

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**AN EXPLORATION INTO THE AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE OF
HOTEL GUEST REGISTRATION LAWS AMONG HOTELS. THE CASE OF
THREE ASSEMBLIES IN THE KWAHU AREA**



VIVIAN AKOMAH ADJEI

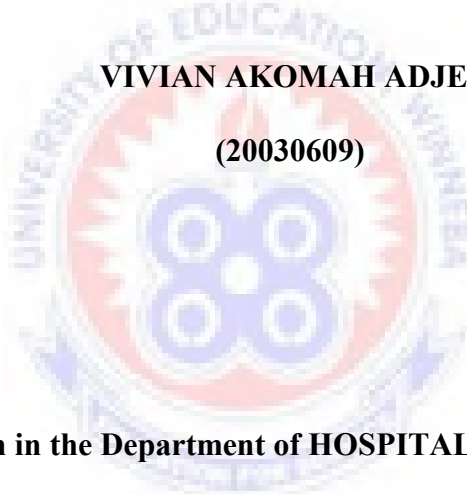


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(20030609)



**A Dissertation in the Department of HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
EDUCATION, Faculty of VOCATIONAL STUDIES EDUCATION, submitted
to the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in Partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy
(Catering and Hospitality) degree**

DECEMBER, 2020

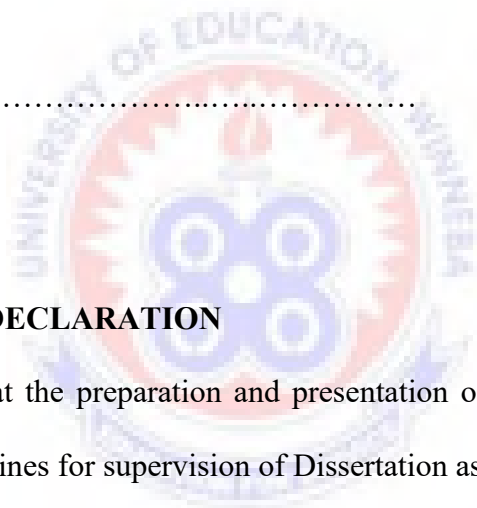
DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, VIVIAN AKOMAH ADJEI, declare that this Dissertation with exception of quotations and references contained in published works that have all been identified and dully acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised following the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: **DR. MRS. ELLEN LOUISE OLU FAGBEMI**

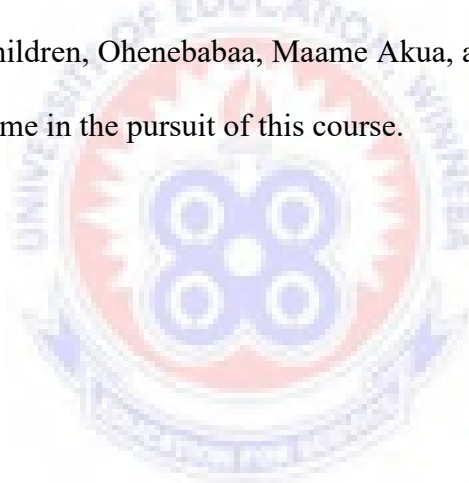
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scholarship is a cooperative enterprise, and I have made use of the help of several people in the conduct and writing of this dissertation. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Almighty who has always been my guide and hope and who has seen me through this work.

I am particularly grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Mrs. Ellen Louise Olu Fagbemi for taken the pains to correct and guide me to bring this work to a successful end. I am very grateful to her. I also wish to express my deepest appreciation to my husband Dr. E O Agyenim-Boateng for his professional advice, understanding, and support. Finally, I am grateful to my children, Ohenebaba, Maame Akua, and Papa Kwaku for enduring my absence from home in the pursuit of this course.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Dr. Emmanuel Oheneba Agyenim-Boateng and my children Ohenebabaa, Maame Akua, and Papa Kwaku.



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ABSTRACT

The registration of hotel guest is very important to the hotel, the hotel guest, and the nation at large. It also satisfies a legal requirement in the Ghanaian hotel laws. Going contrary to the Ghanaian hotel registration laws, may lead to a breach of law which is subject to a liable summary conviction to a fine of not more than one hundred penalty units or imprisonment for a term, not more than six months or both. This study aimed at exploring the awareness and compliance of hotel guest registration laws among hotels. The case of three assemblies in the Kwahu area. The study adopted a descriptive and exploratory case study approach which used both the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 25 hotels which constituted 39.06% percent of licensed hotels in the three Assemblies in the Kwahu. At the time of data collection, 61 front office staff, 25 hotel managers and, 75 guests were used for the study. The main data collection instruments used were questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide which were personally administered by the researcher. The study found that front office staff and managers had inadequate awareness of the hotel guest registration laws though there was some form of compliance concerning the registration of hotel guests. The study also found that all the front office staff in the studied area followed a particular pattern in registering hotel guest. The study moreso spotted some benefits and few challenges in the registration of hotel guests. The study recommends that there should be intensified public education on the legality of the registration of hotel guest, and, the benefits of hotel guest registration to encourage both the hotels and hotel guests to undertake effective guest registration.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Throughout history, people have always travelled, whether to surmount worlds, discover new places, or for pleasure. Thus, there are so many reasons why people travel. Some people travel to explore new places; others travel to discover themselves and learn new things; others travel for business purposes. In contrast, others travel for relaxation and recreation, for adventure, and most people travel for greener pastures. Statistically, while 36% of people who travel, travel to immerse themselves into the local culture; 30% do so planning local shopping trips; 26% learning about local food and cuisine; 24% partaking in learning and educational activities; whilst 23% do visit historical sites, tourist site and monument, (www.hospitality-school.com12/01/2020,16:26).

When people are away from the comfort of their homes, the need for shelter, food, and security arises. To a very large extent, this has led to the rise and development of the hospitality industry. This need of man has consequently led to the development of accommodation facilities (Beatriz al et, 2009). Essay (2013) defines the hospitality industry as a broad field within the service industry that includes lodging, restaurants, event planning, theme parks, transportation, cruise line, and additional areas within the tourism industry. Nykiel (2005) also expresses a similar view as Essay (2013) by defining the hospitality industry as a broad and encompassing travel, lodging, food service, clubs, gaming, attraction, entertainment, and recreation. Foster (2009), on the other hand, describes the term hospitality as the welcoming reaction and handling of strangers. The hospitality industry, therefore, comprises businesses and institutions that

provide lodging, food, and other services to travellers. The welcoming responses and handling of guests are the duties of the people who work in the hospitality industry. A professional hospitality industry must always keep updating according to the needs and wants of the societies. Success in the hospitality industry still relies on catering to the needs of the targeted clientele (Essay, 2013). The hospitality industry caters for some basic human needs such as shelter, food and safety, and the psychological needs of customers as in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs Huitt (2007).

The hospitality industry is divided into three main categories: which are commercial, industrial, and institutional. Commercial hospitality provides services to consumers for a profit; Industrial, on the other hand, assists employees in their workplace while institutional hospitality provides services to residents, inmates at prisons, or patients at the hospital (Ayres, 2012). The commercial sector of the hospitality industry, which includes lodging (hotels), is the focus of this study.

The Hotel Proprietors Ordinance Chapter 158 provides a clear definition of a hotel as an establishment held out by the proprietor as offering sleeping accommodation to any person presenting himself who appears able and willing to pay a reasonable sum for the services and facilities provided and who is in a fit state to be received (www.elegislation.gov.hk. 23/0120/20 @ 4:00 pm). Hotel facilities are characterized based on the level of services provided or ownership. Based on the ranks of the service supplied, hotels could be classified into three types. These are economy, mid-range, and world-class hotels. Economic hotels provide necessities for the guests, such as food, bedroom, and bathroom facilities, and it is comparatively cheaper. Mid-range hotels offer extra services such as telephone facilities, fit bathroom and bedroom amenities,

outlets like coffee shops and restaurants for the comfort of their guests. World-class hotels, which include five-star hotels and above, on the other hand, provide excellent services at a reasonably higher cost. From another perspective, hotels are classified based on ownership; hence we have a chain or independent hotels. An example of a chain hotel is Golden Tulip hotels whilst an example of an independent hotel is Rock City Hotel in Kwahu, <http://modernhotelsofnepal.blogspot.com/2011/02/different-departments-of-hotel.html> 01/09/ 2020 @ 6:00 pm.

Even though a hotel organization may vary according to its ownership or the kind of services it offers, there is one thing that is certain regardless of the category of the hotel, that is, the Front Office Department. The Front Office is considered the 'nerve centre' of a hotel. The majority of the direct interactions in a hotel occur between the guests and the front office personnel more than in any other department (Beatriz et al., 2009). It is for this reason that the front desk has been described as the hub of a hotel's operation (Frye, 2012). The front office is the area where guests are first welcomed and finally departed. It is the place where the current occupancy status of the hotel is maintained, enquiries are answered, and service requests are customarily dispatched. For many hotels, the front office may be one of the only departments that are staffed 24 hours each day (Frye, 2012).

The most crucial duty for the front office staff is to ensure the successful completion of the guest cycle. The guest cycle describes the activities that each guest passes through from the moment he/she calls to communicate a reservation inquiry until he/she departs from the hotel. The guest cycle encompasses four different stages these are the pre-arrival stage, the arrival stage, the occupancy stage and the departure stage (www.ichm.edu.np/.../. 15/08/2014 @ 9:41 pm). The number of interactions and

transactions between the guest and the hotel during a guest's stay is determined by the type and nature of front office operations. The transactions can be best understood by going through the guest cycle (Baker, Huyton & Bradley, 2010). One of the most critical interactions in the guest cycle is the arrival stage, in which the guest registers. The registration of the hotel guest is the process of taking some personal details of the guest. This is the stage, if well captured, may ensure a successful stay of the guest as well as repeated service.

Most of the hotel guests are walk-in guests, meaning they walk into the hotel without reservations. Whether the guest has made a reservation with the hotel or not, they must go through the registration process on arrival. Guest check-in or registration process at hotels is one of the first opportunities for face-to-face contact of a hotel with the guest. At this point, all the marketing efforts and computerized reservation systems should come together. The front desk clerk who is well trained in the registration process is, therefore, able to portray the hotel positively (Bardi, 2013) as the right first impression helps to ensure an enjoyable visit. The customer is addressed as a *guest* in a hotel setup, meaning he or she is not part of the team or the workforce of the establishment (Bardi, 2003). In the Ghanaian traditional homes, when a guest arrives, there is always someone who welcomes him/her, asks about his or her journey and why he/she has come. This is the same with the hotel industry, and this function is performed by the hotel front office staff.

Bardi (2003) believes that the registration process is one of the many points of interaction with the guest and, ultimately, the cornerstone of delivering service before, during, and after the guest's stay. The personal and other information taken from the guest go a long way in assisting the various departments in the hotel in the provision of

good service delivery. The staff need to know every guest in the hotel so that a standard operating procedure could be carried out. For example, the Director of Security would want the housekeeping staff to be alert for indications that more people would be staying in a room than are registered for it. Not only does this information assist in providing security to registered guests, but it also provides the hotel with additional income. This is because the hotel hosts a lot of people from different places, and everyone has his/her own special needs, such as certain room furnishings (cribs or rollaway beds), facilities for the physically challenged, separate folios for guests splitting costs, wake-up calls, or requests for rooms on lower floors and many others. All these should be noted and communicated to the appropriate hotel staff (Bardi, 2007). Thus, the proper registration of a hotel guest can help the hotel provide satisfying services to their guests, which will go a long way to yield the hotel dividends in the form of repeat business.

The Tourism Act (2011) and the Alliance Compliance Order 1971 demand that a hotel keeper provides and keeps details of guests, including the guest's name, identification number, country of origin, next destination, among others. Therefore, hotel owners are obliged by law to ensure that all hotel guests for whom accommodation is provided are registered. This demand can only be met at the registration point as all guests must be registered at the hotel facility. The Ghana Tourism Authority uses the registration record to issue a 1% levy on the hotels while the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) uses the registration card records to track the patronage of the various hotels duration auditing to assign appropriate tax liabilities for the hotels' activities. Finally, the Ghana Immigration Service uses the registration data to determine the number of foreigners in the region to track their movements and activities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned benefits of the registration of hotel guest, failure to register a guest at the hotel may lead to a breach of law. According to the Tourism Act (2011) Section 35 sub-Section 4 and the Alien Compliance Order (1971), any person who fails to comply with this section (Section 35) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than one hundred penalty units or imprisonment for a term, not more than six months or both. A hotel guest with no registration is like someone sleeping on a street of any city; in case of any eventuality or misfortune, the guest may not be traced. Besides, the nation also suffers economically when hotel guests are not made to register, since the GRA and GTA make some revenue from hotel guest registration.

A casual observation about the operation of hotels in the Kwahu Areas shows that some hotels in the area do not attach much importance to hotel guests' registration to ripe benefits thereof. There are various ways the hotels register their guest; most of them use the GTA Logbook. Others do so in an ordinary notebook, whereas others also take the guest's names upon guests' demand during payment of hotel bills. The questions that come to mind and remain unclear are: To what extent do the front office staff in hotels in Kwahu Area comply with the guest registration laws in Ghana as contained in Guest Act 1965, Alien Compliance Order (1971), and Tourism Act 2011? How knowledgeable are the hotel's front office staff in the Kwahu Area concerning the registration laws in Ghana? What are some of the registration practices undertaken by the front office staff of the hotels in the Kwahu Areas? This study seeks to find answers to these and other questions and to investigate the measures that could be put in place to ensure awareness and compliance of Guest Registration Laws in Ghana and effective

registration of guest among front office staff in the hotels in the Kwahu Area for the mutual benefits of the hotels in the area and their clients.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to explore the awareness and compliance of front office staff in selected hotels in the Kwahu Areas concerning guests' registration Laws in Ghana.

1.2.1 Specifically, the study aimed at:

- a) Investigating into the awareness and compliance of the legal bases of guests' registration by hotel managers and front office staff.
- b) Examining the predominant practices of the front office staff concerning checking-in of hotel guests on first and repeat arrivals.
- c) Identifying some of the benefits and challenges in hotel guest registration.
- d) Investigating measures that could be put in place to ensure more awareness and compliance with the hotel guest registration laws in Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the problem and the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- a) To what extent are the front office staff of the selected hotels and their managers aware and comply with the hotel guests' registration laws of Ghana.
- b) What are the predominant practices of the front office staff concerning the registration of guests in the Kwahu area?
- c) What are some of the benefits and challenges facing hotel guest registration to the hotels and their clients?

- d) What measures could be put in place to ensure greater and improve awareness and compliance of the Ghanaian hotel guest Registration Laws by the front office staff in the hotels in the Kwahu areas?

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This study has several significant implications for the hotel guests, hotels in the Kwahu Area, researchers, and the economy. This study's findings would be substantial to academia as it would make theoretical contributions to the hospitality industry's operations. It would also give room for more research studies to be carried out in this area as some researchers might want to be particular about issues that this study might raise. It would also improve hotel front office staff's understanding, knowledge, and practices in hotels in the Kwahu area. Moreover, this study's findings would help hotel managers be aware of the need to ensure that guests' registration is carried out in their establishments as provided for by the hospitality laws of Ghana. This research would also be relevant to the Ghana Tourism Authority and other regulatory bodies in the Kwahu area. It will assist in making an informed decision on the hotels' operations in the Kwahu Area about hotel guest registration.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Though an excellent effort was made to put up empirical research, the following factors acted as limitations to the study. First, there was a time constrain. The study was carried out within a limited time frame and during COVID- 19 pandemics, which prevented the researcher from covering a broader scope. The second limitation was the financial challenges. There was a need to print enough questionnaires to gain access to information and the collection of literature on the topic. There was also the need to

travel the study areas' length and breadth to collect the needed data for the study. However, due to the limited financial resource and the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher could not fund and carry out all these activities. The study, therefore, had to be limited to some selected hotels in the Kwahu area. The third limitation was the unwillingness of respondents (hotel managers) to give accurate information. The study, however, used strategies such as diplomacy, random sampling, and frequent telephone calls to reduce the adverse effects of these limitations on the study results.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The study covered all hotel front office staff in the Eastern Region. However, the research was specifically focused on some selected hotel front office staff in the Kwahu area in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One comprises the study's background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. Existing literature on the subject matter is captured in Chapter Two. Issues discussed in this chapter include the nature of the hospitality industry, the various types of hotel, the departments in the hotel set up, front office staff and their responsibilities, the definition of guest registration, and the Hotel Guest Registration laws in Ghana, including Alien Compliance Order and the Tourism Authority Bill 2011. Chapter Three is devoted to the methodology for the study. The chapter explains the systematic way in which this study was carried out and elaborated on how data for the study were obtained and analyzed to answer the research questions. The chapter also captures the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data

collection procedure, and the data analysis of the study. Chapter Four covers data presentation, analysis, and discussion. Whilst the final chapter comprises the summary, conclusion, and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the study provides insight into the nature of the hospitality industry. Issues discussed in the chapter include the nature of the hospitality industry, the concept of the hospitality industry, the hotel and their front office; hotel guest registration laws in Ghana as well as the benefits and punishment associated with compliance with the regulation.

2.1 The Hospitality Industry

Hospitality was derived from an old French word, 'hospice', which means 'to provide care and shelter for travelers' (Walker, 1999). Hospitality is the art of satisfying the food, beverage, and lodging needs of guests. Today Hospitality is seen as the friendly, welcoming, and generous treatment offered to guests or strangers (Encarta, 2009). The Oxford English Dictionary (2008) considers Hospitality as the act or practice of being hospitable, the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. Lashley (2000), writing for the Joint Hospitality Industry Congress, defines Hospitality as providing food and drink or accommodation to persons or groups of persons away from home. Similarly, the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) (2008), England's Hospitality Review Panel, defines Hospitality as providing food and drink or accommodation in a service context. Furthermore, the Nottingham Group (2012) defines Hospitality as a contemporaneous exchange designed to enhance mutuality (well-being) for the parties involved through the provision of food and drink or accommodation.

Contributing to the debate, HEFC (2008) defined Hospitality as the act of kindness in welcoming and looking after guests or strangers' basic needs, mainly concerning food, drink, and accommodation. Thus, a new explanation of Hospitality refers to the relationship process between a guest and a host. Similarly, Encarta Dictionary (2009) defines the hospitality industry as a business enterprise that provides services such as catering and entertainment to persons or groups of persons who may need those services and are capable and willing to pay for such services. This definition, among other things, indicates that the hospitality industry, like all other industries, is a collection of business enterprises whose services must be paid for. Encarta Dictionary's (2009) definition is similar to Mackenzie and Chan's (2013) description, which describes the hospitality industry as companies or organizations which provide food and drink or accommodation to people who are away from home at a cost.

All the above-cited definitions fit in well with the economic orientation of the concept of hospitality (Lashley, 2000), which makes King's (1995) distinction between private and commercial Hospitality very relevant. King (1995) defines private Hospitality as acts by individuals towards individuals in an intimate setting such as the home. Commercial Hospitality is defined as providing meals, beverages, lodging, and entertainment in return for economic rewards. Based on his categorization, King (1995) provides four necessary parts of Hospitality. These, according to him, are i) A relationship between individuals, a host-guest relationship; ii) This relation can be commercial or private (in a commercial relationship, the guest must pay and to behave reasonably and the guest has the power as opposed to private Hospitality where equality of power is assumed); iii) A key element is having knowledge of what would invoke great pleasure in the guest. In the Arab Hospitality, it will be shameful to hesitate to

give food to a stranger whereas, in the Arctic hospitality of the Eskimos, hosts will place their wives at the disposal of their guests; and iv) Hospitality is a process that includes arrival, which involves greeting and making the guest feel welcome, and it ends with departure.

It is interesting to note that these parts of Hospitality, as outlined by King (1995), might clarify what Hospitality is by looking at it from a consumer (market) side and not from the sector perspective. Therefore, the hospitality industry consists of those businesses and institutions that provide food and lodgings such as hotels, motels, lodge, inns, cruise ships, and restaurants (Walker, 1999). By extension, therefore, the hospitality industry includes the airlines' drive as the enterprise carries people from one destination to another to enable them to enjoy the hospitality industry's services. The hospitality industry could be said to include hotels and restaurants and many other types of organizations or institutions that offer food, drink, shelter, and other related services for the benefit of travellers or strangers of a different kind. These products and services are provided not only to people away from their homes but also to local guests. Such organizations are welfare/institutional catering, including schools, prisons, and hostels (Mackenzie & Chan, 2013 and Walker, 1999).

A critical look at the above definitions and many others indicates that there is no universally accepted definition for the hospitality industry concept. Still, some parts are common to all definitions. For example, lodging and food are included in almost every definition of the hospitality industry. Thus, the question 'What is hospitality?' will generate several varied and exciting responses (Brotherton, 1999). Many of the definition's makers, therefore, "fall into the trap of suggesting that one of the important

features of hospitality is making the guest “feel at home” (Brotherton, 1999:167). It can be concluded that many different definitions are used according to the authors' need; some are more economical while others are more sociological, but all are not entirely different. Therefore, one will want to agree with Brotherton (1999) in saying that any attempt at defining Hospitality per se is doomed to failure, as there is no general and universally applicable definition for the concept of Hospitality. Therefore, the current study will be interested in testing the understanding of the various stakeholders in the hospitality industry in the study area about the concept of the hospitality industry.

2.2 The Hotel Organisation

The sector in the hospitality industry that deals with lodging or accommodation are the hotel. A hotel is a place for an overnight stay, a building or commercial establishment where people pay for lodging, and where meals and other facilities such as conference rooms are often available (Encarta, 2009). Thus, a hotel is an establishment that provides lodging paid on a short-term basis. Facilities provided may range from a basic bed and storage for clothing to luxury features like en-suite bathrooms.

Common-Law states that a hotel is a place where all those who conduct themselves properly and who are fit, ready, and able to pay for lodging facility and other services at a reasonable price (Mackenzie & Chan, 2013). Toh and Potapova (2013) describe hotels as profitable structures that offer to lodge to travellers. To them, hotel services consist of providing temporary lodging facilities and additional services to guests. The authors believe that hotel services consist of the interactions that result in relationships among customers and staff members, which are called customer relationships. One department solely responsible for good customer relationships and critical service

providers in the hotel system is the front office department. The current study will be interested in investigating whether or not the operating staff of the hotels in the study area understand what hotels stand for and what roles they are expected of concerning the awareness and compliance of the hotel guest registration.

2.3 The Front Office of the Hotel

Regardless of the class or type of the hotel, local or international, the competition among hotels can be crucial. However, all hotels have one thing in ordinary no matter their size or where they are located. The common denominator among the functionally is the front office which is the most noticeable and essential focal point in every hotel (Brown, 2006). The front office can be referred to as the nucleus or the heart of the hotel, which controls and records all the activities involved in the guest's stay in the hotel. It is also the most critical first and last contact for guests (Brown, 2006). The front office's focal point of activity is the reception desk, which is located in the front lobby of a hotel and dispenses all front-of-the-house activities of the hotel (Gray & Liguori, 2003). The staff's work at all front desks is the same, and it involves receiving and welcoming guests, selling accommodations, maintaining accounts, and keeping other records (Brown, 2006; Gray & Liguori, 2003).

The front office is also the point of contact for other departments within the hotel and incorporates various requests to make the guests more comfortable (Brown, 2006; Ismail, 2002). Ankara (2009) has a similar description of the front desk. To him, it is the service place where guests arriving at the accommodation business are welcomed, receive accommodation, and make reservations. It is a place where accounts and records are kept. The front desk also provides consultancy services and cooperates with other departments. Thus, the front desk can be considered the hotel facility's heart and

face (Jones & Newton, 1997). It is the first guest contact area and also the nerve centre of the hotel. All the front office activities and sites are geared towards supporting guests' transactions and providing quality services to clients (Woods, Ninemeier, Hayes & Austin, 2007; [www.ichm.edu.np/...](http://www.ichm.edu.np/) 15/08/2019 @ 9:41 pm).

Both new and repeat guests interact with hotels for the first time by communicating with the front office staff, who, by their efficiency, competency, and behaviour, usually create a positive or otherwise first impression about the hotel. Positive first impressions are critical to the successful guest experience, setting the hotel's tone and establishing a continuing business relationship. When guests arrive at the hotel after long, exhausting trips, they expect to be welcomed by someone with a warm smile and genuine greetings (Toh & Potapova, 2013; Roldan, 2004). The guests may be stressed up by various means, the frustrations of commercial travelling, delayed schedules, lost luggage, unfamiliar surroundings, public transportation, and the front office staff responsible for making the guests feel welcomed to the facility (Toh & Potapova, 2013). Toh and Potapova (2013) believe that considerate and valuable front office staff are more likely to recognize the anxiety, restlessness, and hostility in the guests and respond to them positively and understanding manner through guest registration others. The authors believe and rightly so that the way guests are received and treated is very vital as it serves as the basis of guests' first impression and conditions their disputed patronage in the future (Roldan, 2004). Thus, as stated earlier, the front office is the nerve centre of a hotel; therefore, whatever may go wrong at the front office concerning the guests' stay, may affect the hotel's business. The current study will therefore be interested in investigating how the front office staff in the hotels in the study area assist in providing quality service to guests of the hotels through hotel guest registration to create a lasting first impression that will lead to repeat business.

2.4 Main Sections of Hotel Front Office

The hotel front office staff has several responsibilities. Some of the primary duties of the front office staff including but are not limited to undertake front house duties such as meeting, greeting, and attending to the needs of guests to ensure a superb customer service experience. The front office staff is also expected to build a good rapport with all guests and resolve any complaints/issues quickly to maintain high-quality customer service. They have to deal with guests' requests to ensure a comfortable and pleasant stay and assist in dealing with customer complaints effectively and courteously by providing or seeking solutions as quickly as possible. The front office staff are responsible for accurate and efficient accounts and guest billing processes and assist in keeping the hotel reception area clean and tidy at all times as well as undertaking general office duties, including correspondence, e-mails, filing, and switchboard, to ensure the smooth running of the reception area.

The hotel office staff have a responsibility to administer all routes of reservations to ensure that room bookings are made and recorded accurately and to ensure that all reservations and cancellations are processed efficiently. They are responsible for keeping up to date with room prices and special offers, providing accurate information to guests, and reporting any maintenance, breakage, or cleanliness problems to the relevant manager and administering the general petty cash system and float accurately. The front office staff needs to conclude guests' stay with issuing of bills and taking of payment; act as an information point for guests concerning the surrounding area; undertake daily financial tasks, such as the end of shift banking; co-ordinate guest services and facilitate communication with all departments in the hotel (Tewari, 2009; <http://www.melbreakhotel.co.uk/media/28301/job-description-receptionist>).

From the duties mentioned, one can say that all that is expected of the front office staff or receptionist is to ensure the guests' smooth stay. The main functions of the front office staff are being outlined in Figure 2.1, designed by Beatriz et al. (2009)

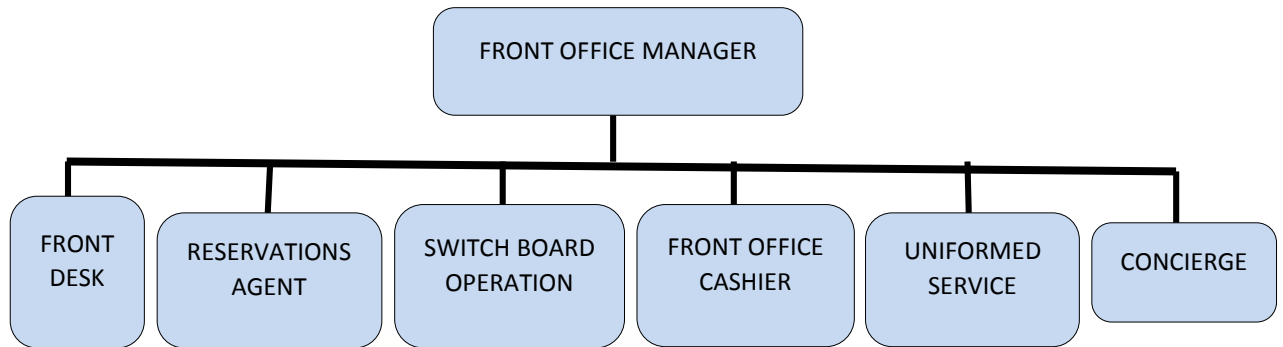


Figure 1: Organizational Chart of Front Office in Large Hotels (Beatriz et al., 2009)

According to Beatriz et al. (2009), the workforce of the hotel front office can be grouped into seven categories. These are the front office manager who supervises and controls all the personnel in the front office department. He/she observes the policy of the management department, is responsible for the training of newly-employed staff, and plays an essential role in staff development for the team to work effectively and efficiently.

The second category of the front office staff is the reservationists responsible for advanced hotel reservation and room booking through telephone, facsimile, and the personal information of the hotel guests. Front desk representatives welcome the guests upon their arrival. They are also responsible for the rooms that are not reserved in advance, the registration, the room numbers, the room keys, and the guests' luggage by coordinating with the bellboy or other staff. Besides, they provide information, mail the letters, take a message, take notes, and report the guests' check-in and check-out statistics.

Front cashiers record guests' payments by producing receipts or daily notices. They also receive money from the guests and take care of the money from all the hotel sections. Another category is the telephone operators responsible for the telephone contact, the supervision of the hotel sound system, and the morning calls. The auditors help examine the records of guests, payment and offer services to the guests upon their check-in and check-out. Another important category of the front office staff is the guest relation officers who always stand by at the desk near the lobby to offer help and advice and solve the guests' problems. They usually have good knowledge of the hotel and the major tourist sites in the city or the hotel's catchment area. They are also generally fluent in at least one foreign language, which enables them to be in the position to offer assistance to foreigners. Finally, the front office has bellboys who are mainly responsible for the guests' luggage. They take the hotel guests to their rooms after being informed about the room numbers and are given the room keys. Sometimes, they need to answer or inform the guests about other hotel services.

The hierarchical structure of the hotel's front office, as shown in an organizational chart (Fig.2.1), clearly indicates communication lines, chains of command, responsibility, and accountability of staff. The size of the structure depends on the hotel's size, whether small, medium, or large. Baker et al. (2000) explain that whether the organisation is large or small, the same jobs must be performed. In small hotels, because there is a reduction in the number of services requested, many of the jobs would have to be combined. Baker et al. (2000) further gave three clear points that can affect a hotel front office organisation. These are (a) the size of the hotel; whether small, medium, or large; (b) standard of service, that is, full service or limited service; and (c) types of guests. The hotel guests can be tourists, business travellers, or families, each having different needs.

The various departments of the front office and the services they provide customers are significant for the hotel's very survival and sustainability. This is because customers form an impression about a hotel the moment they walk through its doors and are greeted by front office personnel, or they call the hotel, and they are answered through the telephone. The front office staff's level of professionalism represents the hotel's brand. To suitably reflect a brand, the front office staff must express the hotel through their appearance, behaviour, attitude, business manners, and communication skills (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). For example, no matter how busy the reception area is in the hotel, the receptionists should always attempt to project a professional image and make a great first impression on everyone they encounter (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Therefore, the primary function of the front office staff is that of a facilitator between the guests and other departments of the hotel. Thus, in the words of Baker et al. (2000), the front office department's primary function is to support the smooth functioning of the guest's transaction and services through all four stages in the guest cycle. The front office department does all the guest transactions such as reservations, check-in and registration, mail and information, uniformed service and baggage handling, telephone calls and messages, guest accounts, check-out, and bill settlement (Baker et al., 2000).

2.5 The Hotel Guest Cycle

The guest cycle describes the activities that each guest undertakes or passes through from the moment he/she decides to lodge in a hotel and calls to communicate a reservation inquiry till their departure from the facility (UNESCO, 2013). The guest cycle, which represents a systematic approach to front office operation, includes pre-arrival, arrival, occupancy, and departure (see Fig. 1).

2.5.1 Pre-arrival of the Hotel Guest Cycle

The hotel front office staff, which can also be referred to as the receptionists, are responsible for providing a friendly, welcoming, and efficient service to all hotel guests, in line with the hotel's vision and values on customer satisfaction. The hotel reception area's staff's main purposes are to respond courteously to guests' requests, play a part in the general running of the reception desk, and help the General Manager maintain a smooth room bookings service. ([@5:25pm](http://www.melbreakhotel.co.uk/media/28301/job-description-receptionist.19/11/20204)).

Mackenzie et al. (2013) believe that at the pre-arrival stage of the guest cycle, the potential guest enquires the hotel as to whether or not accommodation(s) would be available on the date(s) and time(s) he/she intends to stay in the hotel. Suppose the hotel confirms the availability of accommodation. In that case, the prospective guest goes ahead to make a preliminary booking usually established at a later date or on arrival at the hotel premises. In making the initial booking, the prospective guest specifies the accommodation required and its accompanying details.

The pre-arrival stage allows the hotel to sell its services to prospective guests and to establish an excellent positive corporate image among future guests outside its premises (UNESCO, 2013). Thus, the guest chooses a hotel during the pre-arrival stage of the guest cycle. The choice of the guest is usually influenced by many factors, including personal experience with the hotel, advertisement, referral by friends and collagens, location, the name of the hotel, etc. the guest decision to make a reservation is also affected by the ease of making a reservation, the behaviour of reservation officers as well as the facilities in and around the hotel, (setupmyhotel.com.2020). For this reason,

the front office is sometimes called the sales office for non-corporate or group banking. The employees at the reservation desk must be sales-oriented and present a positive and healthy image of the hotel to the would-be customer (setupmyhotel.com2020).

Per the availability of accommodation, the hotel creates a reservation record for the potential guest. Doing this initiates the hotel guest cycle. Moreover, reservation records help personalize guest services and appropriately schedule needed staff and facilities. The reservation department should, then, complete all the pre-registration activities and prepare guest folios (applicable only for automated systems). Doing so will eventually maximize room sales by accurately monitoring room availability and forecasting room revenues

2.5.2 Arrival of the Hotel Guest Cycle

This stage allows the front office to clarify any guest's query, especially the details of the room rate of packages he/she has booked, and sell other products of the hotel to the guest. At the arrival stage, registration and rooming functions occur, and the hotel establishes a business relationship with the guest. The check-in clerk should determine the guests' reservation status (pre-registered guests versus walk-ins). Later, he/she shall prepare a registration record or make the guest sign the already-printed pre-registration record (under some of the semi-automated and all fully automated systems). The registration records shall include the following personal and financial information/items. The personal information includes the name of the guest and billing address, telephone number, and any other coordinates; passport number, birth certificate, and driving license number (whatever applicable) and any special needs or requests of the guest and the guest's signature. On the other hand, the financial

information includes the date of arrival, expected date of departure, or length of stay depending on how the system in the hotel is designed, assigned room number and rate, and the guest's intended method of payment.

2.5.3 Occupancy of the Hotel Guest Cycle

How the front office staff represents the hotel is compensated during the occupancy stage. At the occupancy stage, the front office department shall coordinate the guest's services quickly and accurately. Moreover, the front office staff encourages a repeat visit by the guests by paying great attention to guest complaints. This is ensured by placing complaint or suggestion cards in every public place and revenue centres in the hotel. Moreover, at least daily, the hotel shall collect comment cards, proceed with their analysis, and provide positive feedback to guests as soon as possible. Besides, adequate procedures are designed to protect the funds and valuables of guests. This might be ensured through guest key control, property surveillance, safe deposit boxes, and well-designed emergency panels and exits. As the hotel's primary contact centre, activities the front office is responsible for coordinating guest's requests. The front office must take extra care in responding to the guest in a timely and accurate manner. It must focus on providing anticipatory service and meet or exceed the guest's expectation to encourage a repeated visit.

In terms of security, the front office must follow the hotel operation procedure for handing hotel and guest keys, property surveillance, safe deposit boxes, guest personal property, and emergencies. The front office must monitor and post charges such as restaurant charges, telephones, internet, travel desk and post them appropriately to the guest account according to the front office posting procedures (setupmyhotel.com,2020)

2.5.4 Departure of the Hotel Guest Cycle

Guest services and guest accounting aspects of the guest cycle are completed at the fourth and final stage, the departure stage. In general, a proper checkout occurs when the guest a) Vacates the room; b) receives an accurate settlement of the guest's account; c) returns room keys, and d) leaves the hotel. Once the guest checks out of the hotel, the front office updates room availability status and notifies the housekeeping department accordingly.

At departure, checkout personnel encourage guests to consider returning to the hotel on any future date. That's why cashiers act like a dedicated salesperson, and might eventually accept future guest reservations. That way, the stages of the guest cycle become a cycle (that is, starts from where it ends) (www.tourism.bilkent.edu.tr/~jamel/RDM/Guest%20Cycle.doc @11: 20 am 19/11/2019).

In the case of departure, if the guest account is not entirely settled, then late charges accumulate. In such an undesired case, the responsibility of collection lies within the accounting department. However, the front office department shall provide all necessary information to make this collection more straightforward, quicker, and feasible.

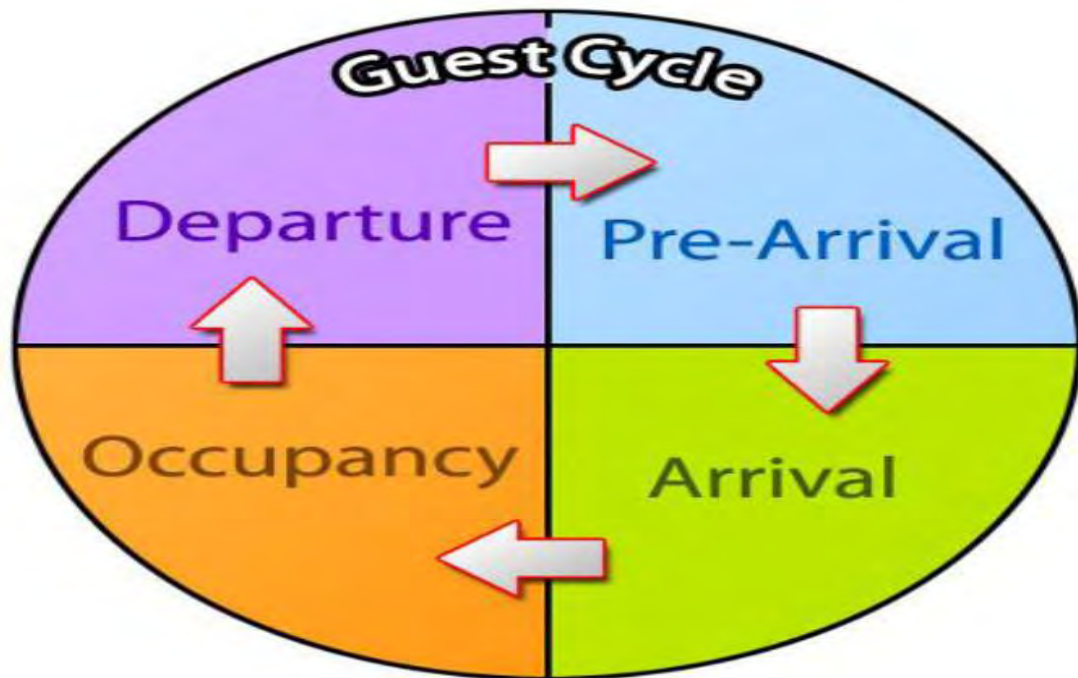


Figure 2: The guest cycle. (Mackenzie, Chan & Tse, 2013)

2.6 Registration of Hotel Guests

Guest registration is the recording of guest's personal information for official purposes. During registration, the guest is required to enter the necessary information on the GRC, such as guest name, contact number, the purpose of stay at the hotel, and passport and visa details in case of a foreign guest. The registration or check-in process in the hospitality industry is a critical process as many vital pieces of information of the guest are exchanged between the guests and the hotel staff during this process; the process can be manual or computerized (Baker et al., 2000). The incoming guests could be individuals or groups and conventions with or without reservations which could involve a substantial number of guests who might all arrive at or about the same time. As the guests come to the registration clerk, each should be pleasantly greeted and asked whether they have reservations or are walk-in's clients. The walk-in clients are potential guests who do not have any pre-arranged plans with the facility and therefore come into the hotel inquire for a room or accommodation

(<http://www.slideshare.net/ShaniaMaeLArradaza/hotel-operation-front-office11:58> @ 1/2/2020).

2.7 Legal Basis on Hotel Guest Registration

Due to the benefits of hotel guests' registration to the hotels, clients, and the economy, many countries have enacted legislation that governs the conduct of the clients and the hotels. For example, the Hotel Guest Registration Act R.S.O. (1990) sets out institutions in the hospitality industry that must ensure their guests' registration. The Act R. S. O (1990) defines a 'hotel' as a separate building or two or more connected buildings used mainly to cater to the needs of the travelling public by the supply of food and the furnishing of sleeping accommodation of not fewer than six bedrooms. The Act (1990) distinguishes hotels from any other building or connected buildings used mainly to supply food and lodging by the week or otherwise commonly known as 'boarding houses' or of furnishing living quarters for families and have a dining room or restaurant widely known as "apartment houses" or "private hotels" (Act R.S.O., 1990). The Act (1990) makes it mandatory for every hotel to keep a guest register in which personal details such as the name and usual place of residence of every person admitted as a guest in the hotel and occupying a room therein alone or with another person(s) would be entered (Act R.S.O., 1990).

Any owner or a manager of a hotel who fails to keep the register required by Section 2 or fails to see that the particulars required by Section 2 are entered therein, or who knowingly and willfully permits an untrue statement as to the name or place of residence of a guest to be entered in the register would be guilty of an offence and on conviction would be liable to a fine of not more than \$100, and in default of payment

may be imprisoned for a term of not more than three months (R.S.O. 1990, c. H.17, s. 3). In addition, every person who applies for admission as a guest in a hotel and who registers under or represents himself or herself as bearing some other name than his or her own, or who in registering or procuring admission to a hotel, makes a false statement as to his or her ordinary place of residence, is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$100, and in default of payment may be imprisoned for a term of not more than three months (R.S.O. ,1990, c. H.17, s. 4).

The Hotel Guest Registration Act [RSBC 1996] of Canada also provides provisions and clauses similar to Act R. S.O (1990). In this Act, a hotel is defined to include an inn or building in which private rooms are maintained for the public's accommodation and a hotel owner or manager as 'keeper' and is seen as the person operating, managing, or in charge of a hotel. The Act demands that a hotel keeper provide and keep a suitable guest register for the registration of all persons provided with sleeping, housekeeping, camping, or other accommodation at the hotel, and all those guests must be registered in it. According to the Act, on the arrival of a guest, the keeper must require the guest to enter in the register, or must enter for the guest, the (a) the name and home address of the guest and all other persons in the guest's party; (b) the date of the arrival; (c) if the guest is travelling by motor vehicle, (i) the trade name of the motor vehicle, and (ii) the license number, and other identifying letters or characters appearing on the official number plate carried on it, including the name of the province, state or country in which the number plate was issued. On the departure of the guest, the keeper must enter the date of departure in the register.

By the Act, the guest has a duty or obligation in providing information on arriving at any hotel when applying for the accommodation of a character described in Section 2 of the Act. Also, the guest must provide to the keeper at the hotel the registration information necessary to complete the registration following Section 2. The Act demands that until a guest has provided such vital pieces of information, he/she must not be provided with accommodation. The keeper has the responsibility of opening all registration records at all times for inspection by hotel inspectors, who are referred to as constables. By the Act, any person who contravenes this Act commits an offence under subsection (1) is liable on conviction to a penalty of not more than \$25 (http://www.elaws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h17_e.htm01/07/2020@21;00).

The Malaysian hospitality industry is regulated by the Registration of Guests Act 1965 (Act 381) and is applicable throughout Malaysia. The Act demands that every person checking into a hotel must show his or her identity card, and it defines 'identity card' as an identity card issued under the National or other similar document identifying the holder thereof. The Act, like Act R. S.O (1990) and that of Act 1996, also requests the 'keeper' of a hotel to ensure that every guest is registered. It defines the 'keeper' regarding any specified premises to include the proprietor and manager thereof and any person for the time being authorized to permit persons to lodge in those premises. According to the Act, 'lodging' includes a room in any specified premises ordinarily used as sleeping accommodation by person lodging thereat, the occupation of any such room by the person required to be registered under paragraph 3(1) (a) whether by day or by night for any period (National Registration Act 1965).

According to the Registration of Guests Act 1965 (Act 381), the keeper of any specified premises is obliged to (a) to keep a register in the form in the First Schedule of all persons lodging at the premises who are not servants of the keeper of the premises and who are not under the age of twelve years; (b) on the arrival of any such person at the premises, to ascertain and enter or cause to be entered in the register kept for that purpose the name, address, occupation, sex and nationality of that person, and the number, place, and date of issue of his identity card or (if he has no identity card) of his passport, together with the date and time of his arrival and the name of the last place from which, and how, he arrived. Also, the keeper has a duty to (c) on the departure of any such person from the premises, to enter or cause to be entered in the register the date and time of departure and the destination on the departure of such person; (d) to enter or cause to be entered in the register such other particulars as may be prescribed; and (e) to furnish to the nearest registration officer such returns as to the persons lodging at the premises at such times or intervals and in such form as may be prescribed (Registration of Guests Act 1965 (Act 381)).

The keeper or hotel managers of any specified premises are so required at any time by any police officer, to make available for inspection any register kept concerning those premises under the Act. Every such record shall be open at all reasonable hours for inspection by a registration officer or any person authorized for that purpose by a registration officer. Similarly, any police officer, registration officer, or any such authorized person mentioned in subsection (3) of the Act may make extracts from any register inspected by him under that subsection. If he/she has reason to suspect the genuineness of any particulars entered in the register or if any entry therein is in his opinion incomplete or misleading, he shall be entitled to demand such further

information as appears to him to be necessary from the person to whom the entry relates or any person occupying the room to which the entry relates (Registration of Guests Act 1965 (Act 381)).

Hotel keepers are obliged to preserve every register kept under the Act for not less than two years from the date of the last entry and may after that, at the keeper's discretion, destroy them. Under the Act, a registration officer may, by notice in writing under his hand, authorize the keeper of any specified premises mentioned in the notice to keep a register in a different form (including a loose-leaf register or card-index or a register which is partly in the form of a bound register and partly in the form of a loose-leaf register or card index) from that provided by the Act.

Any keeper of any specified premises who (a) fails to enter or cause to be entered in the register any particulars which he is required by this Act to enter or cause to be entered therein; (b) fails to furnish to a registration officer any return which he is required by this Act to furnish; or (c) fails to produce any register which is required to be made available or to be open for inspection under subsection 3(3), or obstructs any police officer, registration officer, or the person authorized by a registration officer when such officer or person is exercising his/her functions under the Act, shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding two thousand ringgit, or to both.

Also, any person who (a) knowingly or recklessly makes, or causes or permits to be made, in any register or any return any statement which is false in a material particular; (b) without the approval of the registration officer, willfully destroys, or mutilates or obliterates anything in, any register; or (c) fails to furnish any information in his

possession which is demanded from him under subsection 3(4), shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to a fine not exceeding two thousand ringgit or to both. Furthermore, any person required to be registered under paragraph 3(1) (a) who contravenes subsection 3(2) shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to a fine not exceeding two thousand ringgit or to both.

The Act also requires all guests to register under paragraph (1) (a) to furnish the particulars required by the Act to be entered in the register and to sign the register.

<http://www.agc.gov.my/Akta/Vol.%208/Act%20381.pdf> 12:30pm@1/3/2020).

The Immigration (Hotel Records) Order (1972) of the United Kingdom states, among other things, that all serviced and self-catering accommodation premises must keep a record of all guests over the age of 16. The record, which should include their full name and nationality, must be kept for at least 12 months. The Order stipulates that any hotel facility which holds any personal information on guests or any other individuals, including employees, must do so in the remits of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) unless such an establishment is exempted. If not, the establishment is required to pay an Annual Data Protection Fee to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

For all guests who are not British, Irish, or Commonwealth guests, the facility owners must take details of their passport numbers and places of an issue (or other documents that show their identity and nationality). They also take details of their next destination (including the address, if known) on or before departure. The Order exempts diplomats, their families, and staff do from registering at the hotels.

In Ghana, the tourism and hospitality industry are regulated by the Ghana Tourism Authority established by the Tourism Act, 2011 to regulate the tourism and hospitality industry and provide for related matters. Thus, through the Tourism Act, 2011, the Ghana Tourism Authority was established as a body corporate with perpetual succession to acquire property. Where there is a hindrance to the acquisition of property, the property may be acquired for it under the State Property and Contracts Act, 1960 (C.A.6) or the State Lands Act, 1962 (Act 125), and the cost shall be borne by the Authority (The Tourism Act, 2011 Sections 2 & 3). The prime goal of the Authority is to promote sustainable development of the Ghanaian tourism and hospitality industry nationally and internationally.

The functions of the Ghana Tourism Authority are spelt out in Section three of the Tourism Act 2011 and among other things include: (a) Implement and ensure compliance with the regulations developed in accordance with this Act; (b) Grant licenses for the tourism industry, regulate and supervise tourism enterprises; (c) Regulate and monitor the activities of licensees; (d) Ensure collaboration with other public, private and international agencies; (e) Investigate and take measures to eliminate illegal, dishonorable, unsound and improper activities in relation to any activity regulated under this Act; (f) Establish standards, guidelines and codes of practice in relation to carrying on or running a tourist enterprise and attractions; (g) Develop standards and procedures for designs for use at tourist attractions and enterprises to reflect Ghanaian culture; (g) Take appropriate measures for the safety and security of consumers of the tourism industry; and (h) Advise the Minister on policy issues generally on matters related to the tourism industry.

Section 25, subsections 1 to 3 of the Tourism Act, 2011, gives the Ghana Tourism Authority the power to register and license all tourism and hospitality enterprises and sites before starting operation. To this end, no person shall operate a tourism enterprise as listed in the Schedule of the Act unless that person holds a valid license issued by the Authority regarding that tourism and hospitality enterprise. Also, persons who contravene subsection (2) commits an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than one hundred penalty units or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months or to both (Tourism Act 2011, Section 25 (1 -3)).

An operating license is usually issued regarding a specific tourism enterprise and is non-transferable to another enterprise. Any person who, after receiving an operating license and transfers or attempts to transfer same to another hospitality or tourism and hospitality enterprise commits an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than two hundred and fifty penalty units or imprisonment for a term of not more than two years or to both. However, a license holder can transfer the license upon the sale of a tourism enterprise. In such a case, due diligence shall be carried out by the Authority before a transfer is affected (Tourism Act, 2011 Section 28 (1-4)).

Section 35 of the Act makes it mandatory for all hotel owners and their managers to register all hotel guests who are given accommodation in the hotels. For example, Section 35 (1) states, “A holder of a tourist accommodation license shall keep a register on the premises and shall enter in the register the name and address of each guest who stays in the accommodation and other particulars that the Authority may prescribe” Like Acts 1990; 1995 and 1965 of Canada and Malaysia, subsections 2 and 3 continue “The register shall be retained by the holder of the tourist accommodation license for

at least five years” and “Each guest shall be provided with a registration card which shall be completed by the guest and submitted by the licensee to the Authority as demanded in writing” (Tourism Act 2011 (1-3)).

A hotel owner or manager who fails to register a hotel guest or makes or permits to be made in any register an entry which he/she knows or has reason to believe is false, commits an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than one hundred penalty units or imprisonment for a term of not more than six months or to both (Tourism Act, 2011, Section 35).

To ensure that the Authority can implement its functions, including ensuring that hotels keep and make the necessary entries in the Hotel guest register, it has been empowered to appoint inspectors. The Inspectors are usually issued with a certificate of appointment by the Authority and, in the discharge of their duties, produce the certificate whenever required by the manager or other person responsible for a tourism enterprise under this Act.

The functions of the inspectors include monitoring on-going projects of physical structures of tourism and hospitality enterprises before the grant of a license for such enterprise; entering, inspecting, and examining a tourism enterprise during working hours, by day or by night; taking along a police officer in the discharge of the duties of the inspector has reasonable cause to expect obstruction in the execution of this/her duties; and requiring the production of any register, license or document kept in pursuance of the Act and to inspect, examine and copy any of the documents. The inspectors are also responsible for making or causing to be made any examination and

enquiry necessary to ascertain whether the provisions of the Act and enactments in force related to public health are being complied with by a tourism and hospitality enterprise and any employees of the enterprise; requiring a person who the inspector finds in a tourism enterprise to give information as to who is the operator of the enterprise if it is in that person's power to give the information; and inspecting premises with inspectors from other agencies which may include Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana National Fire Service and Environmental Protection Agency.

To improve upon the performance of the duties of the inspector, an operator, agent, or staff of the operator of a tourism and hospitality enterprise is mandated to facilitate the requirements of an inspector necessary for entry, inspection, examination, enquiry, the taking of samples, or otherwise for the exercising of the powers of the inspector under this Act concerning that enterprise (Tourism Act, 2011, Section 39 & 40).

Per the Act, any person who obstructs an inspector in the performance of a function commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than one hundred and fifty penalty units or a term of imprisonment of not more than twelve months or both. Also, a person who is in charge of a tourism enterprise for the time being and who willfully delays an inspector in the performance of the inspector's functions or fails to produce any register, license, or document which the person is required to produce under the Act, or withholds any information concerning the enterprise, is considered to have obstructed an inspector in the performance of the inspector's functions under the Act.

Another Ghanaian law that is important to hotel guest registration in Ghana is the Alliance Compliance Order (1971). Section 12 of the Alliance Compliance Order (1971) states, among other things, that “It shall be the duty of the keeper of any premises particulars to which this section applies to keep a register of all persons furnished to be staying at the premises who are aliens not being under the age of sixteen years”. The keepers of hotel premises are obliged, on the arrival of any alien not being under the age of sixteen years at the premises, to ascertain and enter or cause to be entered in the register kept for the purpose, the name, and nationality of such alien, together with the date of his arrival and the address from which he last came. The keepers are also requested on the departure of any such alien, to enter or cause to be entered in the register the date of departure and destination on the departure of the alien, and if required by the Minister, he/she shall also ascertain and enter in the register from time to time such other particulars concerning the alien as the Minister may direct. The keepers are also, if the Minister issues directions for the purpose, to make available to the registration officer of the registration district in which the premises are situated, such returns concerning the persons staying at the premises, at such times or intervals, and in such form, as may be specified in such directions.

By the Act, all persons (whether an alien or not) staying at any premises to which this section applies to sign, when so required, a statement as to his nationality and, if an alien, to furnish and sign a statement of the particulars required under this section. The keepers are to direct any person who stays at the premises to sign the statement and furnish the details required from him under this section and to preserve such statements (including any statements supplied under this section to any previous keeper of the premises) for two years from the date when the statements were signed. Finally, the Act

demands that the hotel owners make available the register for inspection by any police officer or any immigration officer or by any person authorized by the Minister.

The Ghanaian laws on hotel registration are similar to those of hotel guest registration regulations in other jurisdictions such as Canada, the UK, and Malaysia. The current study will investigate the hotel owners' and their staff's, especially the front office staff, knowledge of the laws and their level of compliance. The study will also be interested in finding out how the law enforcement agencies are helping in implementing the laws at the various hotel facilities.

2.8 Guest Registration Procedure

Bardi (2007) believe that hotel guest registration can be defined as the process of assigning rooms to guests at the time of their arrival by filling in the necessary details about the guest and the rooms contained on a registration form. The registration form acts as a source of information about the guest and acts a legal proof for both the guest and the hotel. The registration procedure begins with the Hospitality's display towards the guest as soon as they arrive at the hotel. At this point, the front office staff finds out from the guest whether he/she has a reservation and goes through the process. If the guest is a walk-in guest, the front office staff checks the room availability status. If rooms are available, it takes the guest through the registration process by completing the registration card, obtaining the guest's signature, and registers the guest (Oli et al., 2015). The front office staff always have a ready smile all the time to welcome guests. As the guest approaches the front desk, he/she should be greeted warmly. The warmly welcome guest with a sincere greeting will feel optimistic about the hotel and expect similar gesticulation from other hotel staff.

The guest registration procedure involves several steps that, if followed accurately, allow management to ensure a pleasant, efficient, and safe visit. The process is discussed generally as these steps relate to effective front office management. Bardi (2007) highlighted eleven guest registration procedure, and these are: i) Guest requests to check into the hotel; ii) Front desk clerk projects hospitality toward the guests; iii) Front desk clerk inquiries about guest reservation status or otherwise; iv) Guest completes registration card; v) Front desk clerk reviews completeness of registration card and vi) The front desk clerk verifies credit. The rest of the procedure is vii) Front desk clerk makes room selection; viii) Front desk clerk makes room assignment; ix) Front desk clerk assigns room rate; x) Front desk clerk discusses sales opportunities for hotel products and services with guest and finally, xi) The front desk clerk provides a room key (see Fig 2.3)



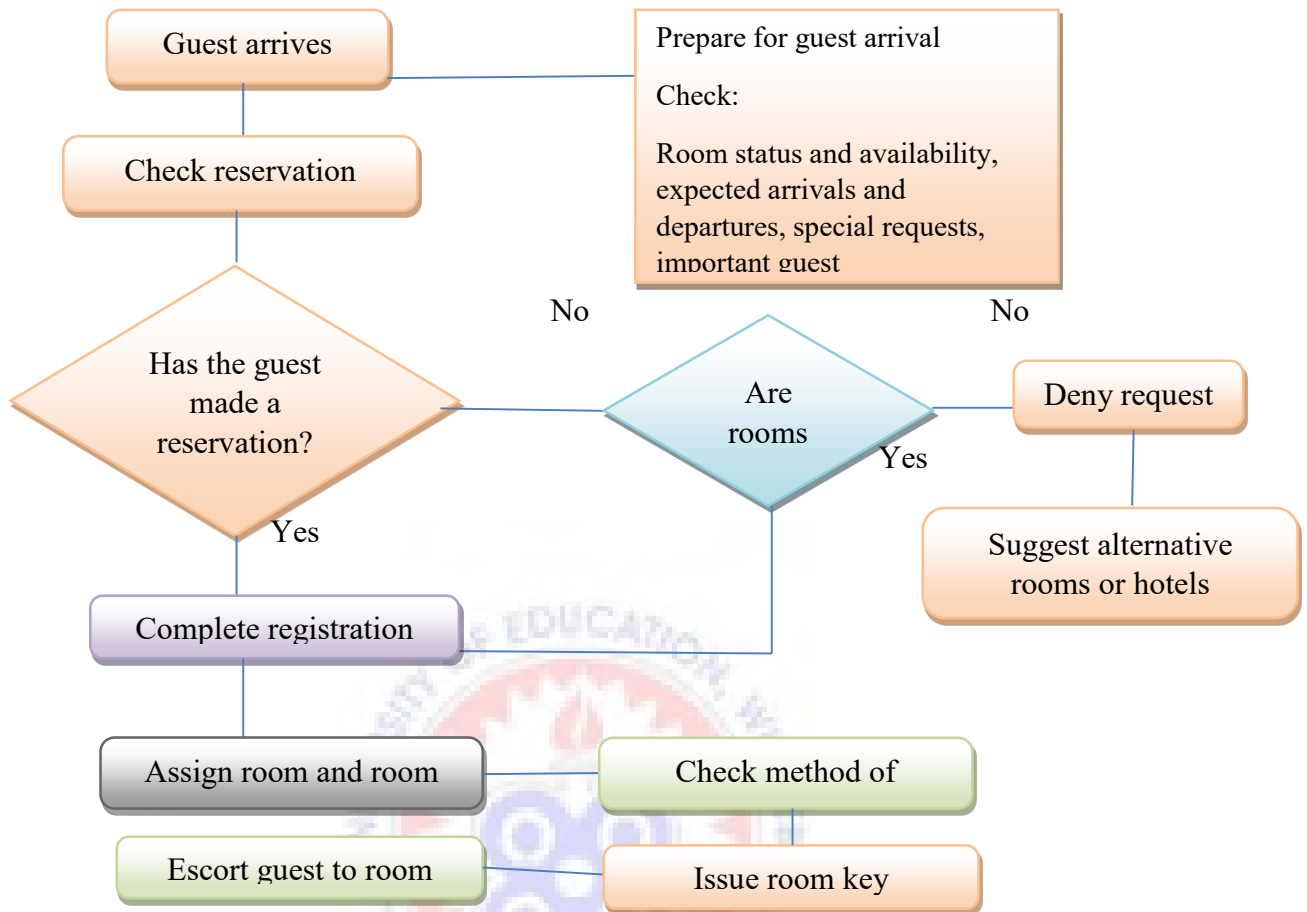


Figure 3: The Check-in Process

Source: Bardi (2007) and Baker, Huyton. and Bradley (2006)

Bardi (2007) believes that when this procedure is followed correctly, it provides the hotel with almost all the essential information it will need in providing quality service to the client and to secure a re-visit to the facility. Asare-Bediako (2010) agrees with Bardi (2007) on the procedure outlined, but he is of the view that the lack of the guests' and the Front Office staff's signature makes the process incomplete. This is very instructive as Oli et al. (2015) have argued that the registration form acts not only as a source of information about the guest but also a legal proof for both the guest and the hotel. Asare-Bediako (2010), therefore, puts the signature of the guests on number ten (x), while that of the hotel staff is placed at number eleven (xi). Hence, Asare-Bediako

(2010) the guest registration procedure should have thirteen steps. He believes that it is only when the guest signs the registration form that he/she commits to abide by the hotel's terms and conditions.

2.9 The Benefits of Guest Registration

One opportunity to build a good relationship with guests is in the improved gathering and use of guest information, and this practice is not new to the hospitality industry. Before the advent of computers, hotel guests' information was recorded manually in journals or on cards. Hotel guest registration is beneficial to the hotels, clients, and the economy at large (Hotel Guest Registration Act RSBC, 1996). The registration is helpful for both guests and the hotel in various ways. For example, it satisfies the legal requirements to keep records of their guests as stipulated by hotel laws in Ghana, such as the Tourism Act 2011 and the Alliance Compliance Order of 1969. It provides a record of arrivals as opposed to reservations, which may help to account for residents in the event of a fire or other disaster. It provides management information that helps in planning and other management decision-making. For example, hotel guests' registration provides management with information on the proportion of arrivals to reservations, occupancy statistics, guests' national origin, and some special needs of guests. Guests' registration confirms guests' acceptance of the hotel's terms and conditions (if they are asked to sign the register), and it occupies the guest. At the same time, the receptionist checks booking records allocated rooms and prepares keys. Registration of hotel guests also serves as revenue for taxation to the local authority.

Registration records of the hotel guest may also be useful for various purposes such as satisfying guests' needs, forecasting room occupancies, settling guest accounts properly, establishing guests' history records at check-out (personal & financial

information), assigning a room type and a room rate for each guest as well as determining long-run availability, that is, reservation information versus short-run availability, the actual room status (Kul Techno Lab and Research Centre; 2019). Guests' registration also helps in the easy identification of guests. In the case of unforeseen and unprecedented situations such as accidents, natural deaths, homicide, and others, the guest can be identified and traced. It also helps in redirecting guests' mails and items left in the hotel to them. Most importantly, hotel registration helps public authorities keep close track of guests' movement, mostly tourists. It also helps the general jurisdiction assess the right levies that the hotel managers are expected to pay to the state (Asare-Bediako, 2010). It also helps the hotels satisfy special guests such as disabled people through barrier-free designs

www.tourism.bilkent.edu.tr/~jamel/RDM/Guest%20Cycle.doc@11:20am
19/11/2020).

The registration card or form is the only legal piece of document that substantiates the guest's attendance in the hotel. This means that the front office staff must fully register all guests coming to stay in the hotel. It helps to keep a close track of the movement of the guests, mostly tourists, within the country by the public authority

2.10 The Challenges of Hotel Guest Registration

People normally lodge or use hotel facilities for various reasons. It could be for a business meeting, a conference of all kinds, vacation, leisure, just to mention a few. Thus, whereas some persons patronize hotel facilities for business, others do so for some special reasons and for that matter might not want to give their true identity. Other people also do not see the significance of giving their details and sometimes wish to

fake their identities. Providing fake identity is most common in many of the hotels and guest houses in Ghana, especially in a case where guests are staying for 'a short time'.

For some guests, the guest process's registration takes too much of their time, especially when they have to follow a long queue to be checked in. This happens as guests mostly may arrive at the facility very exhausted after long travel and would want to quickly check into their rooms to freshen up. Such guests find the checking-in or the registration process, which involves getting to the front desk, showing identification and providing a credit card for room charges and incidentals, and handing over of room key cumbersome and therefore try to avoid it if they can or provide information as quickly as they can and sometimes providing fake information.

Another challenge facing the guest registration process is the unprofessional conduct of some front office staff and some managers. Sometimes, some of the hotels' unfaithful staff connives with some guests to avoid registration to a pocket or reduce the amount of tax paid to the public offices. This not only leads to loss of revenue to the state but can sometimes create problems for both the client and the hotel. For example, in an event where someone who refused to fill the registration card on arrival dies or suffer any mishap in the facility, it will be complicated for the hotel to trace his/her identity or contact his/her family. Furthermore, a guest who fails to go through the registration process will find it difficult, if not impossible, to retrieve his/her items left in the facility as there will be no records to prove his/her visit to the facility.

2.11 The New Trend in Check-in / Guest Registration

Technology has come to stay and continues to be with our day-to-day affairs. The traditional ways of conducting most tasks are gradually fading out, welcoming new ways, hence the use of technology. The strategic use of technology in marketing products and services is one of the most significant opportunities the hospitality industry has at this moment. Most hotels that still use traditional methods of manual registering of the guest usually increase the waiting period for guests and risk making the wrong impression on the tired travellers' minds. The waiting time could be the opportunity to impress the guest in a very positive manner, but at the same time, it could also be very dull if not well-taking care of (Kashmira, 2018).

<https://chatbotsmagazine.com/5-technology-trends-driving-the-hospitality-industry-c206ab2751f2>

Hotels are now using technology in their guest registration exercise. For example, some hotels are using cloud-based property management systems to improve their check-in or registration time and store guest data. This, among other things, helps them to have data about their repeat visitors during the reservation process and also during check-ins. Such systems help store documents that prevent the hotels from the difficulty of identity proof and recapturing the same data repeatedly. The availability of such data helps hotels to provide personalized services to their clients. Being aware of the preferences of rooms, customer requirements and more will save time for your hotel staff. Access to this information reduces the time spent during the check-in and check-out process. (<https://www.hotelogix.com/blog/2018/01/23/simplify-hotel-check-in-and-checkout-process/>)

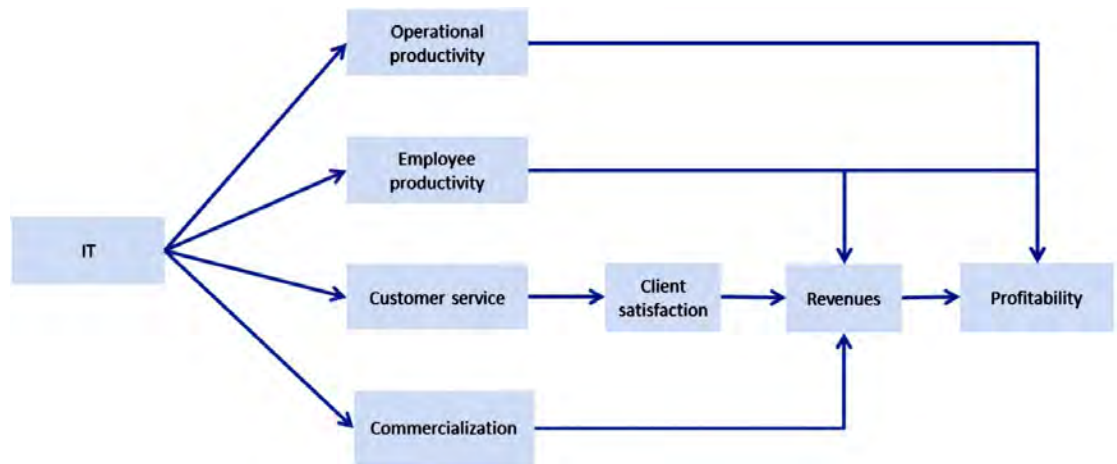


Figure 4: The Global proposals about IT impact on organizational performance

2.11.1 Automated check-ins and check-outs

Due to the advent of technology, some hotels have moved away from staff-assisted guest registration to automated registration. Technology has brought about a different outlook on the registration exercise (Cihan, Berezina, Michael, Kasavana & Mehmet, 2011). Digital check-ins and check-out devices, along with initiating special requests in your hotel, are now possible for guests on their mobiles, tablets, or computers. This has drastically eliminated long queues at the front desk during peak seasons which are quite distressing for guests. Would you like to wait for a room key when you're all jet-lagged? That's when innovation can do wonders. Chain hotels such as Hilton Worldwide have enabled this feature for enhancing the guest experience by allowing them to select rooms according to their preference (Cihan et al., 2011). Mobile applications have also come up with this facet to provide convenience and choice to guests. Guests are updated when their room is ready, allowing them to bypass the front desk. For example, Marriott. Inc has introduced its mobile application which empowers guests to check-in after 4 pm, a day before their check-in date (Cihan et al., 2011). Leveraging this innovation, hotels allow their staff to deliver a high level of service that guests are always looking forward to.

2.11.2 Digitized Room Keys

Another innovation in the hotel guest registration process is the use of digitized room keys. Many hotels have replaced their metal keys and swipe cards with digitized keys, thereby avoiding the problem of having to issue duplicate room keys to guests who have misplaced them and saving the guests from the problem or embarrassment of having to prove their identity every time their keys got missing. Some hotels have now created their applications with some security level with which the guests receive the room key through the application, and the room appears only when they request it. Some of the applications are made so that the hotel can control the IMEI and help out guests if the guest's phone battery dies or losses the phone. Furthermore, guests can share the room key with their fellow travellers. For example, Hilton replaced its swipe cards with smartphones and applications to ease check-ins and reduce the loss of access when it started perusing the vision to install a keyless entry in 2,500 hotels by the end of 2017 (Bhowmik, 2017). <https://chatbotsmagazine.com/5-technology-trends-driving-the-hospitality-industry-c206ab2751f2>.

2.11.3 Electronic Registration

Another innovation in the registration process is a telephone and electronic registration. Most hotels now have a website through which they market their products and services. Some have included portals where would-be guests can register, select rooms of their choice, and sometimes make advance payments electronically. The process is only confirmed when the guest arrives at the hotel. Others also go through the registration process via telephone and make initial payments through mobile money transfer. All these have revolutionaries the registration process and improved guest satisfaction.

2.12 The Front Office and other Departments in the Hospitality Industry

The front office has been described as the heart of the hospitality facility. It also acts as the mediator between the guests and all the other departments in the hotel facility. The front office staff interacts with all hotel departments, including housekeeping, food and beverage, banquet, controller, maintenance, marketing sales, security, and human resources (Bardi, 2003) (see Fig. 2.3). These departments perceive the front office as a source of information and avenue for communication in providing effective guest services. Each department in the hotel facility has a unique communication link with the front office and its staff, and this link must be maintained if the department would be able to provide satisfying services to their guests (China Hotelier, 2008). Cooperation and communication are vital in the hotel industry, which is most evident in the front office (Gray & Liguori, 2003).

The front office department provides the history of the guests to the marketing and sales so that they will be able to develop programs to attract more clients to the hotel. The data provided by the front office include the frequency of visits, special needs/requests, and reservations (Beatriz et al., 2009). The guest history is a valuable resource for marketing and sales. The Marketing Department uses the guests' registration information to target marketing campaigns, develop promotions, prepare mailing labels, and select appropriate advertising media. The front office staff must make every effort to keep this database current and accurate (China Hotelier, 2008).

The housekeeping and front office need to communicate daily with each other about the rooms accessible for guests' occupancy. Housekeepers used the following to indicate room status: Available, meaning the room is clean or ready to be occupied; occupied, meaning guest or guests are already occupying a room; stay over meaning a

guest will not be checking out of a room on the current day. A hotel room can also be described as dirty or on-change, which means a guest has checked out of the room, but the housekeeping staff is yet to release the room for occupancy. When a hotel room is described as out-of-order, it means the room is not available for occupancy as a result of a mechanical malfunction. Guest requests for supplies or additional amenities (personal toiletry items such as shampoo, toothpaste, mouthwash, and electrical equipment) are always routed through the front office department first China Hotelier, 2008).

The human Resource Department of the hotel facility provides competent personnel based on the volume of business transactions for the front office to deliver quality hospitality services as required by the guests. A hotel business's success, among other things, depends on the success or failure in giving quality and up-to-date hospitable services (Bardi, 2010). As the Front Office is in the front line of the hotel's operations, much depends on its staff. Because of this, some scholars believe that an ideal front-office employee should have qualities such as courteousness and friendliness, efficiency and promptness, the genuine desire to work with people, and being neat and attractively dressed (Asare-Bediako, 2011; Amuzu, 2010).

The interactions between the Food and Beverage Department and the Front Office are also essential in the hotel industry. The restaurant supervisor who may be working on the breakfast shift may want to know how many guests would be in the hotel to determine the number of servers to schedule for breakfast service. Some vital information like the number of occupancies and when the guests may depart would be critical to the Food and Beverage Department in its attempt to contribute to the guests' satisfaction during their stay in the hotel (Beatriz et al., 2009).

The Banquet Department, which often combines the Marketing and Sales Department functions and a Food and Beverage Department, requires the Front Office to relay information to guests about scheduled events and bill payment. Since most banquet guests may not be registered guests in the hotel, the Front Office provides a logical communications centre. The banquet guest who is unfamiliar with the hotel property will ask at the Front Office for directions. This service might seem minor in the overall delivery of service, but it is essential to the lost or confused guest (Bardi, 2007)

The Maintenance or Engineering Department and Front Office communicate on room status and the need for maintenance services. Maintenance workforces must know the occupancy status of a room before attending to plumbing, heating, or air-conditioning problems. If a room is reserved, the two departments need to work out a time frame so that the guest can enter the room on arrival or be assigned to another room. Cooperative efforts produce the best solutions to challenging situations. Critical communication and planning by departmental managers to provide guest services at a time that does not interfere with delivering quality hospitality services to clients (Bardi 2007).

On the other hand, the Controller relies on the Front Office staff to provide a daily summary of financial transactions through a well-prepared night audit. This information is also used to measure management's ability to meet budget targets. The information produced by the Front Office is a necessary first step in the process of the factual guest accounting process and the financial assembly of data for the Controller. Communications between the Security Department and the Front Office are essential in providing quality hospitality services to the guests. These departments work closely together in maintaining guest security. Fire safety measures and emergency

communication systems and procedures for routine investigation of guest security concerns require the cooperation of these departments. All Front Office team members must be on alert for people who do not belong in the lobby and report inconsistencies with the Security Department. This professional view of security allows the Front Office to support the Security Department. All these departments in the hospitality industry work and aim to satisfy their guests and retain the hotel business. These are made possible by effective communication among mainly from the front office staff. The current study will be interested in determining how the hotels in the Kwahu Areas use the information gathered from the guest registration processes to ensure communication and collaboration among the various departments in the hotels to achieve high client satisfaction.

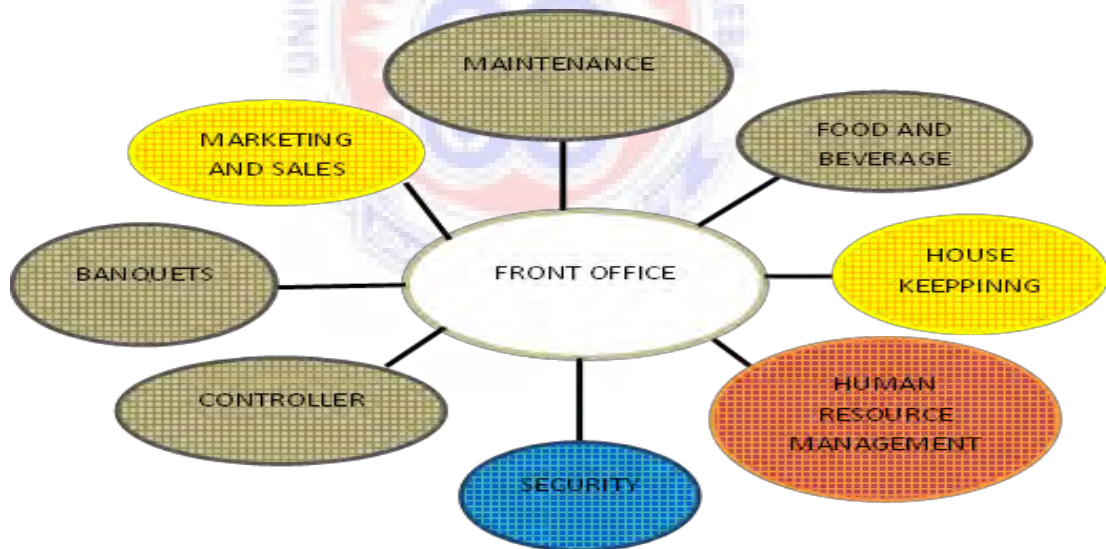


Figure 5: The Front Office and other Departments (Bardi, 2003)

2.13 Conceptual Framework

The ultimate goal of every business organization is to make a profit and retain its core customers. For these aims to be achieved, the business owners and hoteliers are always mindful of their service to the customers. The hospitality industry is made up of tangible and intangible elements in its services and products. The physical products of hospitality, such as food and drink in a restaurant or the actual hotel room, are sold at a price to the guests or customers (Bonciu & Sărac, 2011). For example, the price of a plate of food or the cost (rate/rent) of a hotel room per night is the fee a guest pays for renting a hotel room or the price a customer paid for buying a meal in a restaurant. These are often regarded as tangible aspects of hospitality. It is believed that sometimes the qualities of staff and the way they deliver services to guests are often more important than the tangible products in making a hospitality experience satisfactory or unsatisfactory (Iancu, Soare, Bonciu & Rodica, 2015). Thus, the intangible services are essential components of the tangible element for ensuring guests' satisfaction during their stay in the hotel (Popova, 2012). Therefore, in determining the success of the hospitality industry, service quality, and guests' satisfaction, there is the need to consider the proper use of both tangible and intangible aspects of the hotel's operations. Service quality is an elusive concept that is difficult to define and measure. Some scholars have defined quality as conformance to specifications, implying that the feature set of a product should match the standards predetermined by the management (Reeves & Bednar, 1994). However, such a management-inspired definition can hardly be applied to quantify service quality because services are difficult to reduce to a set of standards (Omanukwue, 2012). To this end, service quality has been developed and characterized by a consumer's perspective. In this respect, service quality can be

defined in three distinct ways: quality as excellence, quality as a value, and quality as meeting or exceeding expectations (Ekinici, 2008).

Thus, customer satisfaction is the psychological response that guests derived from the tangible or intangible services they receive from a service or product provider in exchange for their money (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). In other words, it is the extent to which the perceptual difference gap between expectation before consumption and practical experience after consumption of service or products is bridged. Under a specific hotel service consumption setting, customer satisfaction frequently influences customers' overall attitude and decision-making and repurchase of products or services (Lee et al., 2010; Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). When a hotel succeeds in providing quality service to its customers, it will be in the position to influence their overall satisfaction and create customer favorites, customer loyalty, customer recommendation, and priority option in them. Thus, such a hotel will become a hotel of choice for the guests, and it will be able to maintain such guests (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003).

For a hotel to deliver quality service to its clients which will lead to clients' total satisfaction, it must ensure that it has physical quality (appropriate environment); product quality, quality staff behaviour, and responsiveness are targeted towards clients' desired self-congruence. The desired self-congruence is part of one's self-concept, which has proven to influence customer satisfaction. Self-concept reflects how an individual sees him/herself (Omanukwue, 2013; Graeff, 1996). Customers prefer products and services that are congruent with their self-concept (Graeff, 1996). Self-concept is of two dimensions: Ideal and desired self-congruence (Ekinici et al., 2008). Ideal self-congruence is the image of oneself as one would like it to (Landon, 1974),

while desired, self-congruence, on the other hand, induces goals and desires as reference points (Sirgy et al., 1997). However, the current study's focus is on providing quality services to state regulatory agencies and hotel guests using data gathered from the hotel guests' registration process. The hotel can target the guests' desired self-congruence by obtaining the appropriate data about the goals and desires through guests' registration. When received by the front office staff, such data are communicated to the various departments of the hotel, and they are used to provide tailor-made specialized goods and services to the guests to meet their individual desired self-congruence. This can be achieved when the hotel managers and the front office staff have good knowledge of the laws governing hotel guest registration and abide by them. When this is completed, it will lead to guests' total satisfaction, culminating in guest's loyalty with its goodbye products of guest's retention and guest's recommendation of the hotel's products and services to others. This framework will guide the study during data collection, analysis, evaluation, and discussion.

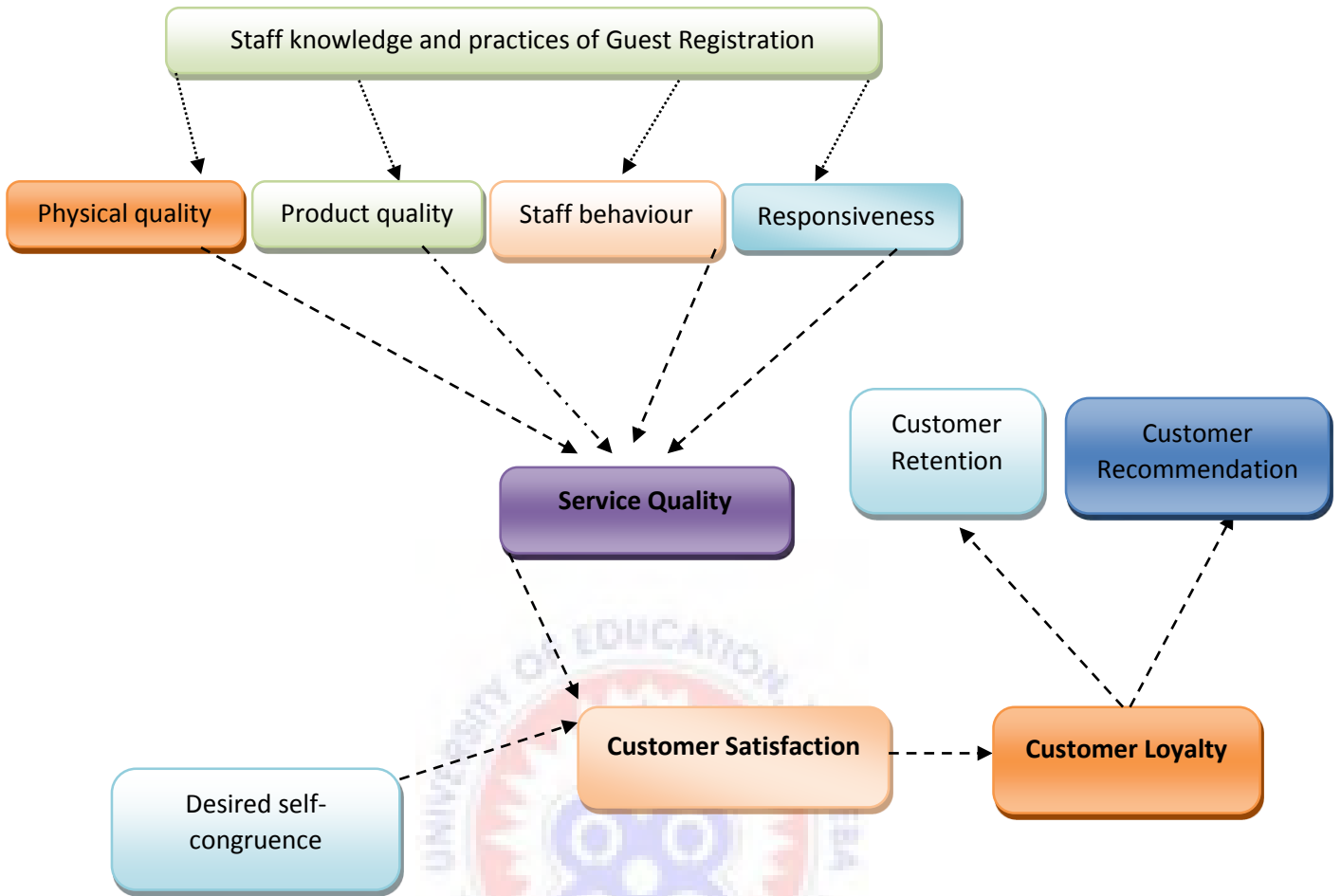


Figure 6: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adopted from Omanukwue (2013)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The current study adopted an exploratory case-study approach. Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. Thus, the case study approach is especially useful in situations where contextual conditions of the event being studied are critical and where the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold.

The study adopted an exploratory case study approach because the researcher had no control over the events as they unfold, and also, not much research work has been done in the area of study.

3.2 Research Approach

There are two research approaches in social research that is quantitative and qualitative approaches (Boumar & Atkinson, 1995; Slavin, 1992). The terms ‘quantitative research’ and ‘qualitative research’ have come to signify much more than ways of data collection. They have come to represent deviating traditions about the nature and purposes of research in social sciences. Some authors believe that the notion that the jargons ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ seem to imply ‘quantification’ or its absence is the central issue is highly unfortunate since the issues span much more than this suggests. Therefore, the current study used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches for the collection and analysis of the data for the study.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population for the current study included all the hotels in the Okwahu Areas, all hotel staff; all hotel guests that patronized hotels in the Kwahu Areas and all officials of Ghana Tourism Authority as well as the Ghana Immigration Service in the Okwahu Area who are responsible for implementing the guests' registration laws in the Area. However, the target population consisted of all the front office staff of the selected hotels, the officials of the Ghana Tourist Authority in the studied area, supervisors, and selected clients of hotels in three Districts in the Okwahu Areas. The target population, therefore, was made up of 64 licensed hotels, 64 hotel managers, 540 front office staff, 10 Regional Offices staff of Ghana Tourism Authority, 15 Immigration officers in the Eastern Regional office; two staff of the Ghana Tourism Authority and three Immigration officers in the Okwahu South Municipality who are responsible for all the assemblies in the Okwahu area.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sampling Side

In order to acquire a representative sample for the study, the study used the multi-stage sampling technique to select the sample for the study. In the first stage, a stratified sampling technique was used to select data sources, which were stratified into Assemblies, hotels, front office managers, front office staff, and staff of the regulatory authorities. The hotels were further stratified into stars, including 7 one-star, 4 two-star, and 53 budget hotels. This was done to ensure that each star was well represented in the study.

At the second stage, the purposive sampling technique was used to select three out of the four assemblies in the Kwahu areas. Kwahu is best known for Easter festival celebrations, paragliding activities, and tourist sites, as well as forty days' funeral

celebrations. These activities and celebrations are primarily centered in three of the four assemblies in the Okwahu Area. For example, most of the activities in the Okwahu areas during Easter times, including the paragliding, street carnival, and site seeing, occur in Nkawkaw, Atibie, Mpraeso, Obomeng, and Abetifi. The Okwahu East, West, and South Assemblies were therefore purposefully selected for the study.

In selecting hotels to be involved in the study, a purposive sampling procedure was used to select all the seven (7) two-star hotels and four (4) one-star hotels for study. This was done because due to their status, one expected that they would be implementing best practices in the industry, and therefore, management and staff of these hotels would not only be aware of the existence of the hotel laws, but they would seek to implement them. Besides, it was also expected that they would have more patronage, all things being equal than the budget hotels. The study selected fourteen out of the 53 budget hotels randomly for the study.

In selecting participants from the regulatory agencies, the study again used a purposive sampling technique to select 3 Immigration Officers from the three Assemblies and three Ghana Tourism Authority staff. This approach was used because the two institutions are critical in the implementation of hotel laws in Ghana.

The study used both purposive and simple random sampling techniques in selecting the hotel staff for the study. For example, the study used purposive sampling in selecting all the hotel managers for the study. A simple random sample was used in selecting the three (3) front office staff, each from the starred hotels and two (2) front office staff from the budget hotels for the study. This was done among other things because it was

realised that the starred hotels have more front office staff than the budget hotels. In all, the study selected eight-six (86) hotel staff made up of twenty-five (25) hotel managers and sixty-one (61) front office staff.

In selecting hotel guests for the study, a convenience sampling technique was used. Even though the researcher was aware of the extent to which a convenience sample, irrespective of its size, actually represents the total population cannot be known (Chaturvedi, n.d). The study, therefore, selected three guests per hotel for the study.

Table 1: Sample for the Study

Sample Category	Number Selected
Ghana Immigration Service	3
Ghana Tourism Authority	3
Hotel Managers	25
Front Office Staff	61
Clients	75
Total	167

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Data collection instruments refer to devices used to collect data such as questionnaires, tests, structured interview schedules, and checklists (Seaman, 1991). Since the study adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches (the mixed method), there was the need to select instruments that could be best used for the data collection. Thus, a self-administered questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were the primary data collection instruments that were used for the data collection. The questionnaire consisted of both close-ended and open-ended items. Close-ended questions provided a range of responses from which the respondents made a choice. Generally, close-ended

questions were quick to complete and straightforward to code for computer analysis. However, the open-ended questions allowed the participants to provide the appropriate responses, and it did not restrict the respondents of their responses (Arthur, 2012). These were used to solicit detailed responses from the respondents in an attempt to explain or support the responses to some of the close-ended questions. The questionnaire employed the Likert scale to measure the awareness and compliance, new trends, and importance of hotel guest registration among hotels in the Kwahu area.

The questionnaire had four sections. Section A consisted of the respondents' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, tenure of job, job category, and educational level. Section B sought to determine the respondents' awareness of the hotel guest registration laws by the Tourism Act (2011). these functions both to the hotel and their guests. The third section, Section C, sought to find out the front office staff's knowledge on guest registration and their awareness of the GTA mandatory requirement on hotel guest registration. The final section of the questionnaire, Section D, asked respondents to indicate their day-to-day practices on guest registration and how they believed the registration of guests could yield any benefits to the guest and the hotel as a whole. A semi-structured interview guide was used in collecting responses from the hotel managers, personnel from the GTA, and some hotel guests. The structure of the semi-structured interview guide was similar to that of the questionnaire.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher initially sought permission and cooperation from the management of the selected hotels through an introductory letter from the Head of Department of the Hospitality and Tourism Education University of Education Winneba Kumasi to the

Human Resource Manager/Administrative Managers of the selected hotels. The introductory letter explained the aims and the objectives of the study as well as the timelines. After the access to the study area and the consent of the respondents had been gained, the questionnaires were distributed to the hotel front office staff to complete. The respondents were given three weeks to complete the filling of the questionnaire. To ensure effective retrieval of the questionnaires, frequent phone calls and visits were made to the hotels to encourage the participants to complete the question. The researcher also went to the Regional and Municipal Offices of the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Ghana Immigration Service to interview the person in charge of hotel operations.

The primary data collection exercise started in the third week of June 2020 and ended in the first week of July 2020. For the data collection exercise, the hotels were grouped into three zones, mainly based on proximity. Zone 'A' consisted of hotels in the Okwahu East Municipality; Zone 'B', hotels in Okwahu South Municipality and; Zone 'C,' hotels in the Okwahu West Municipality. The questionnaires were distributed in the same sequence.

At all the hotels, the researcher was actively involved in the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires. This, among other things, helped to establish rapport with the respondents, gained their cooperation, and provided the researcher with the opportunity to explain the study's purposes and clarify any 'unclear' statements to the respondents (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981; Best, 1977).

The first week of the data collection period was spent on distributing the questionnaires at the various hotels starting from the Okwahu East District Assembly. For the remaining weeks, the researcher moved from one hotel to another to follow up the questionnaires and encourage them to complete the questionnaires. In addition, numerous telephone calls were made to the contact persons (Hotel Managers/Supervisors) to encourage the respondents to complete the questionnaires. Extra copies of the questionnaires were given to the contact persons to be given to respondents who had their original questionnaires misplaced. These activities helped to improve the response rate of the questionnaires. In the end, a total of 54 out of the 61 questionnaires distributed were retrieved, constituting an 88.5% response rate. Also, 88 interviews were conducted (See Table below).

Table 2: Response Rates Attained from the Interviews and Questionnaires

Sample Category	Number Distributed/ Interviewed	Number Interviewed/ Retrieved	Response Rate (%)
Ghana Immigration Service	3	3	100
Ghana Tourism Authority	3	3	100
Hotel Managers	25	25	100
Front Office Staff	61	54	88.5
Clients	75	57	76
Total	167	142	76.6

3.7 Pre-testing of Instrument

Adams et al. (2007) describe pre-testing as using a small sub-sample, which may determine whether the main study's data collection plan is an appropriate procedure. Thus, a small-scale pre-test study provides an advanced opportunity for the researcher to check the data collection instrument to minimize errors due to improper design

elements, such as question wording or sequence. In this respect, the draft questionnaires were first given to the study supervisor and some experienced researchers for vetting. The questionnaires were pre-tested on a similar sample group from some selected hotel front office staff in the Kwaku Areas to eliminate ambiguous and irrelevant items. Enough space was provided at the end of the questionnaire for respondents to indicate their comments on the clarity, weakness, ambiguity of all the items in the instrument. The comments which were received after the pre-test was used to address the challenges identified. The finally approved questionnaire and interview guide were administered to the sampled respondents for actual data collection.

3.8 Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyze the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data. The raw data were coded and entered directly into the SPSS software. The analysis then began with general critical reading to develop a system of coding for the verbal responses. Thematic framework procedures followed this to create the appropriate tables or charts for data reduction to enhance easy reading. After careful juxtaposition of the data, recurrent categories were identified from which specific themes were created. The data from the open-ended questions and the semi-structured interview guide were used to support and explain the quantitative data received from the questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

The study captured respondents' demographic information such as their ages, their gender, their highest educational attainments, length of service, and sections of the Front Office within which they were working. These are presented and discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

Table 3 shows the gender distribution of the respondents in the study. Out of the total one hundred and forty-two (142) respondents involved in the study, including management, staff, and guests, 45.0% (64) were males, while 54.9% (78) were females. With a management category population of 31, 51.6% (16) were males, while 48.4% (15) were females. For the staff category, out of 54, 35.2% (19) were males, while 64.8% (36) were females. Finally, for the sample's guest category, 34 (59.6%) out of the total of 57 were males, and the remaining 23 (34.4%) were females.

The results from the total sample seem to be in line with the national population groupings. Per the 2010 National Census, women in Ghana outnumber men. The results as presented, therefore, indicate that women in Ghana are now becoming more active in the formal sector than before. Thus, the sample's female population shows that the sample was female-dominated and that perhaps, the gender gap seems to be closing up, both at the secondary and post-secondary levels of education where females constitute only 33 per cent at secondary and post-secondary institutions (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

The staff category results seem to support the long-held view that most Front Office staff are females. This stands in opposition to an earlier study where it was found that the male front office staff outnumbered the female front office staff. The reason for the situation in that study was attributed to the rising unemployment situation in Ghana at the time and the changing curriculum in the Secondary and tertiary institutions where courses like Catering and Hospitality are now attracting young men; hence they also end up seeking employment in the hotel industry.

Concerning the guest category of the sample, the data presented a similar view to those of the total sample but in contrast to that of the staff category. Almost sixty per cent (59.6%) of the guests were males, while the remaining 40.4% were females. This, to a considerable extent, is understandable and represents the actual state of affairs as more males tend to visit or spend some time in hotel facilities unaccompanied by females than their female counterparts. In addition, some of the females interacted with indicated that they were there with their male partners. This means that if the men had not visited the hotel facilities, those females might not have been there in the first place.

Table 3: Gender Distribution

Gender	Total Sample		Management		Staff		Guests	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	64	45.0	16	51.6	19	35.2	34	59.6
Female	78	54.9	15	48.4	35	64.8	23	40.4
Total	142	100	31	100	54	100	57	100

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

Table 4 indicates that the majority of the respondents were within the age range of 17 and 49 years. This means that the majority of the respondents (83%) who either managed, worked in, or visited the hotel facilities in the three municipalities in the Okwahu Area for leisure, business, or other activities were relatively young as only 17% of the population were within the age range of 50 and 60+ years. The staff category data did not only indicate that the hotel operators in the study area respected the mandatory retirement age in Ghana, but also the data indicated that most of the studied hotel facilities had youthful employees. If they were properly motivated and trained, they would serve the facilities longer and provide quality services to the facilities' clients by being aware of and implementing the Ghanaian laws on hotel guest registration. It is important to note that the staff's youthful nature could also be a threat to the hotel facilities. As observed by Greg & Wadsworth (1999), this category of employees are very mobile and tend to change jobs and employers relatively frequently, while older workers tend to have a stable relationship with their employers. If this category of employees is not adequately trained and motivated, the facilities will experience rising employee turnover. Therefore, it could be concluded that the youthful nature of the hotel employees in the studied facilities could lead to high employee turnover or an increasing quit rate if effective retention measures are not put in place.

The guests who visited the facilities looked similar to those of the total population and the staff. Only a little above 20% of the guests were above 49 years. Close to 90% (87.3%) of the guests were between the ages of 30 and 59 years. A large proportion of the guests were within the age group of between 30 and 39 years. This, to some extent, is understandable as the hotel facilities in the studied area were mostly patronized by

persons who either attended funerals or Easter festivities and who were primarily young.

The guests who patronised these facilities' age profile means that the facility owners must put in place an effective training programme including training in customer service and how to handle young and vibrant clientele to enable the staff to meet the needs of the guests to ensure repeat business. If this is not done, the workers might be tempted to treat their clients as their colleagues, and this could lead to the creation of disaffection among the clients and therefore lead them to change places during their subsequent visits to the towns.

Table 4: Age Distribution

Age Range (yrs)	Total Sample		Management		Staff		Guests	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
17-29	20	18.7	-	-	15	27.8	5	8.8
30-39	54	38.1	2	6.5	21	38.9	31	54.4
40-49	38	26.1	13	41.9	14	25.9	11	19.3
50-59	23	12.9	12	38.7	4	7.4	7	12.2
60+	7	2.9	4	12.9	-	-	3	5.2
Total	142	100	31	99.9 (100)	54	100	57	99.9 (100)

4.1.3 Highest Education Attainments of Respondents

The results on the respondents' highest educational attainments indicated that the majority of the respondents (72%) held pre-tertiary education qualifications. For example, 7.8 % of the respondents held Junior High School certificates, 39.7% had Senior Secondary Certificates or West African Senior Secondary Examinations (WASSE) Certificates. In comparison, 56 of the respondents (24.5%) had either non-tertiary Diploma or National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) certificates

(see Table 5). This indicates that in terms of education, the respondents had basic English language skills that could enable them to understand the study's demands and provide the appropriate responses. Hence, the data provided could be relied upon.

Table 5: Respondents' Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Level	Total Sample		Management		Staff		Guests	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
JHS	11	7.8	-	-	11	13.0	-	-
SSCE/WASSE	56	30.1	-	-	30	55.5	14	24.6
DIPLOMA/NVTI	36	24.6	15	48.4	13	24.1	8	14.0
FIRST DEGREE	46	32.4	12	38.7	4	7.4	30	52.6
SECOND DEGREE	9	6.3	4	12.9	-	-	5	8.8
Total	142	100	31	100	54	100	57	100

4.1.4 Area of Operation

The data on operation areas as supplied by the staff respondents and supported by the management respondents indicated that hotel facilities in the study area had staff for only two units within the Front Office operation. For example, eighteen (72.0%) of the twenty-five (25) hotel management staff respondents stated that they were operating as hotel managers cum front desk managers while the rest (28.0%) were operating as front managers at the front desk units of the front office. Of the respondents' staff category, a large percentage (80.3%) worked as front office desk assistants while 19.7% worked as bell boys/girls. The data showed that most of the study's hotel facilities were one-star, two-star hotels or guesthouses and therefore did not have many departments in the front office as the three-stars to five-star hotels would have. The data also revealed that the front office staff's main responsibilities included but were not limited to undertake front-of-house duties such as meeting, greeting, and attending to the needs of guests to

ensure a superb customer service experience. In addition, the front office staff was expected to build a good rapport with all guests and resolve any complaints/issues quickly to maintain high-quality customer service (Tewari, 2009; Long, 2007). The front office staff's responsibilities also included dealing with guests' requests to ensure a comfortable and pleasant stay and assist in dealing with customer complaints effectively and courteously by providing or seeking solutions as quickly as possible. However, because the studied facilities were small hotel facilities, these responsibilities were combined and performed by few employees in these facilities (Beatriz *et al.*, (2009). This indicates that the front office staff of the studied facilities might be overloaded with too many responsibilities. Therefore, if they were not well motivated, most of them would be looking for greener pastures somewhere (Tewari, 2009; <http://www.melbreakhotel.co.uk/media/28301/job-description-receptionist>; Beatriz *et al.*, (2009). Management must therefore put in place effective retention mechanisms to ensure that staff was retained in the facilities.

Table 6: Respondents' Areas of Operation in the Hotel Facilities

Area of Operation	Total Sample		Management		Staff	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Hotel/Front Office Manager	18	10.8	18	72.0	-	-
Front Desk Managers	7	6.6	7	28.0	-	-
Front Office Desk Assistants	32	66.3	-	-	32	59.3
Bell Boys	22	16.3	-	-	22	40.7
Total	79	100	25	100	54	100

4.1.5 Length of Service of Respondents

The data in Table 7 indicate that majority of the staff in the studied hotel facilities had served the facilities for less than five years. Thus, while as many as 68.6% had served in the studied facilities for between one and four years, 25.7% of the staff respondent had served the facilities for between 5 and 9 years. Two staff constituting 2.5%, had served the facilities for more than six years. Thus, only 31.4% of the staff had been with the studied facilities for more than four years. The results of the present study depict the situation in the hotel industry in Ghana as a whole. Due to low remuneration and lack of motivation in the hotel industry, most hotel staff do not stay for longer in one facility (Asare-Bediako, 2011; Amuzu, 2010). In other words, the hotel industry's labour turnover is usually high due to a lack of motivation and possibly training. Even though the 31.4% of the staff who had been with the facilities for more than four years was on the low side, it indicates that some of the facilities' owners or supervisors had put in place good retention mechanisms to retain some of their high performing staff.

Table 7: Length of Service of Respondents

Length of Service	Total Sample		Management		Staff	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Between 1 and 4 years	31	68.6	12	48.4	19	35.8
Between 5 and 9 years	46	25.7	11	45.2	35	64.2
Between 10 and 14 years	2	2.5	2	6.4	–	–
Total	79	100	25	100	54	100

4.2 Awareness of and Compliance with the Ghanaian Laws on Hotel Guests Registration

One of this study's key objectives was to determine whether or not the respondents were aware of and were complying with the Ghanaian laws on hotel guest registration. In other words, the study sought to determine whether or not the Front Office staff of the hotels in the Okwahu Area supported by their managers were aware of and were complying with the legal requirement for hotels to register guests when they checked into the hotels. To achieve this objective, several questions relating to whether or not guests were registered when they visited the hotel facilities, the rationale behind the registration, the processes of the registration, and guests' details captured were posed to the respondents.

Due to the benefits of hotel guest registration to the hotels, clients, and the economy at large, many countries have enacted legislation that governs the conduct of the hotels and their clients. For example, the U. S Hotel Act (1990) makes it mandatory for every hotel to keep a guest register in which personal details such as the name and usual place of residence of every person admitted as a guest into the hotel and occupying a room whether alone or with another person(s) would be entered (Act R.S.O., 1990). Any owner or a manager of a hotel who fails to keep the register as required by Section 2 or fails to see to it that the particulars required by Section 2 are correctly entered therein, or who knowingly and willfully permits an untrue statement as to the name or place of residence of a guest to be entered in the register would be guilty of an offence and on conviction, would be liable to a fine of not more than \$100, and in default of payment—may be imprisoned for a term of not more than three months (Act R.S.O. 1990, c. H.17, s. 3).

Similarly, Section 25, subsections 1 to 3 of the Ghana Tourism Act (2011), which regulates the tourism and hospitality industry in Ghana, gives the Ghana Tourism Authority the power to register and license all tourism and hospitality enterprises and sites before they can start operation. Also, Section 35 of the Act makes it mandatory for all hotel owners and their managers to register all hotel guests who are given accommodation in the hotels. For example, Section 35 (1) states, “A holder of a tourist accommodation license shall keep a register on the premises and shall enter in the register the name and address of each guest who stays in the accommodation and other particulars that the Authority may prescribe” (Tourism Act, 2011, Section 35 (1)). Therefore, the current study wanted to find out whether or not the front office staff of the studied hotel facilities were aware of this legal requirement and were also complying with them.

4.2.1 Registration of Hotel Guests on Arrival

This study was interested in investigating whether or not hotel guests in the studied area were registered and at what point the visitors were registered into the hotel facilities. The results indicated that clients who patronised the hotel facilities in the Kwahu Area were mostly registered before being admitted into the facilities and the clients were either registered at the pre-arrival stage and confirmed their registration on arrival or registered on arrival at the reception of the facilities before gaining access into the main facilities (see Table 8). For example, 88.9% of the front office staff confirmed that they registered guests on arrival. Simultaneously, only 11.15 stated that they registered their guests on pre-arrival and approved the registration on arrival.

The current study results confirm an earlier study that indicated that most of the clients who patronised the hotels in the Okwahu Area operated on a “call-in” basis and that only a few clients booked for spaces before arriving at the hotels. Therefore, pre-arrival bookings were not very popular in those hotels. The current results also confirm the fact that regardless of the size, class, or type of the hotel, local or international, all hotels have one thing in common no matter where they are located.

The result also gives an indication that the hotel facilities in the Kwahu Municipality made full use of the concept of the guest cycle in their operations and supports Mackenzie et al.’s (2013) view that the pre-arrival stage of the guest cycle allows a potential guest to make an enquiry from the hotel as to whether or not accommodation(s) would be available on the date(s) and time(s) they intend to stay in the hotel. Suppose the hotel confirms the availability of accommodation. In that case, the prospective guests go ahead to make preliminary bookings usually established at a later date or on arrival at the hotel premises. In making the initial booking, the prospective guests specify the accommodation requirement and its accompanying details.

The pre-arrival stage allows the hotel to sell its services to prospective guests and establish an excellent positive corporate image among prospective guests outside its premises (UNESCO, 2013; Mackenzie *et al.*, 2013). If the facility has accommodation for the prospective guests, the hotel creates a reservation record for the potential guest. The reservation records help personalize guest services and appropriately schedule needed staff and facilities. The reservation department should, then, complete all the pre-registration activities and prepare guest folios (applicable only for automated

systems). Doing so will eventually maximize room sales by accurately monitoring room availability and forecasting room revenues.

Table 8: Registration of Guests upon Arrival and Reservation

Registration Requirement	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	No	%
Required to Register Guests on Arrival	48	88.9	6	11.1
Not Required to Register Guests on Arrival	6	11.1	48	88.9
Total	54	100	54	100

4.2.2 Guests Registration Procedure

Another critical aspect of the study was to determine the guest registration procedures adopted by the studied facilities. The objective, among other things, was to determine whether or not the studied facilities followed an agreed pattern or things were done haphazardly. As shown in Table 4.7, the data indicate that generally, all the front office staff in the studied area followed a particular pattern. In most cases, the guest registration procedures involved several steps followed by the front office staff in the studied area to ensure a pleasant, efficient and safe visit for guests (Asare-Bediako, 2010; Bardi, 2007). For example, the data showed that the guests, whether pre-arrival arrangements had been made or not, reported at the front office, usually the reception desk, and requested to be checked into the hotel (100%); front desk staff confirmed whether or not there were any rooms to give out (100%); guests were requested to fill in the registration card or confirm pre-registration (72.2%), and both the guests and the front office staff signed the registration cards (54%). The data also indicated that in addition to these, the front office staff made room selection and allocation (88.7%) or in some cases, the clients selected their preferred rooms whilst the front office staff

made the room allocation (40.7%) and the clients were led to their rooms (100%) (see Table 9).

The current study results support Bardi's (2007) eleven-point formula for the registration of hotel guests. Bardi (2007) highlighted on eleven guest registration procedure which includes: i) Guest requests to check into the hotel; ii) Front desk clerk projects hospitality toward the guests; iii) Front desk clerk inquiries about guest reservation status or otherwise; iv) Guest completes registration card; v) Front desk clerk reviews completeness of registration card and vi) Front desk clerk verifies credit; vii) Front desk clerk makes room selection; viii) Front desk clerk makes room assignment; ix) Front desk clerk assigns room rate; x) Front desk clerk discusses sales opportunities for hotel products and services with guest and finally, xi) The front desk clerk provides the room key.

From the current study results, one major step in the registration procedure that is missing from the methods practiced by the studied facilities was Bardi's (2007) tenth step that states 'Front desk clerk discusses sales opportunities for hotel products and services with guests. The omission means that the front office staff of the studied areas did not take advantage of the guests' presence on their premises to market their facilities and products. This might be due to a lack of knowledge which a lack of training might have caused. Management must therefore put in place adequate training programmes that will equip the staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to be in the position to sell the facilities and their products.

The study, however, indicates that the hotels in the studied area did not make use of new trends in hotel guest registration such as electronic registration, automated check-ins and check-outs, and digitized room key systems. In recent times, some hotels have moved away from staff-assisted guest registration to automatic registration due to the advent of technology. This has brought about a different outlook on the registration exercise (Cihan, Berezina, Michael, Kasavana & Mehmet, 2011).

Table 9: Procedures for Guests' Registration

Procedures for Guests' Registration	F	%
Guests reported at the front office and requested to be checked into the hotel	54	100
Front office staff confirmed whether or not there were any rooms to give out	54	100
Guests filled in the registration cards or confirmed pre-registration	39	72.2
Guests and the front office staff signed the registration cards	31	54.4
Front office staff made room selection and allocation	48	88.9
Clients made room selection whilst front office staff made room allocation	22	40.7
Guests are led to their rooms	54	100

4.2.3 Clients' Details Captured on the Registration Form

One primary consideration of the study was to determine the details of the data collected from the hotel guests anytime they came to the facilities to register. The data as captured in Table 10 indicate that the Front Office Staff collected demographic data such as the name, date of birth, hometown, and country of origin from the guests. For example, all the staff respondents and the guests agreed that the name of the guests, their date of arrival, telephone numbers, and the names of their hometown were among the data

demanded at the registration point. Also, 51% of the staff respondents and 52% of the guest respondents, respectively, stated that guests were required to provide their date of birth at the point of registration. The results also indicated that guests were also expected to provide information on their country of origin, passport number, date of arrival, the purpose of visit, and contact number in case of any emergency.

The current study results satisfy the demands on the nature of data that many hotel laws, including those of Ghana, require hotel facilities to capture and store in their guest registration registers. For example, both the Canadian Hotel Guest Registration Act [RSBC 1996] and the Ghana Tourism Act (2011) demand that hotel facilities must collect personal details such as the name and date of birth; home address of the guests; date of the arrival; the departure date; national identification number; the purpose of visit and emergency numbers among others (Ghana Tourism Act, 2011; Act 1996). The results, therefore, indicate that the hotels in the studied area were fulfilling the demands of the Ghanaian hotel registration laws. By conforming to the needs of the Ghana Tourism Act (2011), the hotel facilities were assisting in creating a conducive and secured place for their clients and also ensuring that the nation gets the needed tax revenue from those facilities.

Table 10: Details Provided by Guests at the Point of Registration

Data Taken	Staff Respondents		Guest Respondents	
	F	%	F	%
Name	54	100	57	100
Date of Birth	51	94.4	52	91.2
Passport Number	36	66.7	18	31.6
National Identification Number	48	88.9	49	85.9
Country of Origin	38	70.4	12	21.1
Telephone Number	51	94.4	49	85.9
Arrival Date	47	87.0	57	100
Date of Departure	54	100	57	100
Purpose of Visit	38	70.4	32	56.1
Hometown	54	100	47	82.4
Contact in Case of Emergency	28	52	31	54.4
Mode of Payment	28	52	15	26.3
Signature of Guests	48	88.9	32	56.1

4.2.4 The Legal Requirement or Rational for Registering Hotel Guests

Another major goal of the study was to determine whether or not the respondents were aware of the rationale behind hotel guests' registration. The study results indicated that even though the front office respondents had been registering guests who patronised their facilities, most of them did so under the instructions of their managers and owners and not because of the knowledge of any hotel registration law. For example, a large proportion of the front office staff respondents reported that they registered guests who patronised their facilities either because “It provides records for assessment of tax by the National Revenue Authority (22.2%) or “it provides information to other Departments in the Hotel to enable them to serve guests well (63%). A little above eleven percent (11.1%) of the front office staff involved in the study stated that they undertook guest registration in their facilities because “it is a requirement by the Ghana

Tourism Authority” and only 3.7% of the respondents were aware that hotel guest registration was “... a requirement of Ghana Tourism Authority and Ghana Immigration Service”. In effect, only 14.8% of the respondents were aware that hotel guest registration is a requirement under the Ghanaian hotel laws.

It is interesting to note that the lack of awareness of the hotel laws was not limited to only the front office staff but also among their managers and some regulatory bodies staff. For example, even though most of the management respondents, including the regulatory bodies' staff, knew that it was an offence to refuse to register any visitor who visited the facilities, they did not know why such an act constituted an offence. The majority of the management respondents believed that the refusal to register a guest was an offence because such an act constituted an act “against Management Order” or an action that “makes hotel records incomplete” and therefore will affect the “image of the hotel negatively.” Only a few of the management respondents stated that the act of non-registration of hotel guests was an offence under the “Ghana Tourism Bill (2011)”. For example, one respondent stated:

“We ensure that every client is registered before being given a key to the room as this helps us to know how many visitors are in the facility at any point in time, and it also helps us in meeting our tax obligation” (KI 10).

A management respondent who knew it was a requirement under the Ghana Tourism Act (2011) stated:

“In this hotel, we insist that all patrons must be properly registered because it is a legal requirement. The Ghana Tourism Authority requires us to keep records of all our clients. Also, the registration helps us to be in the position to identify our guests, in case of any eventualities” (KI 6).

As for the respondents' management and staff categories, many of the client respondents were also unaware that hotel guest registration was a legal requirement. Most of the client respondents believed that the registration exercise was meant to help them retrieve their lost items from the hotels (see Table 11).

Table 11: Rational for Registering Hotel Guests

Reasons for Registering Guests	Frequency	%
i It is a requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority	6	11.1
ii It is a requirement by Ghana Immigration Service	2	3.7
iii It provides records for assessment of tax by the National Revenue Authority	12	22.2
iv. It provides information to other Departments in the Hotel to enable them to serve guests well	34	63
Total	54	100

It is convenient to conclude from the results of this section of the study that even though the hotel facilities in the studied area were complying with some aspects of the requirements of the Ghana Tourist Bill Act 2011 concerning the registration of guests as well as the details to be captured, the staff were mostly not aware of the legal basis of the requirement which was expected to regulate their activities. Thus, even though there was some level of compliance with the hotel guest registration laws' legal requirement, the level of awareness of the rules among staff and management of the studied hotels was deficient.

4.2.5 The Benefits of Guest Registration to the Guest and the Hotel

Another important goal of the study was to determine the benefits of hotel guest registration to the clients, the Ghanaian economy, and the hotel facilities. In other words, the study was interested in determining how the hotels in the Kwahu Area and

the regulatory organisations used the information gathered from the guest registration processes to ensure compliance with the Ghanaian laws on hotel registration and also to promote communication and collaboration among the various departments in the hotels with the view to achieving high client satisfaction. To achieve this objective, some statements capturing some of the benefits of hotel guest registration to the hotels, their clients, and the Ghanaian economy as a whole were captured in a four-point Likert Scale form for respondents to state their level of agreement with each of the statement in the continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree. The statements ranged from the fulfillment of the legal requirement, provision of data for effective customer service, guests' security, planning for effective usage of hotel rooms, collaboration among various departments in the hotels to establish guests' history, among others. To ensure effective presentation and analysis of the data, the responses were further categorised into agreed and disagreed were strongly agreed and agreed constituted agreed and disagreed, and strongly disagreed constituted disagreed.

The data collected confirmed respondents' lack of awareness of the Ghanaian hotel registration laws. Only 16.4% of the respondents appreciated that one of the benefits of hotel guest registration was that "It satisfied the legal requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority for hotels to keep records of their guests." Further analysis of the data revealed that all the respondents agreed that the hotel registration exercise benefited the hotels, their clients, and the Ghanaian economy because "It provides a record on arrival"; "It helps the hotel to trace the guests in case of any misfortune"; "It helps in settling guests' accounts properly" and "It helps the Ghana Revenue Service to determine the actual tax a hotel must pay". A large proportion of the respondents also agreed that hotel guest registration "...helps the hotel to provide appropriate services

to persons with special needs, such as special food and room requirement, storage for cash and jewels, etc. (88.9%) and also “it helps the front office staff to coordinate guest services in a timely and accurate manner (81.5%)”.

Interestingly, all the respondents disagreed that hotel guests’ registration exercise “...establishes guests’ history records at check-out (personal and financial information) while almost all the respondents disagreed that the registration exercise “acted as a source of security for the guests (92.6%)”. The respondents were rather divided on whether or not guests' signature on the registration form confirmed guests’ acceptance of the hotel’s terms and conditions. It, therefore, served as a legal contract between the guests and the hotel facilities. This is because fifty per cent of the respondents agreed to the statement that “the signature of guests on the registration form confirmed guests’ acceptance of the hotel’s terms and conditions.” In contrast, another 50% of the respondents disagreed with the statement (see Table 12).

Table 12: Benefits of Hotel Guests Registration

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	It satisfies the legal requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority for hotels to keep records of their guests	6 (11.1%)	5 (9.3%)	29 (53.7%)	14 (25.9%)
2	It provides a record of arrival	51 (94.4%)	3 (5.6%)	-	-
3	It acts as a source of security for the guests	2 (3.7%)	2 (3.7%)	38 (70.4%)	12 (22.2%)
4	It helps the hotel to trace the guests in case of any misfortune	51 (94.4%)	3 (5.6%)	-	-
5	It helps the hotel to provide appropriate services to persons with special needs, such as special food and room requirement, storage for cash and jewels, etc	42 (77.8%)	6 (11.1%)	3 (5.6%)	3 (5.6%)
6	It helps the hotel in planning for the use of the rooms and other facilities	41 (75.9%)	12 (22.2%)	1 (1.9%)	-
7	It helps in settling guests' accounts properly	51 (94.4%)	3 (5.6%)	-	-
8	It establishes guest history records at check-out (personal and financial information)	-	-	28 (51.9%)	26 (48.1%)
9	It helps the front office staff to coordinate guest services in a timely and accurate manner	32 (59.3%)	12 (22.2%)	8 (14.8%)	2 (3.7%)
10	It helps the Ghana Revenue Service to determine the actual tax a hotel must pay	51 (94.4%)	6 (11.1%)	-	-
11	The signature of guests on the registration form confirms guests' acceptance of the hotel's terms and conditions)	15 (27.8%)	12 (22.2%)	14 (25.9%)	13 (24.0%)

The staff's responses were collaborated by the interviews with the managers of the facilities and the officials of the regulatory bodies. For example, one of the regulatory bodies' respondents stated:

“Any time we are in doubt concerning the accounts of the hotel facilities, we call for their registration books and compare the data with those captured in the VAT receipt books. Most often, you see that the data in the VAT receipt books are lower than the data captured in the registration books” KI 21.

Another Key Interviewer stated:

“We normally receive information about people, sometimes foreigners, who are in the districts and intend to commit crime or troubles. When such signals are received, we normally begin to search and track such persons down. We are aware that some of the hideouts of such persons are the hotels and guest houses. Whenever we visit the hotels and guest houses, we normally call for their registration books and check on the identities of persons who had checked in during such periods” KI 11.

The facilities managers were also of the view that the data were distributed to other facilities' sections. For example, one facility manager stated:

“The information collected through the guest registration exercise helps us to determine the needs of our guests, especially those with special needs. It also helps the various departments in the hotel perform effectively as they receive appropriate information from the front office. For example, the data help the kitchen to determine the number and types of dishes to prepare for breakfast as we require our guests to make their requests overnight.” (KI, 13).

The data collected from the questionnaire and the interviews indicated that the hotel guest registration exercise has been beneficial to the Ghanaian economy, the hotel facilities and their clients as the process provides information for effective customer care, customer security, tax administration, immigration services, effective accounting services, provided management with information on the proportion of arrivals to reservations; occupancy statistics; the national origin of guests and some special needs of guests as well as security of clients.

This is in line with some of the benefits of hotel guest registration, as outlined in the literature. For example, the results confirm what Asare-Bediako (2010) and others have said that registration records of the hotel guests are useful for various purposes such as satisfying guests' needs, forecasting room occupancies, settling guest accounts properly, establishing guests' history records at check-out (personal & financial information), assigning a room type and a room rate for each guest as well as determining long-run availability, that is, reservation information versus short-run availability, the actual room status (Asare-Bediako, 2010; Kul Techno Lab & Research Centre; 2019). The data also confirm that guest registration helps in easy identification of guests and case of unforeseen and unprecedented situations such as accidents, natural deaths, homicide, and others; the process helps in identifying and tracing the relations of such a guest (Asare-Bediako, 2010). The results also confirm the idea that the process helps public authority in keeping close track of the movement of guests, mostly tourists, and helps public authority in assessing the right levies that the hotel managers are expected to pay to the state (Asare-Bediako, 2010;

www.tourism.bilkent.edu.tr/~jamel/RDM/Guest%20Cycle.doc @11: 20 am
19/11/2020).

The results also confirm that the front office is the heart of the hospitality industry. It acts as the mediator between the guests and all the other departments in the hotel set up as the front office staff are expected to interact with all departments of the hotel, including marketing and sales, housekeeping, food and beverage, banquet, finance, maintenance, security, and human resources (Gray & Liguori, 2003). The front office staff provides information to the Finance, kitchen and restaurant, marketing, maintenance, security, and housekeeping departments.

The data also confirm China Hotelier's (2008) view that most of the departments in the hotel facilities view the front office as a communication liaison in providing guests' services as each department has a unique communication link with the front office staff as the centerpiece of the working force of the industry. The front office is at the centre of interdepartmental communication as it gathers and relays information to the other departments to meet client needs at once (Gray & Liguori, 2003).

The data confirm Beatriz et al.'s (2009) view that the front office department provides the guests' history to the Marketing and Sales Department, which enables the Department to develop programmes to attract more clients to the hotel. Also, the data support Bardi's (2003) view that the housekeeping and front office need to communicate with each other about the rooms available for guests' occupancy. Communication between the Food and Beverage Department and the Front Office is also essential in the hotel industry. The Restaurant Supervisor who may be working on the breakfast shift may want to know how many guests would be in the hotel to determine the number of servers to schedule for breakfast service. Some vital information like the number of occupancies and when the guests may depart would be

critical to the Food and Beverage Department in its attempt to contribute to the guests' satisfaction during their stay in the hotel (Beatriz et al., 2009).

4.2.6 The Challenges of Hotel Guest Registration

The data received from the respondents confirmed that the hotel facilities studied had put in place some systems to ensure effective registration of guests who accessed the services of the hotel facilities; however, the registration process was facing some challenges. The results indicated that 24% of the hotel clients “most of the times” were unwilling to register. In comparison, 64% of the clients “sometimes” were reluctant to register and 12% of the clients “all the times” were unwilling to register with the hotel facilities. It was further revealed that those who registered were either unwilling to provide some personal details or provided some incorrect personal information most of the time.

The data provided by the staff respondents were corroborated by those of the facilities managers. For example, when asked whether or not clients were willing to go through the registration process anytime they were at the facility, one of the management respondents replied:

“Oh yes, those who usually come in for genuine businesses willingly go through the process and also provide critical information like their names, purpose of visits, contact numbers, among other things. But we have other clients who come in for some short stay, say few hours for other things, such people are always unwilling to register, and if they are prevailed upon to do so, some usually provide fake details. They provide non-existing telephone numbers or numbers that could not be traced to them. This is because people come to the hotel for different reasons, and sometimes, some of them would want to hide their identities so that they cannot be traced” (KI 17).

Another respondent said:

“Some people don’t recognise that it is in their interest to register. So sometimes some people supply the incorrect details. For example, just last two weeks there was a funeral in town. A man and a woman checked in, and they were properly registered. After they had left, it was detected that the man had left behind his wallet, which contained his important documents. We tried calling him with the number he registered with only to be told the number does not exist. The documents are still with us. We are hoping that he will one day come for them” (KI, 6).

The results of the study support the view that, in the hotel business, people normally lodge or use the hotel facilities for several reasons (Gray & Liguori, 2003). Some use the hotel facilities for business meetings, a conference of all kinds, vacation, or leisure, just to mention a few. It is also known that some of the persons patronize hotel facilities for and other special reasons and, for that matter may not want to give their true identities or may not see the need to provide their details and if compelled to do so, may wish to give fake information to cover up their real identities. In many of the hotels and guest houses in Ghana, it is not uncommon to see guests who would like to spend ‘short time in the hotels; such guests, under normal circumstances, may not want to disclose their true identities.

Table 13: Willingness of Clients to Register

Willingness to Register	F	%
Most of the Times	13	24
Sometimes	35	64
All the Time	6	12
Total	54	100

4.2.6.1 Some Challenges Faced by the Hotel Facilities in Ensuring Effective Guest Registration Process

The study probed further to identify some of the challenges faced by the studied hotel facilities to achieve an effective registration of hotel guests. The results indicated that many challenges were facing the registration processes in the study facilities. Among the severe challenges facing the hotel, guest registration was “Provision of wrong information by guests (96.3%)” “Those who stayed in the hotel for a short time (two to three hours) do not see the need to register (92.6%)”; “Lack of enforcement of the rules on guest registration by the Ghana Tourism Authority (88.9%)”; “Lack of appropriate materials for registration of guests in the facilities (82.6%)”; “Unwillingness of some guests to reveal their true identities (70.3%)”; “Lack of awareness of the legal requirement by both front office staff and guests (46.3%)”; and “The desire of hotel owners to evade tax (46.3%).

The data from the staff respondents were collaborated by both the management and client respondents. For example, responding to why some of the clients sometimes fail to register or provide some accurate personal records, one of the client respondents replied:

“You see, in this era of digitization, one is always not sure what the details corrected by the hotel facilities would be used for. You remember when Former President Kufuor’s head was placed on the body of a woman. If one is not careful and gives his/her correct details before you are aware, your data would be used for something else. One, therefore, has to be wise and provide some details that will satisfy the hotel operators to safe oneself” KI 10.

Another client asked:

“Sometimes you come here just to spend a few hours only to have some rest or to spend some time with a friend. All that you need is a room and a bed. So why should you have to spend time given all the unnecessary details? KI 6.

Some of the clients were of the view that:

“During peak hours, for example, during funerals or Easter time, there is always a large crowd at the facilities hence it becomes time-wasting going through the process of registration, so you ‘only have to do something to represent something’ KI 8 &14.

One management respondent also stated that:

“Sometimes we face challenges in the registration process because some of the clients, especially those who arrive at the facility after long travel as they may be exhausted, complain of the time they spend doing the registration. Such clients always want to quickly check into their rooms to have some rest. Such guests usually find the registration process cumbersome and therefore try to avoid it if they can or provide information as quickly as possible and sometimes provide ‘fake information’”. KI 7.

One respondent of the regulatory institutions confirmed that one of the challenges facing the registration process was the unprofessional conduct of some hotel managers and their staff. He stated that:

“Sometimes hotel management personnel and staff encourage their clients, especially those who come for a “short time” not to go through the process of registration so that there will not be any record of their lodgment for accounting to their hotel managers or for taxation. Sometimes some of them do not even give the clients receipt for monies paid, and some of the clients also want it, so” KI 9.

Some of the Ghana Tourists Authority officers also believed that sometimes some of the facilities owners refused to register their guests to evade tax. Therefore, surprise visits ought to be used to ensure adequate registration exercise. He said:

“Some of the facilities’ owners refuse to register their guests because they do not want to pay the right tax. Even when issuing receipts to clients, some do not want to issue the VAT receipt because they do not want to pay tax. I believe the way out is effective and surprise visits to the facilities to check these unpatriotic activities” (KI 8)

The results confirm the view that people normally lodge or use the hotel facilities for various reasons such as for business meetings, a conference of all kinds, vacation, leisure, just to mention a few. Due to these varied reasons, it is possible that some of the clients would wish not to leave traces in the hotels visited; hence, they might create some problems for the front office workers when it comes to registering and providing accurate personal data.

Table 14: Some Challenges Facing Hotel Guest Registration

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Unwillingness of guests to reveal their true identities	22 (40.7%)	16 (29.6%)	4 (7.4%)	12 (22.2%)
2	Provisions of wrong information by guests	42 (77.8%)	10 (18.5%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)
3	The desire of hotel owners to evade tax	12 (22.2%)	13 (24.1%)	19 (35.2%)	10 (18.5%)
4	Lack of awareness of the legal requirement by both front office staff and guest	14 (25.9%)	11 (20.4%)	13 (24.1%)	16 (29.6%)
5	Those who stay in the hotel for a short time (two to three hours) do not see the need to register	38 (70.4%)	12 (22.2%)	3 (5.6%)	1 (1.9%)
6	Lack of appropriate materials for registration of guests	42 (77.8%)	8 (14.8%)	4 (7.4%)	0
7	Lack of enforcement of the rules on guest registration by the GTA	32 (59.3%)	16 (29.6%)	3 (5.5%)	3 (5.5%)

4.2.7 Measures that could be put in place to improve awareness of and compliance with Hotel guest registration laws in Ghana

Another important segment of the study was the attempt at determining ways of improving the awareness of and compliance with the Ghanaian hotel guest registration laws in the studied hotels in the Okwahu Area. To achieve this, the respondents, in a four-point Likert Scale, were requested to state their level of agreement with some statements meant for improving the awareness of and compliance with the Ghanaian hotel registration laws in a continuum of strongly agreed to disagree strongly. The statements ranged from stakeholder education on the Ghanaian hotel registration laws and the benefits stakeholder stand to gain from complying with such laws; intensification of Ghana Tourism Authority inspectors' visits to the hotel facilities; sanctions for front office and hotel management personnel who deliberately permit clients to make false claims; sanctions for clients who provide fake statements in the guest register; to GTA insisting on hotels using the appropriate guest registers and GTA enforcement of the rules on hotel guest registration.

The results of the study indicated that almost all the respondents, above 93%, suggested that to improve upon the awareness of and compliance with the hotel guest registration laws, “there must be stakeholder education on the hotel registration laws, including the Tourism Bill (2011) and the benefits that stakeholders stand to gain from complying with the laws”; “the inspectors of the Ghana Tourism Authority must intensify their visitations to the hotel facilities”; and the Ghana Tourism Authority must insist on all hotels and guest houses using the appropriate hotel guest register.” Another large proportion of the respondents (88.9%) also suggested that Ghana could improve upon the awareness of and compliance with the Ghanaian hotel registration laws if “GTA

enforced the rules on guest registration”. Similarly, 72.2% of the respondents suggested that the awareness of and compliance with the Ghanaian laws on hotel registration could be improved if “guests who make false statements in the guest register are dealt with according to the law” if they are found. Interestingly, a large proportion of the respondents (72.3%) disagreed that “Front office staff who wilfully permit clients to make untrue statements in the guest register must be severely punished” per the registration laws.

It can therefore be inferred from the results that all hope is not lost as far as the awareness creation of and compliance with the hotel guest registration laws are concerned. However, it will take commitment and hard work, on the part of the personnel of the regulatory bodies such as the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Ghana Immigration Service, to ensure improved awareness of and compliance with the laws. To ensure enhanced awareness of and compliance, the GTA and GIS personnel and hotel owners in the Okwahu Area must endeavour to undertake massive stakeholder education on the hotel registration laws, including the Tourism Bill (2011). The stakeholders must be educated on the laws' contents and the benefits that stakeholders (hotels, clients, and the economy) stand to gain from complying with the regulations. Also, the GTA and GIS personnel (inspectors) must intensify their visitations to the hotel facilities, enforce all the rules on guest registration and ensure that all hotels and guest houses use the approved hotel guest register in registering all clients who visit the facilities whether for “long or short” stay. The personnel from the regulatory organisations and the hotel management must ensure that any guests who deliberately make false statements in the guest register are severely dealt with according to the law. Finally, to improve upon the awareness and compliance situation, the laws must be

allowed to deal with front office staff and hotel management who wilfully permit clients to make untrue statements in the guest register or encourage clients not to register for personal gains and possible tax invasion (Ghana Tourism Bill, 2011 Section 35).

Table 15: Some Challenges Facing Hotel Guest Registration

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	There must be education on the Tourism Bill 2011	38 (70.4%)	14 (25.9%)	2 (3.7%)	-
2	The inspectors of the Ghana Tourism Authority must intensify their visits to the hotels	40 (74.1%)	10 (18.5%)	4 (7.4%)	-
3	Front Office staff who wilfully permit guests to make untrue statements in the guest register must be severely punished	8 (14.8%)	7 (12.9%)	28 (51.9%)	11 (20.4%)
4	Guests who make any false statements in the guest register must be dealt with according to the law	14 (25.9%)	25 (46.3%)	8 (14.8%)	7 (13.0%)
6	GTA must insist on hotels using the appropriate guest registers	42 (77.8%)	8 (14.8%)	4 (7.4%)	0
7	GTA must enforcement of the rules on guest registration	32 (59.3%)	16 (29.6%)	3 (5.5%)	3 (5.5%)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study's main aim was to explore the awareness of and compliance with the Ghanaian hotel guest registration laws among the front office staff of selected hotels in the Kwahu area. The study adopted a descriptive exploratory case study approach to gather evidence using a questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide, documents, and personal observations. A sample size of twenty-five hotels constituting 39.1% of the hotel population in the Kwahu area was used for the study.

Due to the nature and spread of the population, the study used a multi-stage sampling technique in selecting the sample for the study. This included the use of stratified sampling, purposive sampling, and convenience sampling techniques. The sample, therefore, consisted of twenty-five hotels, sixty-one front office staff, twenty-five hotel managers and supervisors, six staff of Ghana Tourist Authority (GTA) and Ghana Immigration Service, and seventy-five hotel guests. A questionnaire was used in collecting data from the front office staff, while a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from the hotel managers and supervisors, the staff of GTA and GIS, as well as the hotel clients. The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) Version 20 using frequency counts and percentage scores in answering the research questions.

5.2 Summary of the Key Findings

From the survey data analysis, the following key findings emerged from the study.

1. The study found that the hotel facilities in the studied area had youthful staff, many of whom have gained fairly considerable work experience and could be motivated and trained to offer quality service to the facilities' clients and increase their profitability in the business. For example, 66.7% of the staff respondents were between the ages of 18 and 39 years and had worked in the facilities for between one and ten years.
2. The study results also indicated that the female employees of the studied hotel facilities dominated their male counterparts. The female employees of the studied facilities constituted 64.8%, while their male counterparts constituted 35.2%.
3. The hotels in the studied area mainly were two-star one-star, and guest houses. Unlike their counterpart big hotels (three to five-star hotels), the hotel facilities in the Kwahu Area had two dominant units manned by front desk managers and front desk assistants. Due to this, the hotels' front office departments operated only two units that combined and performed almost all the functions of the front office as operated in big hotels with different units. This means that the staff in these facilities were overloaded with responsibilities.
4. Even though their operations complied with some aspects of the Ghanaian hotel guest registration laws, their awareness level was deficient. Only 14.8% of the front office staff were aware that hotel guest registration was a requirement enshrined in the Ghana Tourism Bill 2011.
5. The study found that the guests in the studied facilities were either registered at the pre-arrival stage of the guests' cycle and confirmed the registration on

arrival or registered at the reception on arrival before gaining access to the facilities.

6. All the front office staff in the study area facilities followed a similar in registering their guests. The procedure consisted of six steps. Thus, whether pre-arrival arrangements had been made or not, the guests reported at the front office, usually the reception desk, and requested to be checked into the hotel (100%); front desk staff confirmed whether or not there were any rooms to give out (100%); guests were requested to fill in the registration card or confirm pre-registration (72.2%), and both the guests and the front office staff signed the registration cards (54.3%). The other steps were, the front office staff made room selection and allocation (88.7%) sometimes based on clients' needs and led the guests to their rooms (100%).
7. The study found that the respondents had the requisite knowledge about hotel guests' registration processes in the facilities studied. The data showed that the registration was either done by the guests (those who were literate) (54.3%) or by the Front Office staff after they had interviewed the guests (illiterates) (28.6%). The study also found that the information was captured on a particular form supplied by the Ghana Tourists Authority. Only a few hotel facilities captured the data in a notebook using the same processes.
8. The study also found that both the staff and management personnel of the studied hotels were convinced that some of the hotel registration benefits included satisfaction of legal requirement, providing records on arrival, assisting in tracing guests in case of difficulties, among others.
9. The study found that even though a system was put in place to ensure effective registration of guests who assessed the services of the hotel facilities in the

studied area, the registration was not without any difficulties. Some of the challenges faced included the unwillingness to provide the needed data and false information by clients.

10. The study found that the hotels in the studied area did not use new trends in hotel guest registration such as electronic registration, automated check-ins and check-outs, and digitized room key systems.

5.3 Conclusion

Although the front office staff and facilities' owners or supervisors of the facilities in the Kwahu Area were complying with some aspects of the Ghanaian hotel registration laws, including the Tourism Bill 2011, most of them did not see the registration of hotel guest as a requirement of the Ghanaian hotel registration laws but as a one of the duties of a front staff.

Even though the hotels in the studied area were small, in terms of star, their staff had the requisite knowledge about hotel guests' registration processes and abided by the rules governing hotel registration and adopted the right registration processes and practices in registering their guests. The guests were either registered at the pre-arrival stage of the guests' cycle and confirmed the registration on arrival or registered at the reception on arrival before gaining access to the facilities. Also, whether pre-arrival arrangements had been made or not, the guests reported at the front office, usually the reception desk, and requested to be checked into the hotel; front desk staff confirmed whether or not there were any rooms to give out; guests were asked to fill in the registration card or confirm pre-registration, and both the guests and the front office staff signed the registration cards. The other steps taken in the registration process

included the front office staff making room selection and allocation, sometimes based on clients' needs and leading the guests to their rooms.

Both the management personnel and front staff of the studied hotels were convinced that the benefits of hotel guest registration included satisfaction of legal requirement, providing records on arrival, increasing the revenue of the country, assisting in tracing guests in case of difficulties, among others.

Even though the front office staff and their managers were knowledgeable about the registration processes and were ready to abide by them, they faced some challenges in their attempt at ensuring the effective registration of guests in their facilities. Some of the challenges they faced included the unwillingness of some guests to provide the needed data as well as the giving of false information by clients.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made for consideration.

1. The study found that the hotel facilities in the studied area had youthful staff who had gained fairly considerable work experience. In addition, it was found the majority of the clients of the facilities were adults who visited the facilities for a variety of purposes, including attending funerals. It is recommended that the hotel facilities institute some training and motivational packages for the staff to retain them in the facilities and offer quality service to the facilities' clients to increase their business profitability.

2. The study indicated that the hotel facilities in the studied area were a mostly one-star hotel and guests' houses which operated most of the times, below their full capacity and therefore combined and performed almost all the functions of the front office as operated in big hotels with different units in only two units. It is recommended that the facilities' managers plan their activities very well to not over-utilize their staff during peak periods. Also, it is recommended that the supervisors and managers consider organizing exciting programmes that will attract the non-residents in their catchment areas to patronise their services during the lean periods in order to continue to be in business.
3. The study found that even though there was a system put in place to ensure effective registration of guests who accessed the services of the hotel facilities in the studied area, the registration faced some challenges such as lack of awareness among stakeholders, the unwillingness of some clients to provide the needed data and the given of false information by others. It is recommended that the officials of the Ghana Tourist Authority in the Eastern Region must undertake an intensive stakeholder education on the content of the Tourism Bill 2011 as well as the benefits of hotel guests' registration to encourage people to be willing to register and in fact, to demand that they got registered anytime they visited any hotel facility in the area. It is also recommended that the personnel of the Ghana Tourists Board must intensify their inspection of the hotel facilities to ensure the facilities' managers did the right thing.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies

The current study concentrated on hotel facilities in the Kwahu area. As a case study, the results could not be generalized to all the hotel facilities in the Eastern Region or hotels in Ghana. The study, therefore, recommends that a study involving all the hotels in the region should be conducted to assess how the results could be generalized to all hotel facilities in the region.



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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

EXPLORATION INTO THE AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE GUEST REGISTRATION BY HOTEL FRONT OFFICE STAFF: THE CASE OF SELECTED HOTELS IN THE KWAHU AREA

Staff Questionnaire

Introduction

A study is being conducted into the awareness, compliance, and new trends in guest registration by hotel front office staff in selected hotels in the Kwahu area. The study which is purely an academic exercise, is aimed among other things, to investigate the awareness of the legal bases of hotel guests' registration among hotels managers and front office staff; examine the predominant practices of the front office staff concerning checking-in hotel guests on first and repeat arrivals; the compliance level among the staff; and identify measures that could be put in place to ensure compliance of the hotel registration laws among the hotels in the study area.

I am happy to inform you that you have been selected to be part of the study by filling in this questionnaire which is intended to collect the necessary data for the study. You are kindly informed that the study is purely an academic exercise, and therefore any information provided will be treated as confidential. For this reason, you are kindly requested not to write your name on the questionnaire and also to answer the questions as objectively as you can.

Thank you for accepting to be part of the study

Vivian Akomah Adjei

MPhil Student

Part I: Personal Data

Instruction: Please put a tick or write the right answer in the appropriate space provided

1. Gender
(a) Male (b) Female
2. Age (State your age to the nearest year)
a) Under 20 years b) Between 20 and 24 years
c) Between 25 and 29 years d) Between 30 and 39 years
e) Between 40 and 49 years f) Between 50 and 59 years
g) 60 years and above
3. Please state your highest educational qualification
a) BECE/MSLCE GCE 'O' Level/SSCE/WASSCE
c) NVTI d) Diploma e) First Degree f) Second Degree
4. In which part of the Front Office department are you working?
(a) Front Office Manager's office (b) Front Desk Section
(c) Reservation Unit (d) Switch Board Unit
(e) Front Office Cash Unit (f) Other (please specify)
5. How long have you worked in this hotel?
(a) Between one and five years b) Between six and ten years
(c) Between eleven and fifteen years (d) More than fifteen years

PART II: Awareness and Compliance of Ghanaian Laws on Hotel Guest Registration

5. As a receptionist, what are some of your duties? (Tick as many as applicable)
a) Welcoming guests on arrival b) Registering guests
c) Assigning keys and room allocation d) Preparing bills
e) Answer any guests' queries

6. Why are you always required to register guests who arrive at the hotel and request accommodation? (Tick as many as are applicable)
- a) It is a requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority []
 - b) It is a requirement by Ghana Immigration Service []
 - c) It provides records for assessment of tax by the National Revenue Authority []
 - d) It provides information to other Departments in the Hotel to enable them to serve guests well []
7. Are you aware that it is an offence for any hotel to refuse to register hotel guests on arrival?
- (a) Yes [] (Go to number 8) (b) No [] (Go to number 9)
8. Why is it an offence not to register guests when they arrive at the hotel
- a) It is against Management Order []
 - b) It makes my records incomplete []
 - c) It is against Ghana Tourism Bill []
 - d) It improves the image of the hotel []
9. Please, when guests arrive in this facility, are they requested to register at the reception?
- (a) Yes [] (b) No []

10. The following are some of the guests' details that the Tourism Bill 2011 demands that Hotels should capture. Indicate by a tick [X] those that you capture when registering guests at your hotel (Please tick as many as they are appropriate)

A	Name	
B	Date of Birth	
C	Passport/ID Number	
D	Telephone number	
E	Purpose of the visit	
F	Home Town	
G	Date of arrival	
h	Country of origin	
	Date of Departure	
	Contact in case of emergency	
	Mode of Payment	
	Signature of guest	

Please if there are other details you capture, please list them.....

PART III: The Predominant Practices of the Front Office Staff concerning Registration of Guests at the Hotel.

The following are some of the practices of the front office staff concerning hotel guests' registration at the hotels. In a continuum of strongly agreed to disagree strongly, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2 and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [] the appropriate space provided.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
11	There is a book that is given to all guests to fill whenever they come to the hotel to lodge.				
12	Sometimes, guests' names are written so that receipts can be made.				
13	Guests with reservations do not need any further information taken by the Front Office; they only confirm their registration by appending their signatures on the Registration Form.				
14	The identity cards of guests who register are inspected.				
15	Guests are asked some questions to confirm the correctness of the records given.				
16	Guests are allowed to fill in the form to ensure the correctness of the data given				
17	Guests are briefed on some services and products of the Hotel to encourage sales				
18	During the registration of the guests, guests are treated nicely to encourage a repeat visit				
19	Guests are asked of any special assistance they may need during the registration process				

PART IV: Benefits of Hotel Guests Registration

Instruction

The following are some of the benefits of hotel guest's registration to the state, the hotels, and their guests. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, were strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2 and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [] the appropriate space provided.

Number	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
20	It satisfies the legal requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority for hotels to keep records of their guests				
21	It provides a record of arrival				
22	It acts as a source of security for the guests				
23	It helps the hotel to trace the guests in case of any misfortune				
24	It helps the hotel to provide appropriate services to persons with special needs, such as special food and room requirement, storage for cash and jewels, etc				
25	It helps the hotel in planning for the use of the rooms and other facilities				
26	It helps in settling guests' accounts properly				
27	It establishes guest history records at check-out (personal and financial information)				
28	It helps the front office staff to coordinate guest services in a timely and accurate manner				
29	It helps the Ghana Revenue Service to determine the actual tax a hotel must pay				
30	The signature of guests on the registration form confirms guests' acceptance of the hotel's terms and conditions)				

PART V: Challenges Facing Effective Hotel Guests Registration Instruction

The following are some of the challenges facing effective hotel guests’ registration at the Hotels in the Okwahu Area. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, where strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2 and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [X] in the appropriate space provided.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
31	The unwillingness of guests to reveal their true identities				
32	Provisions of wrong information by guests				
33	The desire of hotel owners to evade tax				
34	Lack of awareness of the legal requirement by both front office staff and guest				
35	Those who stay in the hotel for a short time (two to three hours) do not see the need to register				
36	Lack of appropriate materials for registration of guests				
37	Lack of enforcement of the rules on guest registration by the GTA				

PART VI: Procedure for Guest Registration

38) The following are the procedure for guests’ registration. Please rank them, in descending order, which should be the first activity and which should be the last activity.

Activity	Position/Rank
Guest requests to check into a hotel	
Front Office staff projects the image of the hotel towards guests	
Front Office staff inquiries about the guest reservation	
Guests complete the registration card	
The front office staff reviews the completeness of the registration card	
The front office staff makes room selection based on guests’ needs	

Front Office staff assigns room rate	
Front Office staff discusses sales opportunities for hotel products and services with guest	
Front Office staff assigns a porter to check guests into his/her room.	

PART VI: Measures for Improving Awareness and Compliance

The following statements are about measures that could be put in place to improve upon the awareness and compliance of the Ghanaian Laws on Hotel Registration in the Kwahu area. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, where strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2, and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [x] in the appropriate space provided.

	Statement	SA	A	D	SA
39	There must be education on the Tourism Bill 2011				
40	The Inspectors of the Tourism Authority must intensify their visit to the hotels				
41	The front office staff who wilfully permit guests to make untrue statements in the guest's register must be severely punished				
42	Guest to make any false statements in the guest's register must be dealt with by the law				

43) In your opinion, are there other measures that could be put in place to ensure the registration of hotel guests brings out the desired effects? (Give a maximum of three measures)

- a)
- b)
- c).....

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GUESTS

Introduction

A study is being conducted into the awareness, compliance, and new trends in guest registration by hotel front office staff in selected hotels in the Kwahu area. The study which is purely an academic exercise, is aimed among other things, to investigate the awareness of the legal bases of hotel guests' registration among hotels managers and front office staff; examine the predominant practices of the front office staff concerning checking-in hotel guests on first and repeat arrivals; the compliance level among the staff; and identify measures that could be put in place to ensure compliance of the hotel registration laws among the hotels in the study area.

I am happy to inform you that you have been selected to be part of the study by filling in this questionnaire which is intended to collect the necessary data for the study. You are kindly informed that the study is purely an academic exercise, and therefore, any information provided will be treated as confidential. For this reason, you are kindly requested not to write your name on the questionnaire and also to answer the questions as objectively as you can.

Thank you for accepting to be part of the study

Vivian Akomah Adjei

MPhil Student

PART I: Personal Data

Instruction: Please put a tick [x] or write the right answer in the appropriate space provided

1. Gender
(a) Male [] (b) Female []
2. Age (State your age to the nearest year)
a) Under 20 years [] b) Between 20 and 24 years []
c) Between 25 and 29 years [] d) Between 30 and 39 years []
e) Between 40 and 49 years [] f) Between 50 and 59 years []
g) 60 years and above []
3. Nationality
a) Ghanaian [] (b) European [] (c) British [] (d) American []
e) Scandinavian [] (f) others (please specify country)
4. Occupation
(a) Government official [] b) Hotel Employee []
c) Hotel Owner/Private Business [] (d) Student []
(e) others (please specify).....
5. Purpose of trip/visit
(a) Vacation [] (b) Honeymoon [] (c) Seminar []
(d) Business [] (e) Others (please specify).....
6. How many times in a year, do you use a hotel facility in the Kwahu Area?
(a) Once [] b) Twice [] c) Thrice [] (d) Four or more times []
7. Please, whenever you arrive in this facility, are you requested to register at the reception?
(a) Yes [] (b) No []

8. The following are some of the guests' details that the Tourism Bill 2011 demands that Hotels should capture. Indicate by a tick [X] those that are usually taken from you anytime you register at the (Please tick as many as they are appropriate)

a	Name	
b	Date of Birth	
c	Passport/ID Number	
d	Telephone number	
e	Purpose of the visit	
f	Home Town	
g	Date of arrival	
h	Country of origin	
i	Date of Departure	
j	Contact in case of emergency	
k	Mode of Payment	
l	Signature of guest	

Please if there were other details you capture please list them.....

9. Please, kindly indicate how these pieces of information are taken from you by the front office staff?
- (a) On a sheet of paper [] (b) In a notebook []
- (c) On a Guest Registration Form []

PART II: Procedure for Guest Registration

- 10) The following are the procedure for guests' registration. Please rank them, in descending order, how you are usually requested to provide the details.

Activity	Position/Rank
I request to check into a hotel	
Front Office staff projects the image of the hotel towards to me	
Front Office staff enquires from me if I have a reservation	
I complete the complete registration card	
The front office staff reviews the completeness of the registration card	
The front office staff makes room selection based on my needs	
Front Office staff assigns room rate to me	
Front Office staff discusses sales opportunities for hotel products and services with me	
Front Office staff assigns a porter to check me into my chosen room.	

PART III: Benefits of Hotel Guests Registration

Instruction

The following are some of the benefits of hotel guests' registration to the state, the hotels, and their guests. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2, and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [x] the appropriate space provided.

Number	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
11	It satisfies the legal requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority for hotels to keep records of their guests				
12	It provides a record of arrival				
13	It acts as a source of security for the guests				

14	It helps the hotel to trace the guests in case of any misfortune				
15	It helps the hotel to provide appropriate services to persons with special needs, such as special food and room requirement, storage for cash and jewels, etc				
16	It helps the hotel in planning for the use of the rooms and other facilities				
17	It helps in settling guests' accounts properly				
18	It establishes guest history records at check-out (personal and financial information)				
19	It helps the front office staff to coordinate guest services in a timely and accurate manner				
20	It helps the Ghana Revenue Service to determine the actual tax a hotel must pay				
21	The signature of guests on the registration form confirms guests' acceptance of the hotel's terms and conditions)				

PART IV: Challenges Facing Effective Hotel Guests Registration Instruction

The following are some of the challenges facing effective hotel guests' registration at the Hotels in the Okwahu Area. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2, and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [X] in the appropriate space provided.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
22	The unwillingness of guests to reveal their true identities				
23	Provisions of wrong information by guests				
24	The desire of hotel owners to evade tax				
25	Lack of awareness of the legal requirement by both front office staff and guest				

26	Those who stay in the hotel for short time (two to three hours) do not see the need to register				
27	Lack of appropriate materials for registration of guests				
28	Lack of enforcement of the rules on guest registration by the GTA				

PART V: Measures for Improving Awareness and Compliance

The following statements are about measures that could be put in place to improve upon the awareness and compliance of the Ghanaian Laws on Hotel Registration in the Kwahu area. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2, and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [x] in the appropriate space provided.

	Statement	SA	A	D	SA
29	There must be education on the Tourism Bill 2011				
30	The Inspectors of the Tourism Authority must intensify their visit to the hotels				
31	The front office staff who wilfully permit guests to make untrue statements in the guest's register must be severely punished				
32	Guest to make any false statements in the guest's register must be dealt with by the law				

33) In your opinion, are there other measures that could be put in place to ensure the registration of hotel guests brings out the desired effects? (Give a maximum of three measures)

- a)
- b)
- c).....

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM FOR HOTEL MANAGER, GHANA

TOURISM AUTHORITY, AND IMMIGRATION OFFICERS

Introduction

This Project is an Exploration into the Awareness, Compliance and New Trends in Guest Registration by Hotel Front Office Staff in Some Selected Hotels in the Kwahu Area

You are invited to participate in this study which is part of the process of completing an MPhil programme in Hospitality Management. The study is purely an academic exercise and it is aimed at investigating the awareness and compliance of Ghanaian Hotel Registration Laws among some selected Hotels in the Okwahu Area. Your participation in the study is limited to answering some questions in a semi-structured interview which is scheduled to last for a maximum of one hour. The questions are centered around the activities of Hotel Front Office Staff and their Managers about hotel guests' registration in so far as they relate to the demands of the Tourism Bill 2011 and the Alliance Compliance Order (1969).

To facilitate the conduct of the interview, the interview will be recorded. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed. Also, the interview data will be handled to protect the confidentiality of all participants. Therefore, no personal names should be mentioned in the interview.

As a voluntary participant, you are free to decline to answer any particular question, discuss certain topics or even put an end to the interview whenever you deem fit.

If you are happy to participate in the programme, you are kindly requested to sign the space below to indicate your preparedness to be a participant.

Respondent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

I: PERSONAL DATA

Instruction: Please kindly provide answers to the following questions

1. Please may I kindly know your Gender? (Male (b) Female)
2. Please may I know the range of your age (State your age to the nearest year)
3. Please may I know your Nationality?
4. Please which organization do you work for?
5. How many times in a year, do you visit hotel facilities in the Kwahu Area?
- 6a. Please are you aware of some of the Ghanaian Guests' Registration Laws in Ghana?
- 6b. Please can you mention any two of them and appropriate sections that relate to the Hotel Guests' Registration?

7. Please, is it true that the Ghana Tourism Bill 2011 demands that all hotels must keep Guest Registration Register in which they will have to keep guests' details?
8. Ghana Tourism Bill 2011 Section..... outlines the details of guests that hotels must capture and keep. What are the main details of guests that the Hotels must capture?
9. Please, how long are hotels required to kept the Guests' details captured in the Guest's Register?
10. Which organisations in Ghana are responsible for enforcing the Hotel Guests' Registration Laws?
11. Please, in your view to what extent have these organisations succeeded in enforcing these laws at the hotel levels?
12. Please as a GTA Officer, how does your office determine the number of guests a hotel hosts in a week, month, month, or year?

PART II: Benefits of Hotel Guests Registration

Instruction

Please, the following are some of the benefits of hotel guests' registration to the state, the hotels, and their guests. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2 and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [x] the appropriate space provided.

Number	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
13	It satisfies the legal requirement by the Ghana Tourism Authority for hotels to keep records of their guests				
14	It provides a record of arrival				
15	It acts as a source of security for the guests				
16	It helps the hotel to trace the guests in case of any misfortune				
17	It helps the hotel to provide appropriate services to persons with special needs, such as special food and room requirement, storage for cash and jewels, etc				
18	It helps the hotel in planning for the use of the rooms and other facilities				
19	It helps in settling guests' accounts properly				
20	It establishes guest history records at check-out (personal and financial information)				
21	It helps the front office staff to coordinate guest services in a timely and accurate manner				
22	It helps the Ghana Revenue Service to determine the actual tax a hotel must pay				
23	The signature of guests on the registration form confirms guests' acceptance of the hotel's terms and conditions)				

PART III: Challenges Facing Effective Hotel Guests Registration Instruction

The following are some of the challenges facing effective hotel guests' registration at the Hotels in the Okwahu Area. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2, and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [X] in the appropriate space provided.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
24	The unwillingness of guests to reveal their true identities				
25	Provisions of wrong information by guests				
26	The desire of hotel owners to evade tax				
27	Lack of awareness of the legal requirement by both front office staff and guest				
28	Those who stay in the hotel for short time (two to three hours) do not see the need to register				
29	Lack of appropriate materials for registration of guests				
30	Lack of enforcement of the rules on guest registration by the GTA				

PART IV: Measures for Improving Awareness and Compliance

The following statements are about measures that could be put in place to improve upon the awareness and compliance of the Ghanaian Laws on Hotel Registration in the Kwahu area. In a continuum of strongly agreed to strongly disagree, whereas strongly agreed = 4; Agreed = 3 Strongly Disagreed = 2, and Disagreed = 1; please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements by ticking [x] in the appropriate space provided.

	Statement	SA	A	D	SA
31	There must be education on the Tourism Bill 2011				
32	The Inspectors of the Tourism Authority must intensify their visit to the hotels				
33	The front office staff who wilfully permit guests to make untrue statements in the guest's register must be severely punished				
34	Guest to make any false statements in the guest's register must be dealt with by the law				

35) In your opinion, are there other measures that could be put in place to ensure the registration of hotel guests brings out the desired effects? (Give a maximum of three measures).

a)

b)

c).....

Thank you for your time.