling skills, efficient delivery and serious consideration of customer complaints.

The best way to find whether customers are satisfied is to ask them. What you ask the customers is important and how when and how often you ask these questions is also important. However, the most important thing about conducting a customer satisfaction survey is what you do with their answers.

Sheraton Hotel also emphasizes good customer care services and has established a customer care desk for its customers demand and guidance. The hotel has a customer care service policy that caters for customer activities. The activities for which the policy was designed include efficient and timely delivery of services, hotel guides, security, customer attention, parking space, 24 hour front desk services, sensitivity and attention to customer needs. However, with the existence of all efforts to ensure the best services for its customers, the hotel continues to lose customers to its competitors like Serena and creation of new customers is below target. (Report by Anna Mugenyi, Marketing manager in 2009). The Report revealed that, the customers have complained of high prices for accommodation and customer neglect. This situation has led to customer dissatisfaction and as a result, they are shifting their demands and loyalty to other organizations providing similar services in a manner that meets their expectations.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The Hotel industry is characterized by presence of many hotels which present a wide range of customer care services to their customers. Customer care is considered as a major tool for customer satisfaction (Kotler 1998). However, Sheraton Hotel is still not perfect at certain customer care service for example in 2005 number of customers reduced from 70 percent to 65 percent in aspects and has not made it on international standards hence cannot fully compete with other hotels on both local and international scene. This made it necessary for immediate intervention to save the hotel from losing its customers.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The study is aimed at establishing the relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry a case study of Sheraton hotel.

1.4. Objectives of the study

- (I) To examine customer care strategies used by Sheraton hotel
- (II) To establish the customer care service level at Sheraton hotel
- (III) To examine the relationship between customer care services and customer satisfaction

1.5. Research questions

- (I) what are the customer care strategies used by Sheraton hotel?
- (II) What is the level of customer care level at Sheraton hotel?
- (III) What is the relationship between customer care services and customer satisfaction

1.6. Scope of the study

1.6.1. Subject scope

The study is focused on customer care as the dependent variable and customer satisfaction as dependent variable and effect of customer care on customer satisfaction.

1.6.2. Geographical scope

The study will be conducted at Sheraton hotel Kampala located on Ternan Avenue in central division Kampala district

1.6.3. Time scope

The study focused on the operations between 2000-2010, a period of 5 years

1.7. Significance of the study

- (i) The study will help to build on the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the study variables. It will also help the researcher to gain more skills of conducting research and this will be important to the researcher while in office or pursuing further studies. It will also help the researcher to appreciate the concept of customer care services.

- (ii) The study findings will help to identify and highlight the weaknesses in customer care of Sheraton hotel and how customer care influences customer satisfaction and how to design an appropriate customer care service programme. This will help Sheraton hotel to recover its customers after implementing the necessary customer care services and it will be able to compete fully with other hotels both local and international.

- (iii) The study findings will help to build on the body of the existing literature and knowledge. This will help to provide reference for future researchers and they will be able to carry out research with ease since this study will provide secondary data to the researchers.

- (iv) The study is also expected to add knowledge on the existing knowledge about customer care services to the public. This will help the public recognize and appreciate customer

care services. The public especially customers of the hotels will be able recognize certain customer care services they are supposed to receive from service provide

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature put forward by different scholars and personalities on customer care and customer satisfaction as well as the relationship between the two variables

2.1 Customer care concept

Kotler (1998) described customer care as a service in any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. According to Ngahu (2001), customer care can be defined as any good service rendered to a customer in the process of selling a product or service. Ngahu further explains customer care as the “activities” which are offered to sale or are provided in connection with the sale of goods.

According to Balunywa (1995) any service rendered to a customer is the one referred to as customer care. Indeed so many scholars have attempted to described customer care but the gist of the whole concept of customer care from such definition above is that any one in business must not only concentrate on the product he or she is offering, but must accompany it with great service to the targeted customers. Balunywa observed that the concept of customer care is still new and most managers are yet to embrace it.

Mbonigaba (1995) wrote that there is need to make customers satisfied since they help business to earn. In most offices, customer care starts with the front office clerks. The secretaries at the front office should be made to appreciate the importance of customer care because this is the best chance for any business to create the first impression of good service to its customers. Kotler (1998) observed that customer satisfaction depends on the extent to which customer’s expectations about the services are fulfilled and these expectations are not static. Kotler further

noted that good customer service among other things entails keeping the promises made to customers, and not guaranteeing things that cannot be possible given the nature of the operating environment. To provide an excellent service to customers, the organization should deliver beyond the expectations of the customers.

Santon (1999) argues that, to provide good customer services, the organization in designing must focus wholly on the customer. This brings us to who actually is the customer. A customer is an individual or organization that makes a purchase decision. Drucker (1994) identifies customer creation as one of the major objectives of the business. Without a customer, other components of organization will not be viable for long. Organizations therefore design customer care programs seeking to acquire new customers, provide superior customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.

Caryforth Otal (1990), lists the factors of good customer care services'

- To gain new customers and retain old customers
- To obtain customer loyalty.
- To enhance the image of the organization.

2.2 Justification for quality customer service.

According to Bara (2001), the only reason for businesses to exist is to serve a customer. A customer is a person who enables people to earn a living and also enables government to exist and function. Therefore, there is need to have quality customer service to satisfy the customers. Quality customer care is associated with an attitude, a way of thinking and a philosophy of doing business that emphasize a strong commitment and sincere dedication to satisfying customers

(Ngahu2001) advocates for making customer satisfaction a priority of the company. It calls for the adoption of a customer orientation

Ngahu (2001) and Balunywa (1995) agree that, the main reason customers choose one product over another is probably because it better meets their need in such a way as ease of use, service, or ability to do what it promises to do. Ngahu (2001) further noted that another reason to become customer driven is to build market share. Research shows that you cannot maintain market share with unique features alone, as your competitors will imitate you. Sustainable market share growth is achieved through loyal customer and excellent service. To be customer driven means to position customers at the heart of your operations and to let their needs guide all your decisions, policies and strategies.

According to Zike (2001), in his study of what makes a company excellent, he interviewed 43 high performing companies. He wanted to find out what makes them so successful in an increasingly changing environment where many companies are facing closure. He found out that all high performing companies share a set of basic operating principles, some of which emphasized customer driven service. He found out that excellent companies provide unparalleled customer service, quality and reliability. Moreover, they exhibit a strong commitment to customer satisfaction and tend to stick to the business they know.

Customer orientation is reflected in the quality that customers get at all levels of the company (Ekpei 2001).Customer care helps to enhance the corporate image, customer relations, operational efficiency, competitive advantage and profitability. Moreover, it enables to cope with a rapidly changing environment and highly demanding customers. These are realized because the

company that is customer oriented emphasizes the provision of what customers need that is quality and efficiency in service.

According to Mulwana (2002), in paper presentation at Uganda manufacturer's seminar, he noted that customer service is a major tool for market penetration. Mulwana like Balunywa (1995) noted that businesses always look forward to win, to increase their turnover every other time and that this necessitates basic strategies that can attract and retain customers and the major tool is high quality customer services. Mulwana emphasized that high quality customer care delights and satisfies customers and the biggest benefit is that it creates loyal customers. Mulwana therefore noted that the process of customer care means delivering quality service that can satisfy the customer.

However, companies often fail to recognize the importance of staff care, who are also company customers (Balunywa1995). Balunywa identified two types of customers who enjoy the organizations services that is, the external people who buy from the business and those internal to the organization, who are the employees, those that can make things happen in the organization and deal with the external ones. Balunywa called the first type "kings" and the second type as "royalty". He said that the winning organizations are characterized by a committed customer base, healthy profits and happy people.

Balunywa further noted that customers are likely to receive good service if the staff delivering them are happy with their work. Employers who treat their staff like kings are more likely to have a motivated and committed workforce that is interested and willing to deliver quality service.

2.3 Facts about customer care

- It costs 6 times to attract customers than it does to keep an old one
- A typically dissatisfied customer will tell between 8-9 people about his problem with the organization.
- Seven out of ten complaining customers will do business with you again if you resolve the complaint in their favor
- If the complaint is resolved on spot, 95% will do businesses with you again
- Of the customers quite, 68% do so because of an attitude of indifference by the company or the specific individual.

Source: American Business in Uganda October 1998, 1st edition

2.4 Benefits of customer care

Hasket Otal (1994) says that growth and profits are stimulated primarily by customer satisfaction which has a large bearing on customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction that is largely influenced by the value of customer care provided along or with product or service to the customer. A satisfied customer is one whose expectations have been met and with such a customer organizations tend to benefit in the following ways:

- Positive word of mouth: customers are more likely to recommend a high service to their friends, relatives and colleagues. The business will thus thrive on credible and positive image.

- Creates a competitive edge: excellent customer care offers a much greater competitive edge than competitors largely because positive service differentiation entails improving all the people aspect of business like training, and motivation which are all difficult to copy and achieve.
- Job satisfaction: a pleasant and conducive atmosphere emanating from good customer care will not only result into improved moral commitments but also improved customer satisfaction hence fewer complaints. Good customer care would reduce labour turn over. Cardiac symptoms and absenteeism.

2.5 Benefits of giving staff customer care focus

Organizations rely on human resources to perform and thus be able to compete with others. Where human resource is poor, the performance of the organization may also be poor. (Pearn and Kandala 1993). To take care of customers, organizations must take care of those (staff) that take care of customers and this can be achieved by giving staff customer focused training. (Kother. p)further studies have shown that behavior of a worker in an organization is very important (Miner 1992 and Muchinsky 1993). Organizations need to get persons who know their attitudes, behavior and experience over a period of time. The person can conduct a job analysis of the organization which can enable him to isolate bad attitudes, behaviours and experiences and promote good ones that are customer focused. Some attributes tend to be repetitive through a person's life.

2.6 Attending to customer complaints

Customer complaints naturally reflect customer dissatisfaction and service deficiencies. Encouraging customer complaints is of strategic importance and should be handled with great

attention and care. A research of customer complaining behavior done in the USA had the following results.

- An unhappy customer will tell 9-10 people about his problem with you.
- An unhappy customer who is listened to is twice likely to do business with you again than one who is ignored.
- Out of the customers who complain, 70% will do business with you again if the complaint is resolved in their favor.

The organization should create and open avenues for customer complaints. Some of the usual avenues for customer surveys include putting in place suggestion box and telephone help lines.

Levit (1990) explains the following ways of handling customers.

- Refund. This means that in case the customer is right about the complaint, as a company caring about its customers, you should either explain the claim or refund the money in case of a financial problem.
- Take staff disciplinary action. Take the necessary staff action in case you identify the poor service delivery performance.
- Looking smart and efficient. Employees should always try as much as possible to explain problems and solve them amicably without much time being spent.
- Apologize. In case you find out that it's the corporation's mistake, it will be necessary to apologize and make amendments where possible.

- Equal treatment of complainers. As people interested in providing sound customer care, it is important to handle them with care and solve all their problems as regards your product or service.
- Replace/ make corrections by either part or whole of the product or service by providing a better solution that will create a good image. Remembering that it is easy to get customers but very difficult to retain them and more difficult to get them back. In any working environment that involves human interactions, complaints are bound to feature on a regular basis since they are part of business; one has to address them in more rational and realistic manner.

2.7 Concept of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the customer's perception that his / her expectations have been met. If the customer's expectations are met, then he is satisfied, if the expectations are surpassed, then he is delighted, but in the event that they are not met, the customer is dissatisfied (Kotler2001). Customer satisfied is achieved when a customer's expectations are met and this is largely influenced by the value of customer care provided by the organization. (Kotler1995) states that in the service- profit chain, greater service delivery, which results in satisfied and loyal customers who make repeat purchases and refer other customers to the organization.

2.8 Conceptual framework for customer satisfaction philosophy.

The customer satisfaction philosophy acknowledges supremacy of the customer. "The marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists of determining the needs and wants of target market and delivering the desired satisfaction more efficiently and effectively than competitors".(kotler2001)

From the above definition, one can say that the concept of customer satisfaction fine tunes the marketing concept on customer needs and wants. The concern for the customer and his experience with the company should pervade way and integral art of its philosophy and usher the concept of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction has become a business word for organizations that seek distinction and excellence from others.

The concept that the customer is very important dates far back when business management studies recognized marketing as an essential

Discipline (Davidson 1972). However, in Uganda, it is still new and some organizations are yet to embrace it. However, a satisfied customer will do the following:

- Will tell good about the product on market
- Will buy again
- Will pay less attention on other competing products
- Will leave other products and starts consuming one with more satisfaction.

Due to high demand for certain services, the providers become arrogant and then attitude is like take it or leave it. But the supply demand reduction has changed due to the abundance of substitute products and services to choose from. One can therefore assert that the customer is a king, in Ugandan market and any organization that ignores him stands to regret in terms of cost sales and the demise of such a firm will definitely come sooner than later.

2.9. Components of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been depicted as the identification and management of moment of truth. Zemice and Albrecht, who espouses the philosophy of satisfaction, identify three components of truth namely:

- **The service strategy.**

Service strategy is the decision about a service that will provide it with a unique identity vis-a-vis competition. It's also a means for creating shared value through the organization unifying purpose for management and service priorities for the staff members. To foster customer satisfaction orientation, a service strategy should be customer centered, enabling the business to meet the needs, expectations and motivation of target market.

- **The system;**

The system represents the manner in which a service is being delivered. A customer satisfaction system should be designed to provide a maximum level of ease and convenience to customers. This could be achieved by conducting a task analysis that identifies the service and enables the staff to rehearse the performance required to satisfy the customer.

- **The people (employees)**

Employees are very crucial component of the moment of truth. Employees determine the quality of the service to be delivered. The quality of contact and service given, attitude and appearance of the employees are crucial.

2.10. Customer satisfaction model.

In a maiden research on the subject of customer satisfaction, a Lancaster team (Caruana, Legrand, Omajor 1986) grouped the various moments of truth into five interfaces namely;

- The management - customer interface. Top management does not often come into contact with most customers. However, when dealing with key clients, there is contact. It is therefore of utmost importance that these contacts be well managed. Management would do well to be cognizant of the general rule which states that the bulk of the company's business comes from a small number of its customers. (Goneto)
- The staff-customer interface. The staff that comes into contact with customers on a continuous basis or by job occupation should consider and understand the customer needs on an individual basis. Furthermore, staff that does not come into direct contact with customers should be made to realize that they are supporting those who do come into direct contact with customers.
- The management - staff interfaces. Any organization is only as good as the caliber of the people it employs. Due care must therefore be paid to the recruitment, training and commitment to employees. Welfare is order to foster a customer satisfaction orientation.
- The customer system interface. This refers to the process of delivering the services to the customers. Management has the responsibility of designing and establishing a service delivery process that is satisfactory to its actual and potential clientele. Management should also make sure that the environment within the customer is to be pleasant and portrays the desired image. The customer satisfaction model places emphasis on an active information linkage (feedback) top management and the market management needs to know what customers want.
- Assessment of the performance of the product/ service bought. Dissatisfaction, complaints and suggestions should be put into consideration.

2.11 Relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction

2.11.1 Customer care as a means of customer satisfaction

Growth of business in most service industries is built up on a reputation for providing customer satisfaction through a good standard of attention and care. This is closely associated with exercising fiduciary responsibilities. Maintaining good standards of customer care is as fundamental to marketing as the development and launch of a new product or service. But unfortunately, providing a high standard of customer care cannot be qualified vary basically. As a result, it is often regarded as an operation rather than marketing function.

2.11.2 Fostering customer opinions as a means of customer Satisfaction

Customers are the lifeblood of any business. Customer care therefore is paramount. The ways in which services to publish can be improved are numerous and organizations should incur considerable expense researching then servicing image and reputation. The public relations department at an organization usually has the main task of ensuring that the mainstream marketing efforts are fully supported through winning the esteem of customers and the public at large. Without a good reputation for understanding customer problems and requirements, an organization will lose existing customers and fail to attract at least its market share of new business.

Customers who are not given an opportunity to business can do damage to the organization by the word of mouth, because of influence they have on the existing potential customers. A complaints department is essential for the success in any service business responsive to complaints and diligent in finding out facts. (Davidson,1978).

2.11.3 Customer care as a means of business survival.

Business survival is the continued existence, sustenance and growth of business entity. Organizational survival calls for innovation managerial skills in the exertion of the various

business activities/ functions in a competitive environment. It's through such skills that an organization can adapt to its competencies and eventually out rival its potential and actual competitors. In the provision of products and services, it is usual for both the seller and the buyer to come into contact. It's during this contact that clients form their impression of the quality of services that the organization is delivering.

This may be termed as the "moment of truth" (could1984 and Zemke 1985) the contact with the customer puts the organization to test its performance, quality of the product and service and the results of the test are positive to the organization which offers a high standard customer care services.

2.12. Conclusion

The gap between expectations, perceptions, and delivery of customer care services if managed at a high level, the relationship is mutually a beneficial one where there is equilibrium of commitment. This in turn will encourage repeat customers and give a greater share of the customer which is the defining factor in customer satisfaction

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction.

This chapter presents the detailed plan of how the study will be conducted. It presents the study Design, study population, sampling techniques, data sources, data collection methods and instruments, Data presentation and interpretation of findings.

3.1 Study design

The study was descriptive which was undertaken to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of variables of interest in a situation, and analytical based on qualitative and quantitative data both from primary and secondary sources. The study was based on the views of respondents to make conclusions and recommendations

3.2 Study population

The target population was the customers and staff of Sheraton Hotel in Kampala district.

3.3 Sampling methods

A representation number of respondents were selected among Sheraton Hotel customers and staff using purposive sampling method and this method helped the researcher to get information by selecting the population which conforms to certain characteristics that the researcher was interested in.

3.4 Sample size

The study involved 100 respondents of which 50 were employees of Sheraton hotel and 50 respondents were customers of the hotel. Using non statistical method for example nature of the study, nature of sampling, nature of respondents and other field conditions

3.5 Data source

Data was collected from two major sources that is primary and secondary sources.

- **Primary sources.** This source was providing first hand data directly from staff and Sheraton Hotel customers.
- **Secondary sources.** This source provided secondary data from sales report, invoices, journals, magazines, newspapers and reports from the hotel. This helped to back up data.

3.6 Data collection methods.

- **Survey method:** The researcher conducted face to face interviews with the respondents to collect data. This involved setting a list of questions in an organized way that guided the researcher in a process of collecting data.
- **Observation method:** This involved use of all senses to perceive and understand the experiences of interest to the researcher. This helped to see what people actually do rather than what they say they do.
- **Document review.** This involved critical examination of public or private recorded information related to the issue under investigation.

3.7 Data instrument

(i) Interview guide, this involved a list of questions in an organized way and were given to respondents to give their views.

3.8 Data processing, Analysis and Presentation

3.8.1 Data processing.

This included editing, tabulation and coding.

Editing; This was done to check the completed responses with purposes of detecting and eliminating errors and identifying vital information that was essential in coding and tabulation.

Coding; This was done according to whether or not the response was a representative of the objective of the study and realistic to the subject matter.

Tabulation; This involved mainly the use of simple statistical techniques like use of tables and percentages to test significance of the information from which meaning interpretation was drawn.

3.8.2 Data Analysis.

This involved organization, interpretation and presentation of collected data. The researcher used SPSS packages to analyze the data.

3.7.3 Data presentation

This involved presenting findings in a logical and sequential way so that conclusions can be drawn from them. The data was presented according to research questions and research objectives. Tables and figures were used to present data

CHAPTER FOUR

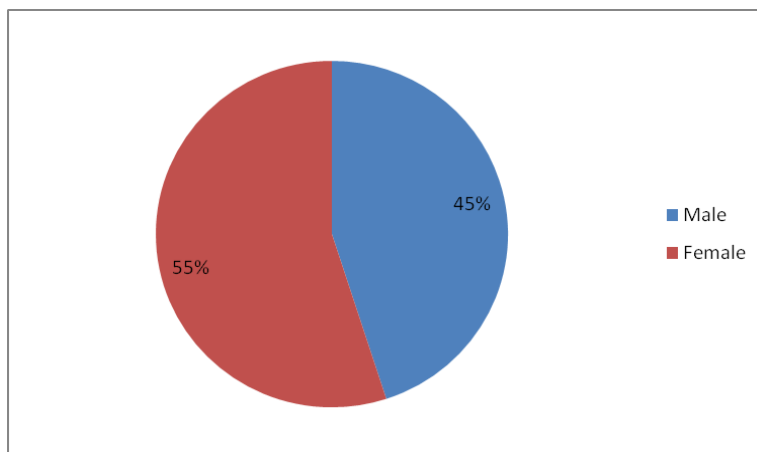
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents empirical findings in reference to customer care and customer satisfaction in chapter one. The findings are from the analysis of questionnaires and are presented in figures, tables, frequencies and percentages in accordance with the objectives to be achieved. These findings were obtained from primary sources

4.1. Findings on the demographic characteristics of the respondents

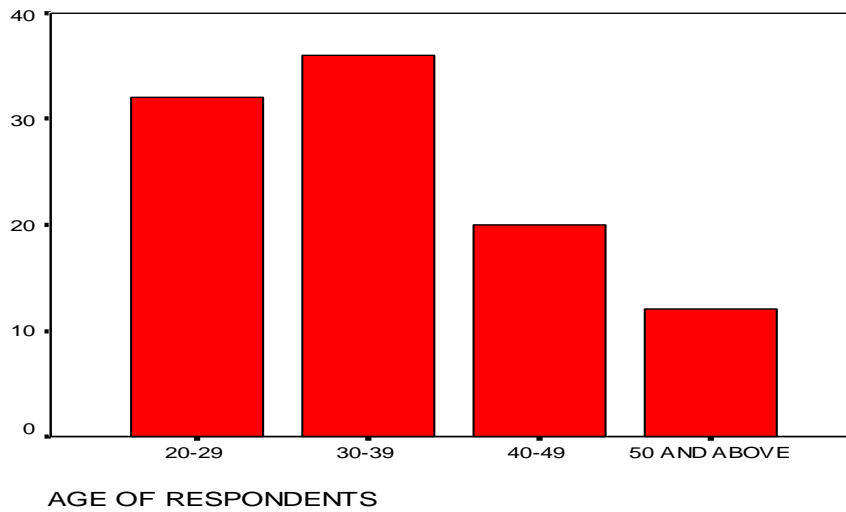
Fig 1: Showing Gender of the respondents



Source: *primary data*

From Fig 1 above, 55% of the respondents were female while 45% were male. This indicates that most of the workers are female which is commonly said that female employees are better at customer care compared to males.

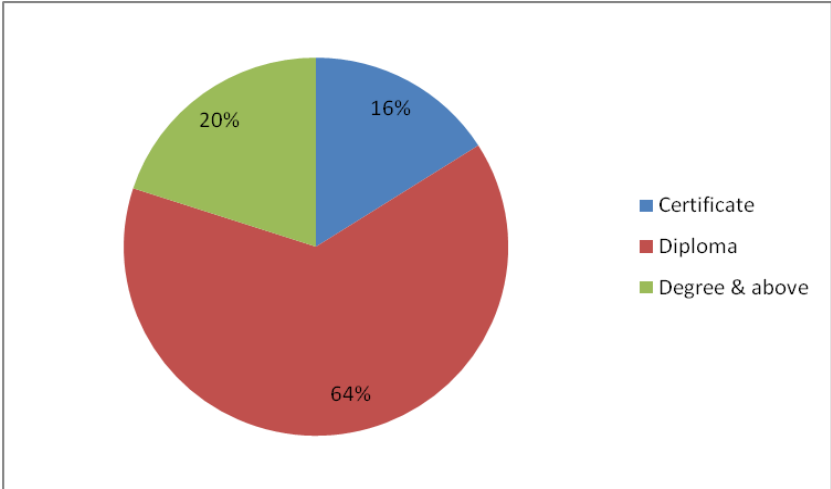
Fig 2: Showing Age bracket of the respondents



Source: *primary data*

From fig 2 above, 28% of the respondents were between the age bracket of 20-29, 33% were in the age bracket of 30-39, while 26 % were in the age group of 40-49 and 13% had 50 and above years. From the above illustration, most workers at sheraton hotel are below 39 and above 30, followed by workers between 20-29 , followed those in the age bracket of 40-49 and lastly those who are 50 and above

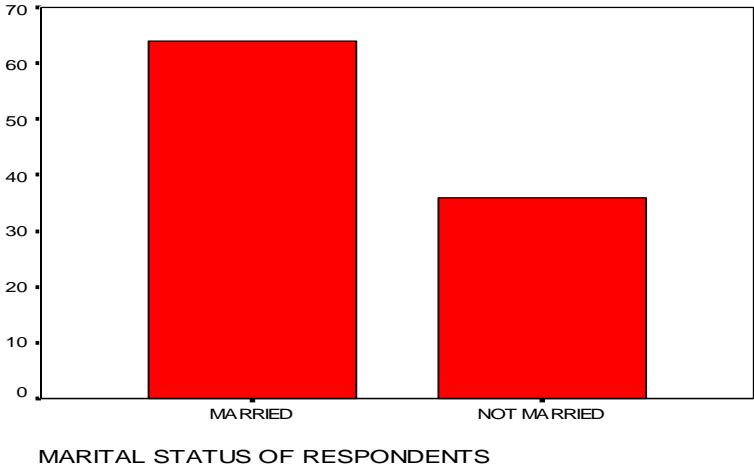
Fig3: Showing Education level of respondents



Source: primary data

From Fig 3 above, results obtained indicate that diploma holders were 64%, certificate holders were 16%. The degree holders constituted 20%, a conclusion can be made that most employees at Sheraton have attained education and therefore able to give positive response to the interviewer.

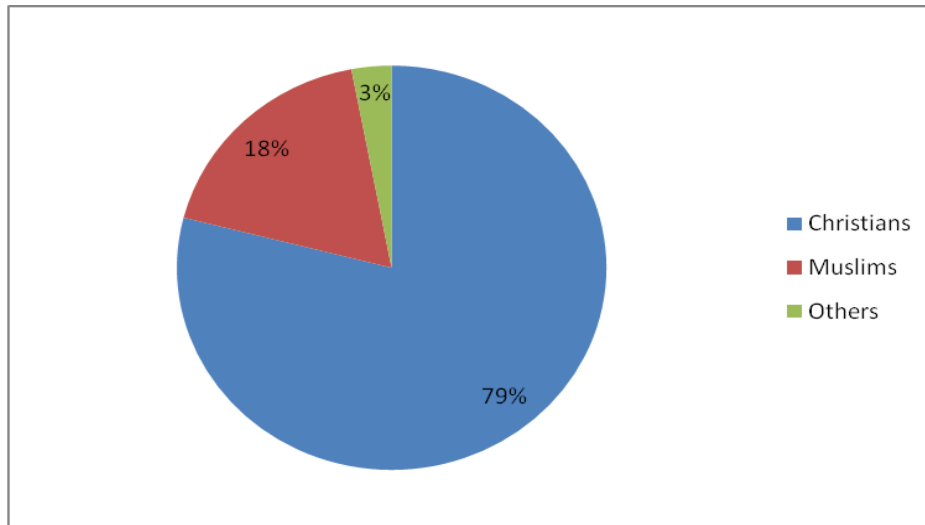
Fig 4: Showing Marital Status.



Source: primary data

The results obtained in Fig 4 indicate that 36% of the respondents were unmarried while 64% were married. This can be explained by the fact that hotel work for the purpose of customer care requires experienced workers whom most of are old and married

Fig 5: Showing Religious affiliations



Source: primary data

From fig 5, Information regarding the religious affiliations of respondents indicates that 79% were Christians and 18% were Muslim, while other religions constitute only 3%. This can be attributed to the fact that Uganda is a Christian dominated country.

Table 1: Showing Years spent working at Sheraton.

Experience	Fequency	Percentage
0-5	17	34
6-10	23	46
11 and above	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: primary data

Table 1 above, indicates that 46% of the workers had worked for 6-10 years, 34% had worked for 0-5 years, 20% had worked for above 11 years. This indicates that the working experience for the categories of workers was enough to get conclusive results, since it is assumed that by virtue of their positions, they know a lot about customer care and customer satisfaction at Kampala Sheraton hotel.

Table 2: Showing Frequency of visits to Sheraton hotel

Period	Frequency	Percentages
Everyday	12	24
Every weekend	32	64
Once month	6	12
Once a year	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: primary data

From Table 2 above, 64% of the customers visit Sheraton hotel every weekend, 24% visit the hotel everyday, 6% visit it once a month while none of the customers visit the hotel once a year

4.2. Findings on customer care strategies

Table 3. Showing customer care strategies employed by Sheraton hotel

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Training of employees	32	32
Motivation of employees	18	18
After sales services	8	8
Other services offered	42	42
Total	100	100

Source: primary data

From Table 3, 42% of the respondents agreed that other services offered to customers such as parking space, tour guides, security is the best strategy employed by the hotel. 32% of the respondents agrees that training of employees is the best strategy. 18% and 8% respondents insist that motivation of employees and after sales services is the strategy that brings many customers at the hotel which in turn brings about customer satisfaction.

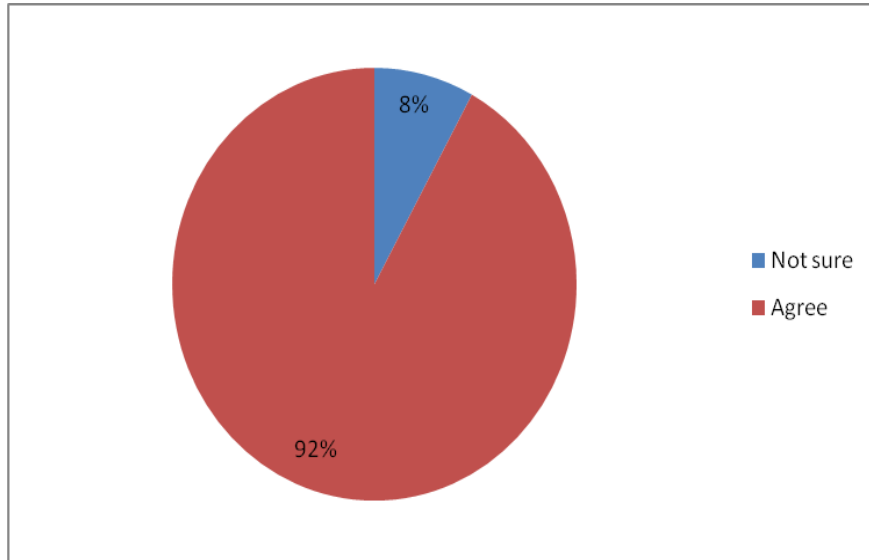
Table 4. Showing the coordination between top management and customer care department

	Frequency	Percentage
DISAGREE	2	4
NOT SURE	14	28
AGREE	22	44
STRONGLY AGREE	12	24
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

From table 4, 68% agreed that the top management of Sheraton hotel Kampala and its customer care department work together to improve customer care at the hotel for purposes of customer satisfaction. This is through providing training services to new employees. 28% of the respondents were not sure if the top management works hand in hand.

Fig 6: Showing responses to whether activities at sheraton hotel ensure customer care satisfaction



Source: primary data

From Fig 6 above, 8% of respondents were not sure whether activities at Sheraton hotel ensure customer satisfaction, 92% of the respondents agree with the statement that activities at Sheraton hotel ensures customer care satisfaction. We can thus conclude that yes activities at Sheraton hotel ensure customer satisfaction.

Table 5: Showing responses on customer care services priority

	Frequency	Percentage
NOT SURE	10	20
AGREE	28	56
STRONGLY AGREE	12	24
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

Table 5 above, shows that the management and the organization acknowledge that for customer care services to be successful, customers' satisfaction should be first priority.

80% of the respondents agreed with the statement while 20% were not sure whether customer care satisfaction should be the first priority.

4.3 Findings on customer care services.

Table 6: Showing Employees aspects in provision of customer care at Sheraton hotel

Rating	Clean	Friendly	Helpful	Efficient	Polite and courteous
	%	%	%	%	%
V. Poor	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	4	16	0
Fair	40	68	28	24	10
Good	44	24	40	32	56
V. Good	16	8	28	28	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: primary data

From Table 6 above, 44% rated cleanliness at hotel Sheraton as good, 16% rated it very good and 40% rated it fairly. None of the respondents rated the hotel as being very poor. As regarding friendly, 68% of the respondents rated the hotel employees fairly, 24% rated them good while 8% rated them very good. None of the respondent gave a poor or very poor rating. 40% of the respondents rated employees at Sheraton hotel as being good regarding being helpful, 28% rated employees at Sheraton hotel as being both fair and the same percentage rates it very good while 4% said helpful of employees at Sheraton hotel is poor. 32% of the respondents rated employees

at the hotel as being good, 24% rated them being fair while 28% rated them very good while 16% rated them poorly in terms of being efficiency. As regards Polite and Courteous, 56% were good, 34% rated it very good while 10% gave it fair rating. According to the above ratings, one can conclude that employee's aspects in provision of customer care at hotel Sheraton are generally good.

Table 7: Showing Customer care services offered at Sheraton hotel

Rating	Parking space	Security	Front desk service	Hotel guides	Customer attention services
	%	%	%	%	%
V. Poor	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	24	0
Fair	10	14	12	40	8
Good	30	40	64	20	56
V. Good	60	46	24	16	36
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: primary data

From Table 7 above, 60% rank parking space at Sheraton hotel as being very good, 30% say its good while 10% of the respondents rate parking space as being fair.

Security wise, 46% respondents said security is very good, 40% ranked it as good while 14% ranked it fairly. 46% ranked front desk service as being good, 24% ranked it as being very good while 12% said it's fair. Regarding hotel guides, 16% ranked it as being very good, 20% as being good while 40% ranked it as being fair. 56% respondents rate customer attention as being good, 36% rate it very good while 8% rated it fairly.

From the above figures, its wise for one to conclude that customer care at hotel Sheraton is good, a reason as to probably why the hotel receives many customers frequently

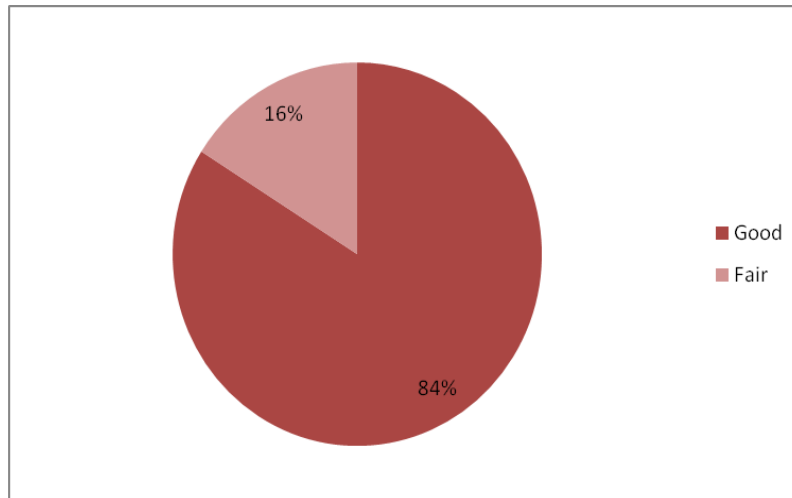
Table 8: Showing Customer care services offered at Sheraton hotel

Rating	Complaint handling	Seeking customer opinion	Avenues of customer's complaints	Transport services	Replacement
	%	%	%	%	%
V. Poor	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	22	0	24
Fair	0	40	16	40	32
Good	70	20	42	26	14
V. Good	30	40	20	34	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: primary data

From Table 8, 70% of the respondents ranked complaint handling as being good while 30% ranked it very good. 42% of the respondents ranked avenues of customer's complaints as being good. 20% ranked it very good, 16% ranked it fairly, transport services was ranked very good by 34% , 26 ranked it good while 40% ranked it fairly.

Fig 7: Showing Customer care description



Source: primary data

From Fig 7 above, 84% of the respondents described customer care at Sheraton hotel as being good while 16% said it's fair, none of the respondents said its poor and none of them were not sure. This enables us to conclude that customer care at the hotel is generally good since none of the customers who were interviewed responded poorly about the subject

Table 9: Showing the Level of customer satisfaction

Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	12	24
Satisfied	36	72
Fairly satisfied	2	4
Not satisfied	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

From Table 9, 72% of the respondents were satisfied with the customer care, 24% were very satisfied while only 4% were fairly satisfied with the level of customer care at Sheraton hotel.

One can therefore deduce that the level of customer satisfaction at Sheraton hotel is generally good since a greater number of customers were satisfaction and none of the customers were not satisfied.

4.4 Findings on the relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction

Table 10: Showing the relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction

	Frequency	Percentage
NOT SURE	5	10
AGREE	24	48
STRONGLY AGREE	21	42
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

From Table 10, 90% agree that customer care services are responsible for customer satisfaction at Sheraton hotel Kampala while 10% of the respondents are not sure of what happens in relation to customer care and customer satisfaction. This puts to a general agreement that customer care is responsible for customer satisfaction since most of the employees agree.

Table 11: Showing the correlation coefficient between customer care and customer satisfaction.

Correlations

		CUSTOMER CARE	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
CUSTOMER CARE	Pearson Correlation	1	.935
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	21	21
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	.935	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	21	21

From the above table, the correlation coefficient between correlation between customer care and customer satisfaction is positive that is 0.935 which means that an increase in customer care also leads to an increase in customer satisfaction and a decrease in customer care also leads to a decrease in customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations and areas that call for further research.

5.1 Summary of findings

5.1.1 Findings on customer care activities offered by Sheraton hotel

The study found out that the hotel has customer care service policy that caters for customers. From the findings, majority of the customer care services at the hotel is good though a slightly bigger percentage rated customer attention in particular as fair. The management is generally good in supervision of customer care services though a higher percentage rated efficiency as fair.

5.1.2 Findings on the level customer satisfaction

Research findings revealed that, most of the employees at Sheraton Hotel were aware that customer care service provision is responsible for customer satisfaction, there are training sessions aimed at improving customer care services at sheraton hotel, the top management and its customer care department work together to improve customer care at the hotel for purposes of customer satisfaction, customers according to the research finding were generally satisfied with the hotel

5.1.3 Findings on the relationship between customer care services and customer satisfaction

From the findings there is a coefficient of 0.935 which shows a very strong positive relationship between customer care services and the level of customer satisfaction. This shows that the higher the customer care, the higher the customer satisfaction and the lower the customer care, the lower, the customer satisfaction

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, it can be concluded that Sheraton hotel Kampala has good customer care activities which include, training of employees on customer handling, after sales services like complaint handling, seeking customer opinion, avenues of customer's complaints, transport services and replacement. Employee motivation has also played a tremendous contribution towards increased number of customers at Sheraton hotel. However employees need to be provided with more trainings and motivation to increase on their customer care services delivery.

From the research findings, the level of customer care services at Sheraton hotel is good; customer care services such as security, parking space, hotel guides, front desk service have continuously been appreciated by the hotel customers. However services such as hotel guides should be improved, findings further reveal that that activities at sheraton hotel such as security, parking space, hotel guides, front desk service ensures customer care satisfaction

However according to the study findings the hotel doesn't have well defined avenues of customers complaints handling which at times make customers feel cheated as some of the services they would wish to have are not available

From the research findings there is a significant relationship between customer care and customer satisfaction, the two variables are directly proportional; the higher the customer care, the higher the customer care and poor customer care leads to customer dissatisfaction

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above findings and conclusion, the followings measures are recommended in response to customer care activities and services at Sheraton Hotel.

The hotel should have a well streamlined customer guides to the entire hotel because most of the customer when asked about the hotel seemed to be only aware of the dining and their resting rooms

The hotel should create a customer complaint desk where customers can register their complaints and a systematic procedure to handle customer complaints.

Employee motivation should be improved by Sheraton hotel administrators to avoid cases of neglect and little attention provided by some customers to some of the workers at the hotel.

Management should consult the customers while designing customer care service policies so that a wide number of customer complaints and areas of interests are considered

Creativity should be encouraged so that a wider experience of employees is put to use in designing the policies concerned with customer care services.

Management should put in place strict guidelines to be followed while dealing with customer complaints so as to eliminate negative feedbacks from customers

From the above research findings, the hotel should have customer based strategies. In the findings many customers declared that they were satisfied with services and that they will continue visiting the hotel, although there are some who indicated that some areas like hotel tours are not well streamlined.

Making follow ups on the services offered help to overcome some of the negative issues and make proper improvements to increase customer satisfaction.

Emphasis on market research, understanding of the customer needs, expectations and services quality management plans can be achieved through market research. Therefore top management and customer care department of Sheraton hotel should be able to identify primary objectives of its customers so that they can best satisfy them

5.4. Areas of further research

Research should be carried out on employee performance and customer satisfaction.

Research should also be carried out on the impact of customer care services on sales volume.

Research should be carried out comparing customer care services of surrounding hotels.

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Questionnaire

Dear respondent;

I am **Natuhwera Christine** a student at Makerere University carrying out a research on customer care and customer satisfaction, a case study of Sheraton hotel.

You are kindly requested to spare a few minutes and fill this questionnaire. This research is purely academic and any information provided will be treated with at most confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PART A: Background information.(For Employees)

Please tick where applicable.

1. what is your gender
 - i. Male
 - ii. Female
2. Which age bracket do you belong?
 - i. 20 – 29
 - ii. 30 – 39
 - iii. 40 – 49
 - iv. 50 and above
3. Which is your highest level of education?
 - i. Certificate
 - ii. Diploma
 - iii. Degree
 - iv. Masters

v. Others specify

4. What is your marital status

i. Married

ii. Not married

5. What is your religion?

i. Christian

ii. Muslim

iii. Others(specify)

6. For how long have you worked with Sheraton hotel?

i. 0-5 years

ii. 6-10 years

iii. 11 years and above

7. Which of the following categories of employees do you belong?

i. Top management

ii. Middle level managers

iii. operational staff

B. Customer care services (Activities)

8. List the customer services offered by Sheraton hotel

.....
.....

.....
.....

9. Are there strategies in Sheraton hotel aimed at giving customers more satisfaction?

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. Not sure

10. If yes, what are the strategies used by Sheraton hotel to increase customer satisfaction?

.....
.....
.....
.....

11. How do you explain customer care services of Sheraton hotel?

- i. Very poor
- ii. Poor
- iii. Good
- iv. Very good
- v. Not sure

12. Briefly support your answer in (11.) above.

.....
.....

.....
.....

13. What do you think needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of the hotel's customer service?

.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Has the hotel put emphasis on training employees on the importance of customer care services?

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. Not sure

15. Do you think that your customers are satisfied with the services you offer to them and why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

16. What is your opinion concerning the following questions?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a strong relationship between customer care services and customer satisfaction in Sheraton hotel					
The hotel top management and the and customer care department work hand in hand					
The management of Sheraton hotel regularly organizes training sessions on customer care services.					
Customer care activities significantly affect the level of customer satisfaction					
Basing on your knowledge, activities of Sheraton hotel determine the level of customer satisfaction.					
The management and the organisation acknowledge that for customer care services to be					

successful, customers' satisfaction should be the first priority.					
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15. The organisation of the hotel's activities has improved the level of customer satisfaction.

- i. Yes
- ii. No

B ,Give reasons for your answer (15.) above.

For Customer

PART A: Background information.)

Please tick where applicable.

- 1 what is your gender
 - i. Male
 - ii. Female
- 2 Which age bracket do you belong?
 - i. 20 – 29
 - ii. 30 – 39
 - iii. 40 – 49
 - iv. 50 and above
- 3 Which is your highest level of education?
 - i. Certificate
 - ii. Diploma

iii. Degree

iv. Masters

v. others specify

4. (A)Customer care services

i. Parking space

ii. Security

iii. Front desk service

iv. Timely service

v. Hotel guide

(B) After sales service

i. Complaint Handling

ii. Seeking customer opinion

iii. Avenues for customer's complaints

iv. Transport service

v. Replacement

7. According to your description of a good customer care service, how do you comment on Sheraton Hotel?

i. Good

ii. Fair

iii. Poor

iv. Not sure

C. Given your description of customer care service in (7) above, what is the level of your satisfaction?

i. Very satisfied

ii. Satisfied

iii. Fairly satisfied

iv. Not satisfied

8. Have you ever had a complaint with Sheraton hotel?

i. Yes

ii. No

9. If yes in (8) above, what was the complaint?

.....

10. Was the complaint above handled?

i. Yes

ii. No

11. How was the complaint handled?

i. Very well

ii. Well

iii. Not well

12. Are there any delays in delivery of services at Sheraton Hotel?

i. Yes

ii. No

Thank you