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FOREWORD

Dear Authors and Esteemed Readers

It is with deep satisfaction that I write this Foreword to the Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Future of Tourism (ICFT) held in Arusha, Tanzania, April 16 - 17, 2019.

ICFT continues a tradition of bringing together researchers, academics and professionals from all over the world, experts in tourism and hospitality. The conference particularly encouraged the interaction of research students and developing academics with the more established academic community in an informal setting to present and to discuss new and current work. Their contributions helped to make the Conference as outstanding as it has been. The papers contributed the most recent scientific knowledge known in the field of Sustainability of Tourism; Domestic Tourism and SMEs Development; Tourism and Economic Development; Culture and Tourism; Innovation in Tourism; Customer Care in Tourism; Methods of Measuring Tourism; and National Tourism Policy.

In addition to the contributed papers, two invited keynote presentations were given: by Mr. Richald Rugimbana, the Executive Secretary of Tourism Confederation of Tanzania who spoke about the Issues for future tourism development with special focus of Tanzania; and Prof. Zororo Muranda, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Chinhoyi University of Technology in Zimbabwe who gave presentation on the Future of tourism: Tourism of the future.

The Conference was preceded by a tailor made training in *e-Tourism and Management of World Heritage sites*. The facilitators of training were: Prof. George Oreku, a professor of ICT from the Open University of Tanzania and Mr. Erick Kajiru, an expert of Management of UNESCO World Sites from the UNESCO Commission in Tanzania.

These Proceedings will furnish the scientists of the world with an excellent reference book. I trust also that this will be an impetus to stimulate further study and research in all these areas.

We thank all authors and participants for their contributions.

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ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE IN PROMOTING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN FIVE STAR HOTELS IN ZANZIBAR

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Abstract

Competence is a fundamental quality of a person which results in effective performance on the job in relation to knowledge, skills and attitude. This study explores the role of language competency in promoting customer satisfactions in hotel business. The impact of poor language competence and communication abilities can hugely affect the hotel business. Customers are not only sensitive to price but also to the quality services. Customer satisfaction can be promoted if service is delivered accordingly and employees have English Language competencies. This study used questionnaires and sample of 5 hotels each with 10 customers. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze data and variance and means used to present data. The study shows the importance of language competency in promoting customer satisfaction and suggested ways on how to mitigate the effect of lack of language competency in hotel business. These skills enable employees to understand and provide quality services that are required by the customers.

Keywords: Competence, satisfaction, hotel

Introduction

English language is an important means to communicate within tourism organizations. Buckley (2015) pointed out that English plays role in facilitating communication in hotel business. Consequently, high level personnel with language skills are becoming more and more necessary to corporate efficiency and success in tourism. It is true that the hospitality industry includes a variety of career opportunities for progression and promotion. But, most of the times they are out of reach unless a person who is pursuing them is a proficient and a confident user of the English language. It is more than just important to effectively communicate in English, no matter where in the world you live, travel or work. Certainly speaking fluently in a language is imperative when working in an English speaking nation. (Buckley 2015).

Pop-Anamaria (2016) emphasize that language has great importance in the dialogue and understanding between tourist and tourism facilities. English today is international language and most of the tourist establishments require employees to speak English in addition to their local language. Without any symbol of doubt, the universally accepted language of hospitality is English. It doesn't matter whether you are a housekeeper or a manager; it is almost

guaranteed that you will be expected to have not only a passive understanding of English, but also confidence in actively using it.

Having English language skill is very important for personal development and career progression. English language competency helps promote customer satisfactions but also create friendly environment for the business development for hoteliers. English language competency is very important in a daily basis while working. It keeps the English speaking customer comfortable while receiving services and they tend to like the service and get satisfied. (Pop-Maria, 2016).

Does English Language competence promote the satisfaction of customer in five star hotels in Zanzibar? This study evaluates the role of English Language competencies in promoting customer satisfaction.

Study objectives and significance

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the role of English Language competence in promoting customer satisfaction and specific objective were; to examine English language needed for customer satisfaction, to establish English language competencies that are important in service delivery and to assess role of English language competencies in relation to customer satisfaction. The significance of this study include; to improve service delivery in Hospitality business, improve Hospitality and Tourism curricular, to improve hotel staff output in the hotel business and to create confidence to employees while fulfilling their daily operations.

Theoretical foundation

Spicer (2009) define competency as the sets of skills, abilities, knowledge and attributes or characteristics that allow employees to accomplish their job successfully. The concept of competency management is suggested to be applied to the hotel industry because the nature of hotel business is labour focused and people oriented. Thus, if the employees have competencies at work, then the outcome is in a positive aspect to the hotel (Lee et al 2008). Therefore employees' knowledge, skills and abilities need to be developed in terms of competency because their job performance creates significant impact on the service quality and hotels' productivity. (Kim et al., 2011).

Satisfaction is the customers' feeling of contentment. Customer satisfaction recognizes the different between customer expectations and customer perceptions. Satisfaction may be developed quickly or it may be cultivated over a period of time (Harris, 200). The customers have many concerns and the job of a hotel business is to reduce as much stress as possible and create a pleasant customer experience while also providing current information and helping to solve problems for the customers (Ramsey and Sohi, 1997) The customer may

think back on the experience and realise how pleasant it was (Harris, 2000). Thus customer satisfaction is a function of performance relative to the customer's expectations.

In most service activities, customer satisfaction depends largely on the direct interaction with service provider. (Carlos P, et al 2018) .In case of Tourism, an interaction often occurs between people from different countries and whose mother tongues are different. In this context language context plays the key role in the customer satisfaction. Customer perceive a higher or at least equal level of interaction quality when the employees choice of language adheres to their preference than when the employee switches to their preferred language after missing it initially. This industry demands highly developed communication skills from its employees, as 5-star hotels deal with guests from foreign countries. (Carlos P, et al 2018).

Language plays central role in interactions between employees and customers and often forms the basis for their evaluation of service encounter. (Holmqvist et al., 2017). The use of language in intercultural service encounters is further exacerbated by the fact that language can imply inclusion or exclusion with respect to a social group. (Linke, 2004; Miller, 2000). As globalization and multiculturalism continues to broaden, the socio-political consequences of choice and use of language will increase. (Heller, 2010). The appropriate choice and use of language can reduce the misunderstandings that permeate intercultural service encounters and lead to better service outcomes, including customer satisfaction. (Zolfagharian, 2018).

There are important competences that are needed to promote customer satisfaction. Language competencies play key roles during service delivery. Ciotti 2018 identifies those language competences as patience, attentiveness, clear communication skills, knowledge of the product, ability to read customers, a calming presence, goal oriented focus, ability to handle surprises, persuasion skills, tenacity, closing ability, empathy, willingness to learn among others. One of those competencies discussed by Ciotti is clear communication skills which is the most required in service delivery and customer satisfactions. Customer satisfaction with a company's product or services is often seen as the key to a company's success and long-term competitiveness. Customer satisfaction determines the economic return of the business (Thurau, 1997). Hence English language competency should not be taken for granted when it comes to satisfaction and service delivery. Those daily interactions are determined by good language competencies and clear communication.

Further, Thurau 1997 argues that long term business satisfaction has an effect on the profitability of nearly every business. Hence long term business depends on the customer satisfaction during service delivery. Language competencies

play the most important role towards customer satisfaction. Hotel business depends on customer interactions towards services that are delivered daily (Thurau, 1997). Customer daily feedback on the quality of service delivery is the most important thing in hotel business. Hotel business serves different customers from different cultures and backgrounds. These customers are changing every day and every time. A hotel will only retain its customers if the services delivered to them are good. These services depend on good command of language and communication skills (Harzing et al, 2017).

Customer satisfaction results can help to identify important customer requirements. Identification of the specific customer requirements for promoting customer satisfaction is useful at a very fundamental level. The organization is able to clearly focus efforts in those areas that are most important to the customers. For an organization to remain solvent, information regarding customer satisfaction must be adequately collected and analyzed. One of the dimensions of service quality is empathy which includes access, approachability, ease of contact, communication with customers and understanding customers 'need. (Ilieska, 2013). Retention of customers depends much on the satisfaction of services that are given to them on daily basis.

Thorough understandings of how business gain and maintain long term relationship with clients is critical in today's environment (Ilieska, 2013) Listening is a highest order construct composed of three dimensions; sensing, evaluating and responding. Customers perceive a high level of listening behavior by a salesperson and leads to greater anticipation of future interaction. (Ramsay et al, 1997). English Language competencies are important elements of hospitality industry. Understanding of performance expectations are keys to achievement of tourist satisfaction. Good oral and written skills are the top skills important to hospitality practitioners at different position levels. (Kostic Bobanovic M. & Grzinic J 2012).

English Language competency is vital in the development of hotel business but also a key to customer satisfaction. Promoting customer satisfaction in hotel or any tourism business, communication abilities of the employees and the entire organization is very important. English has become an international language in the globalised business world because people from all around the world use English as a tool of communication; for example in trade industry, tourism, universal organization etc (Jitjen, 2015).

Language should be a policy for tourism organizational management (Dhir&Goke-Pariola, 2002; Lauridsen, 2006; Spolksy, 2004; Tange& Luring, 2009:218). A language policy can be defined as systematic activities and efforts done in a company or organization with the purpose of supporting the goal of the company (Simonsen, 2009:203)

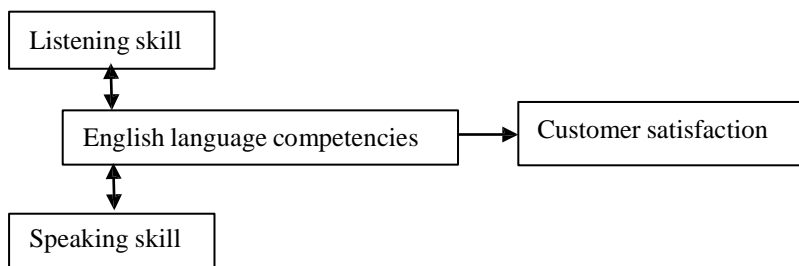
Any country that determines to access the global community must ensure that its citizens possess satisfactory proficiency in English language. Good English language contributes to effective communication and it is among essential employability skills needed in the 21st century. (Mohd.Zulkifli Mohd Yunus et al 2012).

Recent studies have provided ample support for the long held notion that listening skills is one of the most important competencies to become successful in sales (Anaza et al, 2018). Review of the listening literature shows that salesperson's listening is related to customer attitudes towards the salesperson in form of satisfaction and trust. (Ramsay & Sohi, 1997, Ruyter & wetzels, 2000). Recent findings also demonstrates that salesperson's listening affects customer perception of the organization namely service quality. (Hani & Inyang, 2015; Park et al, 2015.) Listening is critical in building relationships with customers. (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997).

For listening skill, knowledge of English provides communication with directions that serves their needs. (Clark et al. 1986). Only careful listeners can respond to the intention conveyed directly. A lack of competence in English listening skill results in misinterpreting the message. People may not have considered the eye to be important tool in listening but yet what someone sees when someone is speaking is sometimes as important as what is heard. A smile, a glance, the expression of being bored and cheerful, all the facial expressions and manners of the speaker has an effect on the meaning of the message. (Ramsey&Sohi, 1997).

In hotel business, successful business people not only need to speak directly and effectively but proficiency of speaking skill always helps facilitate communication and it also promote customer satisfaction. Jamieson and Arnold (1985) suggest three speaking skills; speak clearly: Language should be simple and direct, words, ideas should be well organized, speaking accurately: words must convey the intended meaning, facts should be correct and language should be polite and friendly.

Listening and speaking are equally important in the communication between staff and customer. Based on the literature reviewed I propose the following model (Figure 1) that will examine the relationship between English language competence and customer satisfaction during service delivery.



Importance of English Language in general

Language is a system of spoken or written symbols that communicate ideas, emotions and experiences. Understanding the role of language, organization can improve the coordination skills, operate better, new technology, develop customer satisfactions and have effective management in tourism industry (Al-Saadi, 2015). Language creates greater interest and it is a significant factor that influences competitiveness. So it is very crucial for an organization to have communicative competence throughout the organization.

Al-Saadi (2015) point out that there is a need in language skills in organization and it relates to performance like the ability to increase customer satisfaction, the ability to enhance and maintain language competency of tourism people motivate international tourists, better understanding on demand, culture and ability to create effective internal and external communication. Ignoring the important roles of English language may lead to loss of resources and limitations to tourism organizational and managerial development due to lack of communication and knowledge sharing.

Bloch (2005) pointed out that language skills are demanded in various occupations within organizations. English competence is a requirement for reaching managerial level in any tourism organization

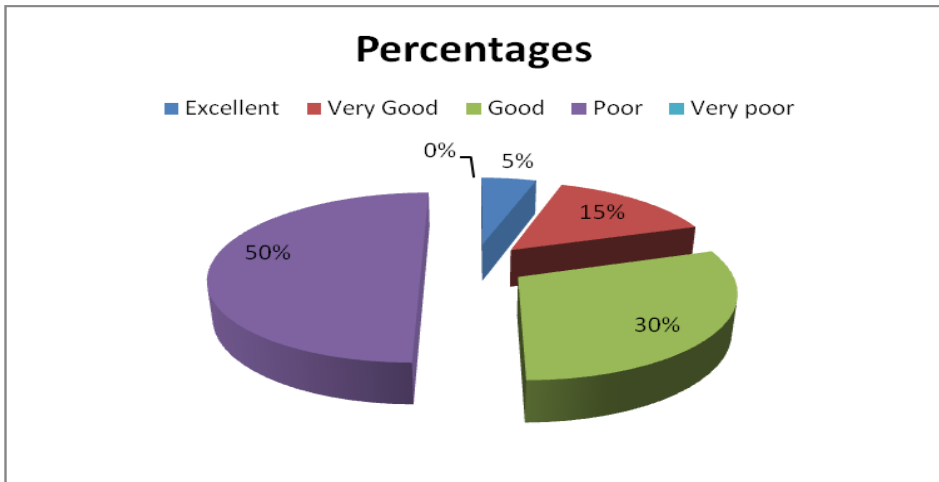
Language problems can lead to negative consequences and misunderstanding which will further lead to incorrect tourism business decision

Research Design/ Methodology

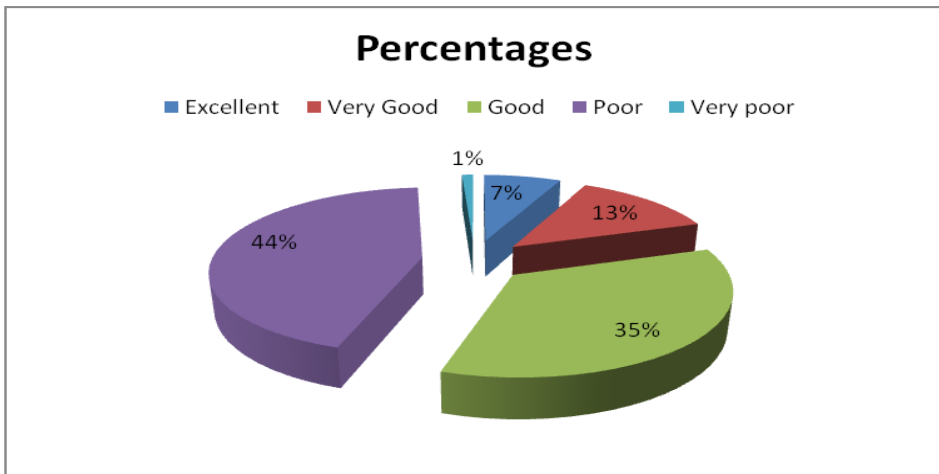
The study employed a quantitative research design and Zanzibar was selected to conduct this study because of many five stars' hotels available, uniqueness of the island and employees who are working in those hotels. Duration of working in those hotels was also considered. This study used questionnaires and sample of 5 hotels each with 10 customers. Total number of 50 customers was asked to fill in the questionnaires. These customers were sampled from different five stars hotel and validity and reliability were accepted. The closed questions were used in a questionnaire to collect the presented data

Findings

The rates of English Language usage from the hotels were rated as shown in the diagram. As shown below only 30% of employees were good in using English language.



The rates of customer satisfaction with the services that they received from hotels that they visited were as indicated in the diagram:

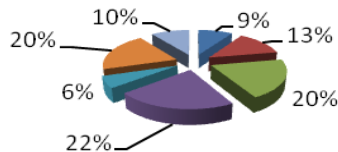


The rate of service satisfaction was poor in 44%, good in 35%, 13% very good and 7% was rated excellent and 1% was rated poor.

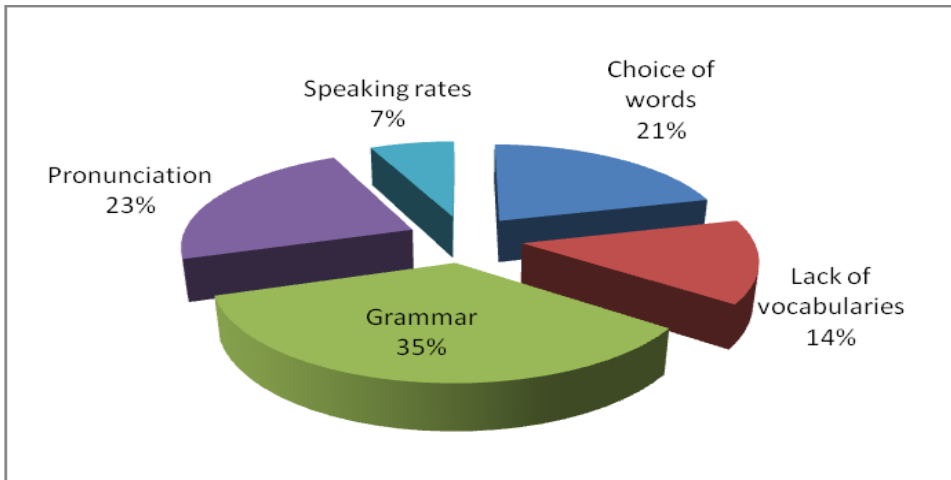
The frequency use of the following items in the hotel while receiving services were rated as has shown in the diagram however it shows that hotel employees were not good in speaking English however they understood the request of the customers. 9% understood the request, 13% responded very well, 20% could promptly assist without any verbal response, 22% could assist a customer without any verbal response and 6% they responded verbally to the request very promptly.

Percentages

- They understand the request
- They responded the request very well
- They promptly assist without any verbal response
- Assisted customer without any verbal response
- They verbally responded to the request promptly

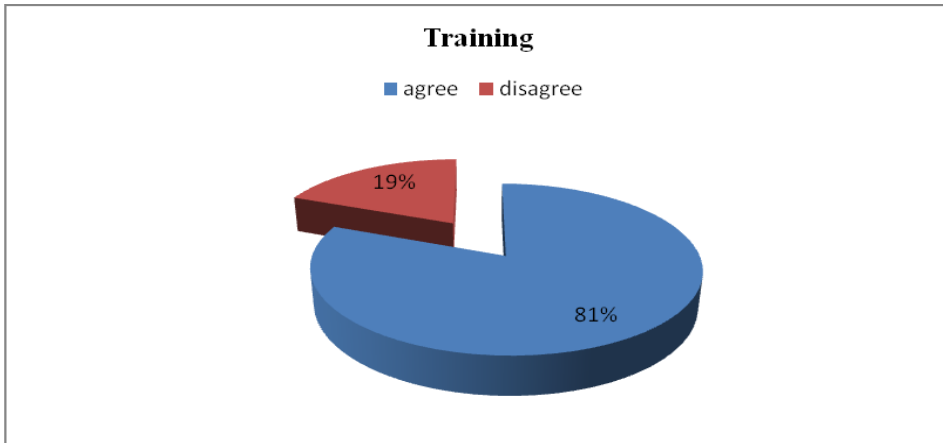


Difficulties to understand hotel staff when they speak English during service delivery showed the following results as follows:

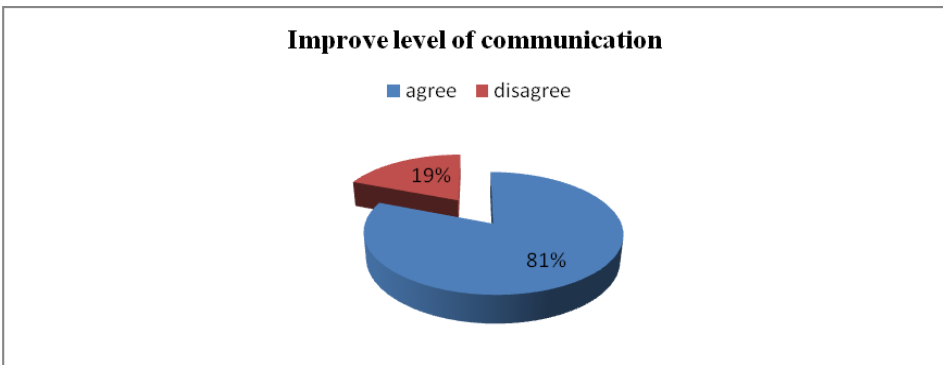


The results shows that 35% faced difficulties in grammar, 14% lack of vocabularies, 21% choice of words, 7% speaking rates and 23% pronunciation difficulties.

The researcher also wanted to find out whether training in speaking and listening skills should be provided and the response was 87% agreed that there must be training while 13% so that there was no need to have such trainings in the hotel.



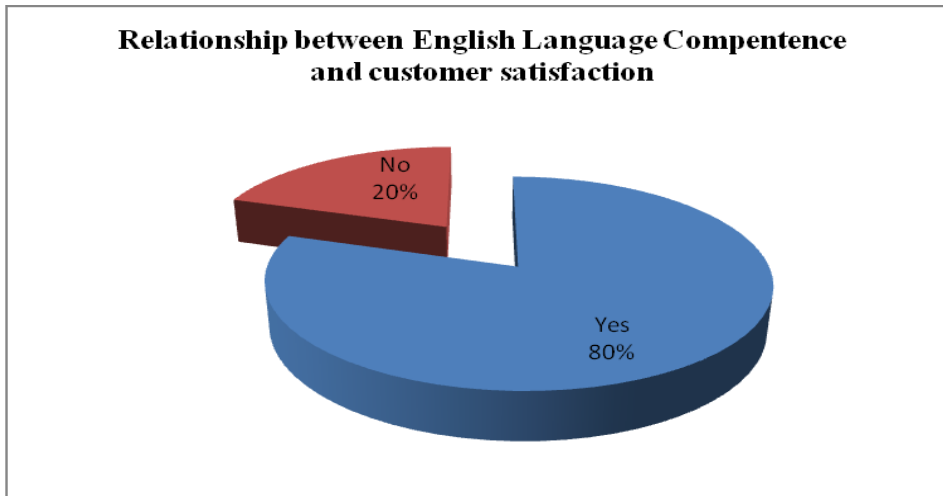
The study also wanted to find out whether the level of communication using English language should be improved or not. And the results were 81% agreed that it should be improved and 19% responded that there was no need to improve. The diagram below shows the results:



The results show that for customers to be satisfied, employees who offer services should have English language Competencies. Competence in English language is important in hotel business especially for communication with customers, others companies and organizations, suppliers and other stakeholders. In Zanzibar, English language usage is a must in the hotels and it helps to create comfort and satisfaction if used well. This study shows that employees face challenges when communicating in English and they also like important competence to perform their duties better. Those with poor language competence and lack confidence while a working is not competitive and customers saved by them cannot be satisfied.

The study also wanted to find out if there is a relationship between English language competence and customer satisfaction. The result shows that there is

80% relationship between English Language competence and customer satisfaction. On the other hand 20% shows that there is no direct relationship of having English Language competence and customer satisfaction. The diagram below shows the link between English Language competence and customer satisfaction



With these results, customer satisfaction depends much on the listening and speaking competencies. Employees in the hotels need English language competence to deliver the required services and to create their own confidence while working. Customers were satisfied with service providers who could understand English language and who could speak the language well. Customers were happy with the employees who could express themselves very well but also those who could understand the order without hesitations. The study shows that those who could respond correctly verbally made their customers happy and satisfied English language competence was indicated by the study as a very important need in hotel operations despite the struggle using it from some of the employees.

Conclusions and Implications

Customer satisfaction in the hotel determines the prosperity of the business but yet English language competence is a challenge. There study shows that there is great link between English Language Competence and customer satisfaction in five star hotels in Zanzibar. The study has also shown that employees with English Language competence are good in promoting customer satisfaction. Basic language for interactions in the hotels in Zanzibar is English. Employees need to have the required English language competence to promote customer satisfaction but also for the prosperity of the business. The success of hotel business can be easily measured by customer satisfaction. Zanzibar has rapidly developed hospitality facilities that attract many foreign and English language users from all over the world.

Graduates from hospitality programmes should have best ability to communicate in English and acquire as best competence as possible so as to promote customer satisfactions. Good language skills relates to good performance. Hotel business is very competitive and competence in English language creates interests to visit those facilities and ultimately customers can be satisfied. For hoteliers, English language competence is very important in daily basis and it keeps the customers satisfied with the service. Hotels are very important entity in the development of Tourism industry and hence customer satisfaction is very crucial for its development.

Recommendations

The study has shown there is a need to improve English language skills to employees of hotels in Zanzibar. This study was based on listening and speaking competence only and selected few hotels to collect data. I would recommend other researchers to concentrate in all competences like reading and writing and sample as more respondent as possible. I would also recommend the same study to be conducted in other areas in Tanzania like Northern Circuit and other circuits. Also this study concentrated on English Language competence only. I would recommend other researchers to conduct the same research in other languages that are used in the hospitality and tourism organizations and facilities.

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