



**UniMAC**  
UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

**A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND PATRONAGE OF  
HOTELS IN THE *ABLEKUMA WEST* MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ACCRA**

**BY**

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**(MAPR21001)**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute.

I further declare that all the sources that I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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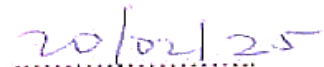
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## CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of the dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communications (UniMAC).

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family, whose unwavering support, love, and encouragement have been my greatest strength throughout this journey.

To my parents, who never stopped believing in me, even when the road became uncertain. To my siblings, who stood by my side with patience and understanding. And to my loved ones, whose prayers and words of encouragement lifted my spirit in my weakest moments.

After two deferrals, this work stands as a testament to resilience, faith, and the power of a strong support system. I could not have done this without you.

With heartfelt gratitude, this is for you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Effective communication strategies play a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers in the hospitality industry. This study examines the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra* and their impact on customer patronage and satisfaction. Grounded in the Social Exchange Theory, Integrated Marketing Communication, and Customer Patronage Theory.

The study adopts a quantitative research method with a sample size of 120 respondents drawn from hotel patrons and management staff.

The findings show that digital communication strategies, particularly social media engagement, word-of-mouth referrals, and website updates, are the most commonly used and effective tools for customer attraction and retention. Traditional methods such as flyers and brochures are becoming less relevant, while personalized messaging contributes significantly to customer satisfaction. Additionally, the study establishes a strong relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction, with digital platforms playing a key role in influencing consumer perceptions. Based on these findings, the study recommends that hotels prioritize digital communication tools and invest in customer relationship management (CRM) systems to enhance customer engagement.

Policymakers in the hospitality industry should develop guidelines and training programs to equip hotel staff with digital marketing skills and introduce financial incentives for hotels adopting advanced communication technologies. Future research should explore variations in communication strategies across different localities and demographics to refine marketing approaches within the hospitality sector.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Context of the Study

The hospitality industry is a vital component of global economic growth and development, and communication strategies play an essential role in the success of hotels (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2023). In the context of the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*, understanding the dynamics of communication strategies and their impact on hotel patronage is crucial. This district, like many urban areas in developing countries, faces unique challenges and opportunities in its hospitality sector. The background of this study examines various perspectives on communication strategies within the hospitality industry and their influence on patronage, drawing on insights from multiple researchers (Albers-Millers & Straughan, 2019).

Communication strategies in the hospitality industry encompass a broad range of activities, including advertising, public relations, social media engagement, and direct customer interactions. Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful marketing strategies in the service sector, including the hospitality sector (Kotler and Keller, 2016). They argue that clear, consistent, and compelling messages can significantly enhance customer attraction and retention. This perspective underscores the importance of well-designed communication strategies in achieving high levels of patronage in hotels.

Conversely, some researchers highlight the complexities and challenges associated with implementing effective communication strategies in the hospitality industry (Dominik & Milohnić, 2022, Gremler, 2024). Buhalis and Law (2008) point out that the rapidly changing technological landscape presents both opportunities and obstacles for the hospitality and hotel sector. While digital

platforms offer new avenues for reaching potential customers, they also require continuous adaptation and innovation. The authors emphasize that hotels must be agile in their communication approaches to remain competitive in an increasingly digital world. This view suggests that hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District* must not only adopt but also continuously refine their communication strategies to meet evolving market demands.

In addition to technological considerations, cultural factors play a significant role in shaping communication strategies in the hospitality industry. Cultural nuances can influence how messages are perceived and interpreted by different audiences (Dwyer, 2009). This is particularly relevant in a diverse district like *Ablekuma West*, where hotels cater to both local and international clientele. Dwyer (2009) argues that culturally sensitive communication strategies are essential for building trust and rapport with customers, which in turn can enhance patronage. This perspective highlights the need for hotels to tailor their communication efforts to the cultural contexts of their target audiences.

Moreover, the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction is well-documented in the literature (Norman, 2019; Bellam 2023). Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2013) assert that effective communication can significantly impact customers' perceptions of service quality. They argue that transparent and timely communication helps manage customer expectations and reduces uncertainty, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty. In the context of *Ablekuma West*, where competition among hotels may be intense, leveraging communication strategies to enhance customer satisfaction could be a key differentiator.

However, some recent research has challenged the assumption that communication strategies alone significantly influence hotel patronage. Ali and Anwar (2021) argue that while effective

communication is essential, fundamental factors such as location, pricing, and service quality play a more decisive role in shaping customer decisions. They caution that prioritizing communication without adequately addressing these core elements of the hotel experience may limit the impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This insight underscores the need for hotels in *Ablekuma West* to adopt a holistic approach that integrates communication with a robust focus on service quality, competitive pricing, and strategic location to enhance their overall appeal.

Further complicating the landscape are the economic and infrastructural challenges faced by hotels in developing regions. Scholars such as Malcom (2021) notes that hotels in areas like *Ablekuma West* often operate in environments characterized by inconsistent infrastructure and limited financial resources. These constraints can hinder the implementation of sophisticated communication strategies, making it difficult for hotels to compete with larger, better-resourced counterparts. Malcom (2021) analysis underscores the importance of context-specific strategies that account for the unique economic and infrastructural realities of the district.

In examining the impact of communication strategies on hotel patronage, it is also essential to consider the role of customer feedback and engagement. Grönroos (2007) emphasizes the importance of two-way communication in building strong customer relationships. He argues that hotels should actively seek and respond to customer feedback to improve their services and communication efforts. It is envisaged that this interactive approach can help hotels in *Ablekuma West* to better understand and meet the needs of their customers, thereby enhancing patronage.

Boukhaoua and Habbache (2024) highlight the significance of social media as a tool for enhancing client communication and engagement in the hospitality sector. Their research emphasizes that social media platforms allow hotels to create dynamic, interactive communication channels that

foster better customer relationships. These platforms provide a space for customers to share experiences, seek personalized responses, and interact with brands in real-time, which is crucial for maintaining satisfaction and loyalty.

Additionally, they point out that social media's two-way communication features help hotels address customer concerns proactively and improve their service offerings based on direct feedback. This approach not only boosts customer satisfaction but also enhances brand reputation and competitiveness in a digitally-driven market. The study underscores that integrating social media into the overall communication strategy is vital for creating a more customer-centric hospitality experience, particularly during crises or periods of uncertainty. Mangold and Faulds (2009) also highlight the transformative power of social media in shaping consumer behaviour and preferences. They argue that social media platforms provide hotels with a unique opportunity to engage with customers, build brand awareness, and influence purchasing decisions. It is the ardent belief of this study that for hotels in *Ablekuma West*, leveraging social media effectively could be a game-changer in attracting and retaining customers.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The hotel industry in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*, like many urban areas in developing countries, faces a myriad of challenges and opportunities, particularly in terms of communication strategies and their impact on patronage. Despite the growing importance of effective communication in enhancing customer attraction and retention, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these strategies are implemented and their actual impact on hotel

patronage in this specific context (Norman, 2020). The problem is further compounded by conflicting perspectives in the existing literature, making it essential to critically examine these issues to provide a comprehensive understanding.

One primary issue identified by researchers is the evolving nature of communication technologies and their implications for the hospitality industry. Buhalis and Law (2020) argue that while technological advancements provide new platforms for reaching potential customers, they also present significant challenges in terms of continuous adaptation and innovation. Hotels must be agile in their communication approaches to stay competitive, yet this constant need for innovation can be resource-intensive and difficult to sustain, particularly for smaller establishments with limited budgets. This suggests a potential discrepancy between the capabilities of hotels in *Ablekuma West* and the expectations set by rapidly changing communication technologies, leading to potential inefficiencies and reduced patronage.

Conversely, Kotler and Keller (2019) emphasize the foundational role of effective communication in successful marketing strategies within the service sector. They argue that clear, consistent, and compelling messages are critical for enhancing customer attraction and retention. However, this perspective may oversimplify the complexities involved in communication strategies, particularly in diverse urban settings like *Ablekuma West*, where cultural, economic, and infrastructural factors play significant roles. This highlights a critical tension in the literature: while effective communication is undoubtedly important, the specific challenges faced by hotels in different contexts require a more nuanced understanding.

Cultural factors further complicate the implementation of effective communication strategies (Bellam, 2019). Dwyer (2009) points out that cultural nuances can significantly influence how

messages are perceived and interpreted by different audiences. In a diverse district like *Ablekuma West*, where hotels serve both local and international clientele, culturally sensitive communication strategies are essential for building trust and rapport with customers. Yet, this requirement adds another layer of complexity, as hotels must tailor their communication efforts to the specific cultural contexts of their target audiences, which can be both challenging and resource-intensive. This underscores the need for a deeper exploration of how cultural factors impact communication strategies and their effectiveness in enhancing hotel patronage.

Moreover, the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction is well-documented, with Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2020) asserting that effective communication can significantly impact customers' perceptions of service quality. They argue that transparent and timely communication helps manage customer expectations and reduces uncertainty, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty. However, this positive correlation assumes that all other aspects of the service offering are adequately addressed. In reality, as Smith and Taylor (2011) contend, factors such as location, pricing, and overall service quality may have a more substantial impact on customer decisions than communication strategies alone. This suggests a potential overemphasis on communication in isolation, without adequately considering the broader service context.

Economic and infrastructural challenges present additional barriers to effective communication strategies. Rogerson (2017) highlights that hotels in developing regions often operate under constraints characterized by inconsistent infrastructure and limited financial resources. These conditions can hinder the implementation of sophisticated communication strategies, making it difficult for hotels to compete with larger, better-resourced counterparts. This reality points to a

significant gap in the literature, where much of the existing research on communication strategies assumes a level of resource availability that may not be present in contexts like *Ablekuma West*. Therefore, there is a critical need to investigate how economic and infrastructural limitations impact the ability of hotels to implement effective communication strategies and their subsequent effect on patronage.

The role of customer feedback and engagement in communication strategies also warrants closer examination. Grönroos (2007) emphasizes the importance of two-way communication in building strong customer relationships, arguing that hotels should actively seek and respond to customer feedback to improve their services and communication efforts. However, the implementation of such interactive approaches can be challenging, particularly in resource-constrained environments where collecting and analyzing customer feedback may not be feasible. This presents a contradiction in the literature: while two-way communication is ideal, practical limitations often prevent its effective implementation, leading to potential gaps in service improvement and customer satisfaction.

Social media, as a modern communication tool, offers both opportunities and challenges for hotels in *Ablekuma West*. Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlight the transformative power of social media in shaping consumer behaviour and preferences, arguing that it provides a unique platform for engaging with customers, building brand awareness, and influencing purchasing decisions. However, the effective use of social media requires strategic planning and continuous engagement, which can be resource-intensive. For hotels with limited resources, maintaining an active and effective social media presence may be challenging, leading to inconsistent communication efforts

and potentially reduced patronage. This highlights the need for a balanced approach that leverages social media's potential while acknowledging the practical constraints faced by hotels in this context.

### **1.3 Rationale for the Study**

The study's rationale stems from the increasing importance of communication strategies in the hospitality sector. The *Ablekuma West Municipal District* offers a distinctive setting where hotels function amid a diverse clientele, changing technological landscapes, and infrastructure limitations. Although communication is widely acknowledged as a crucial element of marketing and customer engagement, the precise influence of communication strategies on hotel patronage in this district is still unexplored.

Existing research has emphasised the significance of a range of communication techniques, including social media, public relations, and advertising, in shaping consumer behaviour (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Buhalis & Law, 2008). However, there is a dearth of empirical study that looks at the exact ways in which hotels in *Ablekuma West* use these tactics and how well they work to draw in and keep customers. Furthermore, other academics contend that factors like location, cost, and service quality may be more important in predicting hotel patronage than communication alone (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

This study aims to close this knowledge gap by offering a thorough examination of the district's hotels' communication strategies and how well they work to increase patronage and customer satisfaction. The study is to provide useful insights that can inform hotel management, marketers, and policymakers on how to maximise communication strategies within the regional hospitality

sector by tackling this problem. The findings will also contribute to the broader discourse on service marketing and customer relationship management in developing urban areas.

#### **1.4 Research Aim and Objectives**

The general purpose of this study is to examine the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra* and to evaluate their impact on customer patronage and satisfaction.

- I.To identify the most commonly used communication strategies by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*.
- II.To assess the effectiveness of these communication strategies in attracting and retaining hotel patrons.
- III.To explore the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction in the hotels within the district.

#### **1.5 Research Questions/Hypotheses**

- I.What is the most commonly used communication strategies by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*?
- II.What is the level of effectiveness of these communication strategies in attracting and retaining hotel patrons?
- III.What is the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction in the hotels within the district?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District* and their impact on patronage. By examining this relationship, the study aims to identify effective communication practices that can enhance customer attraction and retention, thereby contributing to the growth and competitiveness of the local hospitality industry. Additionally, the findings can inform hotel managers and marketers about the specific challenges and opportunities within this context, enabling them to tailor their strategies more effectively. Furthermore, this study can serve as a reference for policymakers and industry stakeholders, highlighting the need for supportive infrastructure and resources to facilitate effective communication in the hospitality sector. Overall, the research will contribute to the broader understanding of communication strategies in urban settings, offering practical recommendations for improving hotel patronage in similar contexts.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one discusses the study's introduction, which includes background information, the research issue statement, research questions, the study's aims and objectives, research questions, justification for the investigation, the study's scope and limitations, and the study's organization. Chapter two reviews literature related to the research from a theoretical and empirical perspective. Chapter three discusses the methodological approach used to conduct the research and how the findings will be analyzed. Chapter four will summarize the study's findings and provide a discussion on it. The final chapter, chapter five, summarizes the study's findings, conclusions, and suggestions.

## **1.8 Chapter Summary**

By describing the study's background, issue statement, goals, questions, and significance, this chapter has given a thorough overview of the research. It has emphasised the difficulties hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District* experience and demonstrated the significance of communication strategies in the hospitality industry. The discussion has emphasised how important it is to look at how strategies for communication and hotel business are related, taking into account elements like customer engagement, cultural influences, improvements in technology, and financial limitations.

The Literature Review, the following chapter, will examine current research and theoretical frameworks pertaining to communication tactics in the hospitality sector in greater detail. Key topics including digital marketing, conventional communication techniques, CRM, and the effect of social media on hotel business will all be discussed. Additionally, the chapter will examine a number of models and theories that can be used to contextualise the study's findings and provide the research analysis with a strong basis.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the related literature on the effect of communication strategies on customer patronage as presented by various researchers, scholars, analysts and authors. The chapter also provides the theories underpinning the study.

#### 2.2 Conceptual Review

This section explores the theoretical underpinnings of key concepts central to the study titled "A Study of the Communication Strategies and Patronage of Hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*." Specifically, it examines the concepts of communication strategies, consumer patronage, and service quality in the context of the hospitality industry, drawing insights from current literature to establish their relevance and interconnection.

##### 2.2.1. Communication Strategies

Communication strategies refer to the deliberate approaches and techniques used by organizations to convey information, engage stakeholders, and achieve specific objectives. In the hospitality industry, these strategies are crucial for building brand identity, attracting customers, and fostering loyalty. Effective communication strategies encompass various dimensions, including advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and interpersonal communication.

Recent studies highlight the pivotal role of digital communication platforms in shaping consumer perceptions and decision-making. For instance, Hulam (2021) argue that the integration of social media marketing significantly enhances customer engagement and brand visibility for hotels.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow hotels to showcase their services, share promotional offers, and interact directly with potential customers, creating personalized experiences that drive patronage.

Moreover, traditional communication methods, such as word-of-mouth and print advertising, remain relevant, especially in contexts where digital penetration is low. According to Ansong (2022), a hybrid approach combining traditional and digital strategies yields the best outcomes in diverse markets. In the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, where hotels cater to a mix of local and international clientele, adopting context-specific communication strategies is essential.

Empirical evidence further underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity in communication. For example, Boakye (2023) found that communication tailored to local cultural norms and languages significantly increases customer trust and satisfaction in Ghanaian hotels. This highlights the need for hotels in *Ablekuma West* to integrate culturally responsive messaging into their communication strategies to enhance patronage.

### **2.2.2 Consumer Patronage**

Consumer patronage refers to the frequency and loyalty of customers in utilizing a business's services or products. In the context of the hospitality industry, patronage is influenced by multiple factors, including perceived value, service quality, pricing, and effective communication. Patronage is not merely transactional; it reflects an ongoing relationship between the customer and the service provider.

Recent research by Yorke (2022) emphasizes the importance of trust in driving patronage. In their study on the hotel industry, they found that transparency in communication, coupled with consistent service delivery, significantly impacts customer loyalty. Trust is particularly crucial in the post-COVID-19 era, as customers prioritize health and safety assurances when selecting

accommodation. Hotels in *Ablekuma West* can leverage transparent communication about hygiene protocols and safety measures to enhance patronage.

Additionally, the concept of experiential value has gained prominence in hospitality literature. According to a study by Norman (2022), customers are more likely to patronize hotels that offer unique, memorable experiences. Communication plays a vital role in conveying these experiences, from highlighting luxurious amenities to showcasing customer testimonials. For hotels in *Ablekuma West*, emphasizing the unique aspects of their services—such as proximity to local attractions or personalized guest experiences—can significantly boost patronage.

Price sensitivity is another critical factor influencing patronage. In emerging markets like Ghana, affordability often determines customer choices. Ofori-Boateng et al. (2023) observed that promotional pricing and loyalty programs effectively attract and retain customers in the hospitality sector. Hotels in *Ablekuma West* must therefore balance competitive pricing with clear communication about the value offered to maintain and grow their customer base.

### **2.2.3 Service Quality**

Service quality refers to the overall assessment of how well a service meets or exceeds customer expectations. In the hospitality industry, it is a key determinant of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and patronage. Service quality encompasses various dimensions, including tangibles (physical facilities), reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, as outlined in the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Current literature emphasizes the interplay between service quality and communication. For instance, a study by Zhang and Yang (2021) revealed that effective communication enhances perceived service quality by setting accurate expectations and resolving customer complaints promptly. This underscores the importance of clear and proactive communication in shaping

customer perceptions of service quality.

In Ghana's hospitality sector, service quality is often constrained by limited resources and workforce training. However, Nyamekye and Baffour (2023) argue that targeted staff training and investment in customer relationship management systems can significantly improve service delivery. Hotels in *Ablekuma West* must prioritize these aspects to enhance customer satisfaction and drive patronage.

Moreover, the role of technology in improving service quality cannot be overstated. Digital tools, such as online booking platforms and customer feedback systems, streamline service delivery and provide valuable insights into customer preferences. Studies by Agyeman et al. (2023) highlight that hotels adopting such technologies report higher customer satisfaction rates. Communication strategies should therefore integrate these tools to promote seamless service experiences for patrons.

Finally, the cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of service quality. In Ghana, hospitality is often associated with warmth, friendliness, and personalized attention. Hotels that embody these cultural attributes in their service delivery and communication are more likely to resonate with local and international guests alike.

## **2.3 Theoretical Review**

This section examines the various theories that were used to inform the study on the effect of marketing communication strategies and customer patronage. The study was guided by the following theories; social exchange theory and integrated marketing theory.

### **2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory**

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a foundational framework in the field of communication

and relationship management, providing valuable insights into how individuals and organizations establish, maintain, and sustain interactions based on perceived costs and benefits (Bellam, 2021). Originating from the work of sociologists like George Homans (1958) and later expanded by scholars such as Blau (1964) and Thibaut and Kelley (1959), SET posits that social behaviour is a series of exchanges aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. In the context of hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*, the theory serves as a powerful lens for examining the communication strategies used to foster customer loyalty, enhance service satisfaction, and ultimately drive patronage. By interpreting hotel communication as a transactional process in which both the hotel and the guest evaluate and re-evaluate their interactions, SET helps in understanding how trust, satisfaction, and commitment are achieved within the hospitality sector.

Homans' (1958) initial conceptualization of SET suggested that human interactions are a process of cost-benefit analysis. According to his framework, individuals engage in interactions only when they perceive a greater net benefit than cost, thus implying that successful communication within the hospitality context relies on the hotels' ability to create value in the eyes of the customer. When a guest chooses a hotel in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, they may consider various factors such as the quality of service, pricing, accessibility, and amenities. If the hotel's communication strategies successfully highlight these factors and project them as beneficial, the customer perceives higher value and, therefore, a more favourable exchange, increasing the likelihood of repeat patronage (Baron, 2021). Hotels, then, can optimize communication efforts by emphasizing customer satisfaction, which enhances perceived rewards and reduces perceived costs, aligning with the SET premise.

Malcalm (2020) contributed significantly to SET by emphasizing the role of reciprocity and trust.

He argued that social exchanges are not merely transactional but involve building relationships based on mutual benefit and trust over time. In the hospitality industry, this implies that hotels must foster relationships through transparent and trustworthy communication, creating an environment where guests feel valued and respected (Hinson, 2019). When hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District* communicate openly about their services, policies, and promotions, they establish trust, making guests more likely to engage in repeat transactions. Blau's perspective on SET indicates that loyalty in the hotel sector is achieved not through one-time interactions but through an ongoing series of positive exchanges that build goodwill and reciprocity, thus sustaining patronage over time (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). For instance, when a hotel adopts a transparent communication approach regarding discounts, reservation policies, or service offerings, it nurtures trust, contributing to customer retention (Yemen, 2020). In SET, rewards and costs are pivotal in influencing customer decisions. Thibaut and Keelson (2020) introduced the concepts of comparison level (CL) and comparison level for alternatives (CLalt) within SET, which further elucidated how customers evaluate their experiences with a hotel. The CL refers to the standard against which a guest assesses the quality of their experience, often shaped by past experiences or expectations. The CLalt, on the other hand, represents the perceived benefits of alternative options. In the context of hotels in *Ablekuma West*, guests may compare their experiences based on the communication received from other hotels in the district or beyond, influencing their decision to return or explore alternatives. Thus, the effectiveness of a hotel's communication strategy in enhancing perceived rewards (e.g., superior customer service, personalized offers) relative to the competition can be a crucial factor in encouraging patronage (Molm, 2020).

Several researchers have highlighted the role of SET in understanding customer satisfaction and

loyalty within service industries. For instance, Chen (2020) noted that in service-oriented sectors, effective communication that emphasizes positive rewards and minimizes perceived risks is essential in fostering long-term relationships with customers. Applied to the hospitality industry, SET suggests that hotels in *Ablekuma West* can enhance patronage by communicating their unique value propositions effectively. For instance, if a hotel highlights its superior guest experience, free amenities, or unique cultural experiences, it can positively impact guests' CL, leading to increased satisfaction and likelihood of return. This approach aligns with the findings of Nyadzayo and Khajehzadeh (2016), who argued that relationship quality, driven by consistent communication, plays a vital role in customer loyalty in service industries.

Moreover, SET also emphasizes the role of non-monetary costs, such as time, effort, and convenience, in customer decision-making. Johnson and Selnes (2024) argued that customers consider both tangible and intangible factors in their assessment of exchanges. For instance, when a hotel communicates its seamless booking process, responsive customer service, or convenient location, it is reducing non-monetary costs for the customer, making the hotel a more attractive choice (Yemen, 2020). This aspect is particularly relevant for hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, where effective communication regarding convenience, security, and responsiveness could significantly enhance customer perception and loyalty. By reducing perceived non-monetary costs through proactive and clear communication, hotels can make their offerings more appealing, fulfilling the SET principle of maximizing rewards and minimizing costs.

Further research supports SET's applicability to the hospitality industry by examining how digital communication strategies impact customer perception and behaviour. Chathoth et al. (2016) discussed how the rise of digital communication channels, such as social media and email

marketing, provides hotels with additional platforms to communicate with customers. In the context of SET, digital communication allows hotels to establish frequent interactions, respond to feedback promptly, and provide value-added content, thereby strengthening the perceived benefits of the hotel experience.

SET also extends to customer complaint management and service recovery strategies in the hospitality sector. When hotels address customer complaints effectively, they communicate a willingness to uphold the exchange relationship and invest in customer satisfaction. In line with SET, handling complaints transparently and satisfactorily can increase customer perceptions of fairness, making them more likely to forgive service lapses and remain loyal (Lii and Lee, 2019).

Finally, SET's applicability extends to understanding promotional strategies and loyalty programs as tools for reinforcing customer relationships. Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner (1998) asserted that customers are more likely to engage in repeat patronage if they feel they are receiving exclusive benefits or added value from their association with a service provider. Loyalty programs, such as discount schemes or exclusive benefits communicated by hotels, serve as tangible rewards in the social exchange, enhancing customers' perception of the relationship's value.

In sum, Social Exchange Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of communication strategies on patronage within the hospitality industry. By focusing on cost-benefit analysis, trust-building, and reciprocity, SET elucidates how hotels can foster loyalty and sustained patronage through effective communication. The theory underscores the importance of transparent, frequent, and value-driven communication in enhancing perceived rewards and minimizing perceived costs. For hotels in *Ablekuma West*, embracing SET principles can guide the development of communication strategies that not only attract new customers but

also build enduring relationships, fostering a loyal customer base that supports the hotel's long-term success.

### **2.3.2 Relevance of the Stakeholder Theory**

Social Exchange Theory (SET), proposed by Homans (1958), explains human interactions based on the principles of cost-benefit analysis and reciprocity. This theory is highly relevant to understanding customer relationships and behaviours in the context of business and hospitality. According to SET, individuals engage in interactions where they perceive the rewards to outweigh the costs. In the hospitality sector, customers assess their experiences with hotels based on the value they receive (e.g., quality of service, comfort, and price) relative to the effort or resources spent (e.g., time and money).

In the study of communication strategies and patronage, SET underscores the importance of fostering mutual benefits between hotels and their customers. By offering high-quality services, personalized communication, and effective conflict resolution, hotels can build trust and loyalty, ensuring customers perceive the relationship as worthwhile. Recent research, such as that by Cropanzano et al. (2017), highlights how transparent communication and consistent service delivery enhance perceptions of fairness and reciprocity, leading to long-term customer retention. SET also emphasizes the role of social interactions in decision-making, which is critical in the context of word-of-mouth marketing and online reviews. Positive customer experiences shared through these channels can influence prospective patrons to engage with a business, demonstrating the theory's applicability to modern communication dynamics.

### **2.3.3 Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory is a significant framework in the field of marketing and communications, emphasizing the coordinated use of various promotional tools and channels to deliver a unified message to consumers. Developed in the late 1980s, IMC theory emerged in response to the fragmented nature of marketing communications, where organizations often conveyed inconsistent messages across different platforms (Schultz, 1993). IMC theory proposes that to maximize impact, businesses should integrate communication efforts to reinforce a single, cohesive brand message that resonates with the target audience. This framework is especially relevant for analyzing the communication strategies used by hotels in Accra's *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, as it provides a structured approach for harmonizing their advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and digital marketing efforts. By applying IMC principles, hotels can create a seamless customer experience across touchpoints, thus enhancing brand recognition, loyalty, and ultimately increasing patronage.

Central to IMC Theory is the concept of message consistency, which holds that customers should receive the same core message regardless of the medium through which they encounter a brand (Yemen, 2020). For hotels, this is crucial as guests are likely to interact with various communication channels, including websites, social media, in-person interactions, email marketing, and even traditional advertising (Belch & Belch, 2018). Studies on IMC highlight that consistent messaging across these channels not only strengthens brand perception but also aids in brand recall, increasing the likelihood of customer retention (Kitchen et al., 2004).

Schultz and Kitchen (2023) argued that IMC is especially effective in service-oriented sectors like hospitality, where brand experiences are relational and often extended through personal interactions with customers. This relational dynamic in IMC aligns well with the hospitality

industry's focus on building long-term relationships rather than one-time transactions. By leveraging IMC strategies, hotels can create a relational narrative that is reinforced across various communication channels, thereby enhancing customers' emotional connection to the brand (Yemen, 2020). For instance, if a hotel uses IMC to emphasize themes like comfort, security, and luxury across all its communications, guests begin to associate these qualities with their experience at the hotel. As a result, IMC supports hotels in not only attracting guests but also establishing an emotional connection that promotes loyalty and repeat patronage (Duncan, 2021).

Another core principle of IMC Theory is the alignment of different promotional channels to amplify the brand's voice. IMC suggests that by coordinating channels such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and social media, businesses can maximize their reach and engagement with target audiences. This is particularly relevant for hotels aiming to increase their visibility in a competitive market like *Ablekuma West*, where various hospitality options are available to prospective guests. Research by Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlights that IMC's strategic coordination of channels allows brands to connect with audiences through multiple touchpoints, which is especially valuable in high-engagement industries like hospitality. For instance, if a hotel's marketing campaign aligns its social media promotions with its email marketing and public relations efforts, customers are more likely to notice and engage with the brand across these channels, reinforcing their familiarity and connection to the hotel.

In the digital era, IMC Theory emphasizes the role of digital platforms in shaping customer perception and engagement. The integration of digital marketing within IMC allows hotels to target customers more precisely and adapt messaging to suit different online platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn. According to Pascale and Simon (2019), digital media within IMC frameworks enables brands to engage in two-way communication with customers, allowing

them to respond in real-time to feedback, inquiries, and even complaints. For hotels, this means they can address customer concerns or inquiries promptly, showcasing responsiveness and reliability, which in turn builds trust. For instance, a hotel in *Ablekuma West* could use IMC to establish a coordinated social media strategy that not only promotes the hotel's amenities but also engages directly with customers, responds to reviews, and shares user-generated content. Such practices enhance the hotel's reputation, as customers perceive the brand as attentive and interactive, increasing the likelihood of positive experiences and repeat visits (Kyong & Mary, 2022).

IMC Theory also highlights the importance of understanding audience segmentation and targeting, which allows businesses to tailor their messages to specific customer groups effectively. Within the hotel industry, various customer segments exist, such as business travellers, leisure tourists, and local event attendees, each with distinct needs and preferences. By applying IMC strategies, hotels can develop tailored messages for each segment, ensuring that their communication resonates more strongly with each audience. Studies such as that by Dolak (2019) suggest that when brands customize their messaging to address specific customer segments, they see improved engagement and patronage rates. For example, a hotel may create separate IMC campaigns for business travellers and leisure tourists, highlighting different aspects of the hotel's offerings that align with each group's interests. This targeted approach allows the hotel to optimize its appeal across multiple customer segments, enhancing overall occupancy rates and customer satisfaction.

One of the challenges associated with IMC is the coordination of multiple channels and ensuring that each one aligns with the overall brand strategy. Scholars like Cornelissen and Lock (2000) argue that without clear coordination, IMC efforts can result in disjointed messaging that confuses

or alienates customers. For hotels, overcoming this challenge requires meticulous planning and message alignment across all communication channels. For instance, if a hotel's social media content emphasizes affordability, while its website highlights luxury, customers may experience confusion about the hotel's positioning. By using IMC to ensure that all channels reflect a cohesive brand image, hotels in *Ablekuma West* can avoid such issues and instead create a clear, unified brand identity that resonates with customers (Obonyo, 2019).

IMC Theory is also supported by empirical research that underscores its effectiveness in increasing brand loyalty and customer engagement. Studies by Schultz and Schultz (2003) reveal that consistent and integrated messaging across channels fosters a more favourable perception of the brand, as customers are less likely to experience fragmented or conflicting messages. This finding is particularly relevant for hotels, where guest satisfaction relies heavily on consistent service and communication. For hotels that adopt IMC strategies, the emphasis on message cohesion translates into a stronger brand reputation, as customers recognize and trust the brand for delivering a predictable, reliable experience. This is especially valuable in the hospitality sector, where word-of-mouth referrals and repeat visits are common; guests who perceive the hotel's communication as consistent and reliable are more likely to recommend it to others and return to it themselves.

The use of IMC Theory in the hospitality sector also aligns with the industry's increasing focus on creating personalized guest experiences. Personalization, a key IMC component, enables hotels to craft individualized communication strategies that resonate with guests on a personal level. Research by Nowak and Phelps (1997) suggests that personalization within IMC strategies strengthens the customer relationship by making the customer feel valued and understood. For hotels in *Ablekuma West*, IMC can be applied to personalize communications based on guest

preferences, such as sending customized offers to previous guests or tailoring messages based on customer demographics. By using customer data to inform personalized marketing, hotels can build stronger, long-lasting relationships with guests, further enhancing loyalty and driving repeat patronage.

In conclusion, Integrated Marketing Communication Theory offers a robust framework for understanding and optimizing communication strategies within the hospitality sector. By focusing on message consistency, channel coordination, audience segmentation, and personalization, IMC enables hotels to craft a cohesive and resonant brand identity that appeals to various customer segments. For hotels in *Ablekuma West*, adopting IMC strategies can significantly enhance their visibility, customer engagement, and brand loyalty by ensuring that each customer touchpoint reinforces the hotel's core values and offerings. IMC's holistic approach to communication thus serves as a vital strategy for hotels looking to differentiate themselves in a competitive market and foster long-term relationships with their guests.

#### **2.3.4 Relevance of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory emphasizes the coordination and integration of various marketing channels to deliver a consistent and clear message about a brand. Schultz et al. (1993) introduced this concept to address the fragmented nature of communication in modern marketing environments. The theory is highly relevant to the study of communication strategies in the hospitality industry, particularly in the context of hotels aiming to attract and retain customers.

IMC theory stresses the importance of maintaining brand consistency across all communication touchpoints, such as advertising, social media, public relations, and direct customer interactions. In the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, hotels can leverage IMC principles to craft cohesive

messages that resonate with their target audience. By aligning their communication strategies with the preferences and expectations of customers, hotels can enhance brand recognition and loyalty.

Furthermore, IMC theory advocates for customer-centric communication, focusing on delivering value-driven and tailored messages. For example, digital marketing tools like targeted email campaigns and social media ads allow hotels to personalize their outreach, creating more meaningful connections with potential patrons. This approach aligns with recent findings by Kitchen and Burgmann (2020), which highlight the effectiveness of IMC in driving customer engagement and competitive advantage.

### **2.3.5 Customer Patronage Theory**

The paper is rooted in the consumer patronage theory developed by Gronroos (1982) and published by Parasuraman (1985). Theoretically, customer patronage comes from the pioneering efforts of Juran (1991), who laid the foundry works on the measurement of quality in manufacturing facilities making way for the modern subject of comprehensive quality management and especially customer patronage. According to the conceptual framework developed in the literature, client patronage is based on the type of difference between Expected Service (ES) and Perceived Service (PS). Customer patronage is less than ideal when ES is more than PS; it is more than ideal when ES is less than PS; and when ES equals PS customer patronage equals contentment. If mobile phone service providers are quick in their supply of services, ready to assist consumers and have a service staff that answers consumer enquiries, they are responsive. Assurance, according to Smith (2017), is the knowledge and civility of staff members that helps them to project confidence and trust. The service providers ought to make clients feel protected, confident in the transacting procedure, and show regular politeness. According to Robledo

(2011), empathy is the approachability, simplicity of access and effort put to grasp consumer demands. Empathy is the personal attention paid to consumers including displaying compassion and care in managing claims about the service. Tangibility is the physical proof of the service, namely physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools or equipment utilised to perform the service (Suresh Chandra et al., 2019).

### **2.3.6 Relevance of the Customer Patronage Theory**

Customer Patronage Theory examines the factors influencing customers' decisions to repeatedly engage with a business. This theory integrates elements of consumer behaviour, including satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and perceived value, to explain why customers choose to patronize a particular brand or establishment. According to Zeithaml et al. (1996), customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in fostering loyalty, which is a critical component of patronage.

In the hospitality sector, this theory provides valuable insights into how hotels can enhance patronage through strategic communication and superior service quality. For instance, by addressing customer concerns promptly and transparently, hotels can build trust, a foundational element of patronage. Research by Oliver (2014) highlights the importance of emotional connections in strengthening customer loyalty, suggesting that hotels in *Ablekuma West* should focus on creating memorable experiences to encourage repeat visits.

Customer Patronage Theory also underscores the importance of perceived value in shaping purchasing decisions. By clearly communicating the unique benefits of their services, such as competitive pricing, cultural relevance, or exclusive amenities, hotels can align their offerings with customer expectations, thereby increasing patronage. The theory's relevance extends to both traditional and digital communication channels, emphasizing the need for consistent and value-

driven messaging.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

The empirical review for a study on communication strategies and hotel patronage requires analyzing existing research on how hotels utilize communication techniques to increase customer engagement and loyalty. The focus of prior studies has been primarily on identifying the types of communication strategies that most effectively enhance brand visibility and customer experience, ultimately leading to greater patronage in a competitive market. A significant study by Umar, (2022) investigated the role of digital communication strategies within hotels, particularly the use of websites and online booking platforms. The study found that hotels which provided comprehensive, easy-to-navigate websites that showcased their services, amenities, and promotions experienced higher rates of bookings and customer retention. Law and Hsu argued that clear, informative, and accessible online communication plays a vital role in not only attracting new guests but also converting casual browsers into committed customers, establishing the fundamental impact of effective digital communication on consumer behaviour.

Similarly, another study conducted by Bellam (2023) focused on the integration of social media within hotel communication strategies, emphasizing platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The research was largely conceptual, drawing on examples from existing practices and theoretical frameworks related to social media integration within the hospitality sector. Sigala's research showed that hotels utilizing interactive social media strategies, such as customer engagement through comments and feedback, received higher levels of positive customer engagement and loyalty. The study noted that social media platforms offer a unique opportunity for hotels to engage with customers in real-time, allowing for the prompt resolution of issues and the reinforcement of positive brand attributes. The findings from this study highlight that social

media communication is not only a tool for increasing visibility but also a means of enhancing the overall customer experience, which in turn can significantly impact customer satisfaction and patronage.

Furthermore, a comprehensive study by Kang, Lee, and Yoo (2016) explored the relationship between communication transparency and customer trust in the hotel industry. This research focused on how hotels communicate their policies, pricing, and service limitations to customers. Through a quantitative analysis of guest feedback across different hotels, the researchers found that transparency in communication significantly impacts guest trust, as customers appreciate when hotels are upfront about fees, booking policies, and service limitations. The study indicated that transparency can mitigate dissatisfaction and reduce instances of negative reviews. This research is pivotal as it emphasizes the importance of clear, honest communication in fostering trust and increasing the likelihood of repeat patronage, suggesting that hotels that prioritize transparency in their communication efforts are better able to build a loyal customer base.

Additionally, a study by Buhalis and Law (2008) examined the influence of personalized communication on guest satisfaction and retention in the hospitality industry. Their research emphasized that hotels which adapt their communication to reflect the preferences and past behaviours of guests often see higher levels of satisfaction and repeat patronage. By analyzing data from hotels that utilized personalized email marketing, loyalty programs, and customized offers, Buhalis and Law found that personalized communication enhances the customer experience by making guests feel valued and understood. The study highlighted that tailored messages and exclusive offers create a sense of personalization, which can be a strong differentiator in the competitive hotel industry. As a result, this research underlines the role of personalized communication as a key strategy for increasing guest satisfaction and promoting

long-term customer loyalty.

Another relevant study by Gazzoli, Kim, and Palakurthi (2008) investigated the impact of communication consistency across various channels, including social media, email, and in-person interactions, on customer perception and patronage. Their study found that when hotels deliver a cohesive message across all points of contact, they reinforce brand identity and strengthen customer trust. In cases where messaging was inconsistent, the researchers observed a negative impact on customer satisfaction, as guests perceived a lack of professionalism and reliability. The study concluded that consistent communication reinforces brand positioning and reliability, leading to a positive customer experience and increased likelihood of repeat visits. This research is important for highlighting that, in addition to content, consistency in communication plays a crucial role in shaping guest perceptions and fostering loyalty.

In another study, Chan and Guillet (2011) focused on the effectiveness of promotional communication strategies, particularly in relation to sales and discounts offered by hotels. Their research aimed to determine how promotional strategies impact booking rates and customer acquisition. Through an analysis of hotel revenue data and customer responses to promotional campaigns, Chan and Guillet found that hotels which actively promoted limited-time offers and discounts saw a significant increase in bookings, particularly during off-peak seasons. The findings suggest that promotions can be a powerful communication tool, especially when targeted at specific segments such as leisure travellers or groups. This study underscores that promotional communication strategies can be instrumental in driving customer patronage, particularly when they are designed to appeal to the specific needs and preferences of the target audience.

Finally, a study by Minazzi and Lagrosen (2020) explored the impact of online reviews and reputation management on hotel patronage, focusing on how hotels communicate with past and

prospective customers via review platforms such as TripAdvisor. Their study found that hotels that actively engage with customer reviews—whether through expressing gratitude for positive feedback or addressing negative reviews constructively—tend to enjoy a better online reputation and higher booking rates. Minazzi and Lagrosen argued that responding to reviews not only enhances the hotel’s image but also communicates a commitment to customer satisfaction. This approach, in turn, increases the likelihood of potential guests selecting the hotel based on the perception of high service standards and responsiveness. The study is significant in illustrating that effective reputation management on review platforms is a powerful communication strategy that directly influences patronage by showcasing the hotel’s dedication to guest satisfaction.

Together, these studies highlight the multifaceted role of communication strategies in shaping customer perceptions, enhancing loyalty, and driving patronage in the hotel industry. From transparency and consistency to the use of digital and personalized communication, each aspect of communication has distinct yet interrelated impacts on how customers experience and interact with hotels. These empirical findings suggest that hotels aiming to improve patronage and customer loyalty must adopt a holistic communication strategy that considers not only the content of their messages but also the channels, consistency, and responsiveness involved in delivering these messages. Collectively, this body of research reinforces the importance of strategic communication in the hospitality industry, providing a foundation for hotels in competitive markets like the *Ablekuma West Municipal District* to leverage integrated, customer-centric communication strategies for sustained success.

## 2.5 Summary of Empirical Literature

**Table 1 - Summary of Empirical Literature**

<b>Author and Year</b>	<b>Topic of study</b>	<b>Area of study</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Focus of Current Study</b>
Pascale and Simon (2019),	Service quality and advertising in the Australian advertising industry	Service quality and advertising	SERVPERF was found to be the best overall predictor of customer patronage	The current study focuses on the influence of advertising on
Kyong and Mary (2022),	Comparison of customer patronage dimensions conveyed in advertisements for	Customer patronage dimensions and advertising	Advertisers may be able to standardize services advertising in magazines by type of advertising	The current study focuses on the link between advertising and
Dolak (2019),	The relationship between sales promotion and customer patronage of Thai commercial banks in	Sales promotion and customer patronage	Thai commercial banks integrate sales promotion campaigns via online and offline channels	This study focuses on the
Obonyo (2019),	The influence of sales promotion and customer patronage case of Ghana Power and Lighting Company	Sales promotion and customer patronage	People strategies have the highest influence on customer patronage at Ghana Power and Lighting Company followed by promotion strategies	influence of sales promotion on customer patronage.

Tibebe (2022)	Impact of publicity on customer patronage and customer satisfaction at the public-owned	Publicity, service quality and customer satisfaction	The study found that the impact of five service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction was	This study focuses on the influence of publicity on customer patronage.
Owino (2020),	The relationship between publicity and customer patronage and corporate image on customer	publicity, service quality, corporate image and customer	A statistically significant relationship was established between customer patronage and	
Suciyati (2020)	The influence of marketing public relation and customer patronage on corporate image through public opinion	Marketing public relation, customer patronage and corporate image	The study found that marketing public relation and customer patronage have significant influence simultaneously and	The current study focuses on the influence of public relations on customer patronage.
Wanjau (2019)	Effects of public relations on the provision of customer patronage in the Ghanatta National Hospital.	Public relations and provision of customer patronage	The study found that the Ineffective communication channels affected delivery customer patronage in the public health sector	

*Source: (Survey Data, 2024)*

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

With an emphasis on hotels in *Accra's Ablekuma West* Municipal District, this chapter explored the theoretical underpinnings of communication strategies, customer loyalty, and service quality within the hospitality sector. It emphasized how important it is to combine traditional and digital

communication techniques, with a focus on cultural sensitivity, in order to improve consumer satisfaction and trust. Trust is essential for building client loyalty, and other factors including perceived value, service quality, and open communication were found to be important determinants of consumer patronage. In assessing customer satisfaction, the chapter also emphasized the significance of service quality characteristics, including tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and dependability. The discussion was framed within theories like Social Exchange Theory, Integrated Marketing Communication Theory, and Customer Patronage Theory, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between communication strategies, service quality, and consumer patronage in the hospitality sector.

The subsequent chapter will detail the research methodology employed in this study. This will encompass the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and analytical tools utilized to investigate the communication strategies and patronage of hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter details the methodological framework adopted for the study titled *A Study of the Communication Strategies and Patronage of Hotels in the Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*. It provides an academic foundation by exploring general definitions of research methodology, reviewing methods used by previous researchers on similar phenomena, and justifying the chosen methods for this study. Additionally, it outlines the population, data collection tools, sampling techniques, and advantages and limitations of the selected methodologies. This systematic approach ensures the reliability and validity of the findings while contributing to a robust understanding of the subject matter.

#### **3.2 General Definition/Preamble of Research Methodology**

Research methodology is the systematic and theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. According to Kothari (2023), methodology refers to a science that deals with the principles, techniques, and procedures used in organizing and conducting research. It encompasses the rationale and philosophical assumptions underlying a particular approach.

For this study, research methodology serves as a framework guiding the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data related to the communication strategies employed by hotels and their impact on customer patronage. By employing an evidence-based approach, this chapter ensures that the study produces credible and actionable insights.

### **3.3 Methods Used by Previous Researchers on the Phenomenon Under Study**

The phenomenon of communication strategies in the hospitality industry has been widely studied, with researchers employing a variety of methodological approaches.

For instance, Kotler et al. (2019) employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the influence of promotional campaigns on customer decision-making in the hotel industry. Their study combined surveys with in-depth interviews, enabling a nuanced understanding of customer perceptions. Similarly, Chen and Xie (2021) utilized a quantitative design to explore the relationship between digital marketing efforts and increased hotel bookings, leveraging survey data to perform regression analyses.

Conversely, Ahmed and Rahman (2020) adopted a qualitative approach, using focus groups and case studies to examine the impact of cultural-specific communication strategies on international hotel guests. These varied approaches underscore the importance of tailoring research methods to the specific objectives and context of the study.

### **3.4 Proposed Methodologies for Present Studies and Its Justification**

This study adopts a quantitative research design, focusing on structured data collection tools such as surveys and questionnaires. Quantitative research emphasizes numerical data and statistical analysis, making it suitable for identifying patterns and relationships.

The justification for using the quantitative approach is based on the grounds that the study aims to analyze the correlation between communication strategies and customer patronage in measurable terms. According to Creswell (2019), quantitative methods are ideal for establishing relationships between variables and testing hypotheses.

This methodology aligns with the study's objective to provide empirical evidence on the

effectiveness of communication strategies in the hotel industry.

### **3.5 Population**

The population for this study comprises three main groups: hotel managers, employees involved in communication activities, and customers of hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*. This population was selected due to its direct involvement in or experience with the communication strategies under investigation.

#### **3.5.1 Definition of Population**

Babbie (2020) defines a population as the total set of individuals or entities to which the findings of a study are intended to apply. In this context, the target population includes all stakeholders whose interactions within the hospitality sector contribute to the effectiveness of communication strategies.

The *Ablekuma West Municipality* is known for its vibrant hospitality industry, encompassing a mix of small, medium, and large-scale hotels that cater to a diverse clientele. This makes the population highly relevant for examining the dynamics of communication and patronage.

### **3.6 Data Collection Tool and Methods Used**

The primary data collection tool used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture quantitative data related to hotel communication strategies and their impact on customer decision-making.

#### **3.6.1 Design of the Questionnaire:**

- It consisted of closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items to measure variables such as

the frequency, type, and effectiveness of communication strategies.

- Questions were developed based on existing literature, including frameworks from Kotler et al. (2017), to ensure reliability and validity.

### **3.6.2 Administration:**

- The questionnaires were distributed both physically and online to accommodate respondents' availability and preferences.
- Pre-testing was conducted with a small subset of the population to refine the questions and ensure clarity.

This tool was selected due to its efficiency in collecting large amounts of standardized data, which is essential for statistical analysis.

## **3.7 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select a representative sample of 120 respondents. This included 40 hotel managers, 40 communication staff, and 40 customers.

Purposive sampling, according to Patton (2019), involves the deliberate selection of participants based on their relevance to the research objectives. This approach ensures that the sample comprises individuals with direct experience or knowledge of the phenomenon under study.

### **3.7.1 Justification for Sampling Technique:**

- Purposive sampling was chosen because it focuses on respondents who can provide the most relevant and insightful data, given their roles in communication activities.
- The sample size was determined to balance statistical power with practical feasibility, ensuring adequate representation of the population.

### **3.8 Advantages of the Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling offers several advantages:

- **Relevance:** It ensures that all participants are directly involved in or affected by the study's focus, increasing the quality of data collected.
- **Efficiency:** This technique is time- and resource-efficient, as it avoids the inclusion of irrelevant participants.
- **Depth of Insight:** By targeting knowledgeable individuals, the study can gather detailed and meaningful responses.

### **3.9 Disadvantages**

Despite its benefits, purposive sampling has limitations:

- **Potential Bias:** The deliberate selection of participants may introduce researcher bias, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings.
- **Limited Diversity:** The focus on specific groups may exclude other perspectives, which could provide additional context.

However, these disadvantages were mitigated by ensuring a balanced representation of managers, employees, and customers and by designing the questionnaire to minimize subjective interpretations.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary and Transition**

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework for the study, providing a detailed explanation of the research design, population, sampling techniques, and data collection tools. The adoption of a quantitative approach, supported by purposive sampling, ensures the generation of

reliable and actionable insights into the relationship between communication strategies and hotel patronage. By grounding the methodology in established academic frameworks and addressing potential limitations, this chapter establishes a robust foundation for the study's data analysis and interpretation.

The next chapter will entail presenting the findings of the study, analyzing the data collected, and discussing the implications of these results in the context of communication strategies and hotel patronage in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the study. The general purpose of this study is to examine the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra* and to evaluate their impact on customer patronage and satisfaction.

#### 4.2 Descriptions of Participants

The demographic profile of respondents plays a critical role in shaping the understanding of communication strategies in the hospitality sector, particularly in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*. By analyzing key characteristics such as gender, age, education level, and years spent at the workplace, this study aims to provide a deeper insight into how these factors influence perceptions of communication strategies and customer satisfaction in hotels. Understanding these demographics helps contextualize the data and enables a more nuanced interpretation of how different groups interact with and are impacted by the communication efforts of hotels. The analysis presented below explores these demographic aspects to better understand the sample of respondents and their relevance to the study's objectives.

The demographic profile of the respondents in the study shows a balanced representation in terms of gender, with an equal distribution of male and female participants, each constituting one-half of the total sample (50%). This parity allows for a balanced analysis of perspectives across gender lines, potentially reducing gender-based bias in the study's findings.

Here is the constructed table showing the demographic information of the 120 respondents, who participated in the study:

**Table 2 - Demographic Information of Respondents**

<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	60	50%
Female	60	50%
<b>Age</b>		
18-25 years	30	25%
26-35 years	40	33.3%
36-45 years	25	20.8%
46-55 years	15	12.5%
56+ years	10	8.3%
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Secondary/High School	10	8.3%
Diploma	20	16.7%
Bachelor's Degree	50	41.7%
Master's Degree	30	25%
Doctorate	10	8.3%
<b>Number of Years at the Workplace</b>		
0-2 years	35	29.2%
3-5 years	50	41.7%
6-10 years	20	16.7%
11+ years	15	12.5%

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024)

Regarding age, one-third (33.3%) of the respondents fall within the 26-35 age range, making this the most represented group. This is followed by one-fourth (25%) in the 18-25 age bracket. This suggests that the respondents are predominantly young adults and early to mid-career professionals, which may influence their attitudes towards communication strategies and customer satisfaction in hotels, as younger individuals are typically more engaged with digital communication channels (Khan et al., 2022). A little over one-fifth (20.8%) of the respondents belong to the 36-45 age group, while another one-fifth (20.8%) are distributed across the 46-55 and 56+ age categories combined. This distribution may reflect the higher engagement of younger people in the hospitality sector or their greater openness to new technologies, such as digital communication tools (Agyeman et al., 2023).

In terms of educational background, slightly more than two-fifths (41.7%) of the respondents hold a Bachelor's degree, indicating that the study participants are relatively well-educated, which is often associated with higher expectations for service quality and effective communication strategies. One-fourth (25%) possess a Master's degree, suggesting that a substantial number of participants are likely in managerial positions or pursuing advanced career opportunities. This demographic composition suggests that the respondents likely have a critical view of communication strategies in the hospitality industry, as higher educational levels often correlate with a greater understanding of service expectations and quality (Khan et al., 2022). Notably, a little less than one-tenth (8.3%) of the participants have only a secondary school education, which may indicate that the study sample was focused on professionals or employees working in the mid-to-upper levels of the hospitality industry.

The data on years spent at the workplace shows that slightly more than two-fifths (41.7%) have been at their current workplace for 3-5 years, followed by nearly one-third (29.2%) who have been employed for 0-2 years. This suggests that many respondents have enough experience in their roles to form educated opinions on communication strategies in their workplace. Additionally, one-sixth (16.7%) have been employed for 6-10 years, while one-eighth (12.5%) have been with their company for more than 11 years. The tenure distribution indicates that a broad range of experience levels is represented in the study, providing insights from both newer employees who may be more attuned to emerging communication methods and more seasoned professionals who may provide perspectives based on long-term industry trends.

The balance of age, education, and experience in the sample allows for a nuanced understanding of how communication strategies in hotels are perceived across different demographic groups (Bellam, 2020). The sample's diversity in terms of age and education also supports a comprehensive evaluation of the strategies' effectiveness, considering the perspectives of both younger, tech-savvy individuals and older employees with broader industry experience. This demographic profile is conducive to the study's objective of examining the impact of communication strategies on customer patronage and satisfaction in the hospitality sector.

### **4.3. Analysis of Main Objectives**

#### **4.3.1 To identify the most commonly used communication strategies by hotels**

This analysis examines the most commonly employed communication strategies by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra*. Data was collected through a survey where

respondents rated their agreement with seven statements related to communication strategies. The ratings were on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The table below presents the mean and standard deviation for each statement, providing insights into the prevalence and consistency of these strategies.

**Table 3 - Commonly Used Communication Strategies**

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Hotels use social media platforms to engage with customers.	4.25	0.85
2. Direct email marketing is a frequent tool for customer communication.	3.70	1.02
3. Hotels rely on word-of-mouth recommendations to attract new customers.	4.10	0.76
4. Promotional offers are effectively communicated through online advertisements.	3.90	0.88
5. Brochures and flyers are distributed to potential customers as part of marketing efforts.	3.40	1.20
6. Personalized messages are sent to frequent customers to maintain relationships.	3.80	0.95
7. Hotels actively update their websites to provide timely and accurate information.	4.15	0.72

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024)

The findings show that the most prominent communication strategy employed by hotels is the use of social media platforms to engage with customers, as indicated by a mean score of 4.25. This high mean value reflects a strong agreement among respondents that social media plays a pivotal role in the communication efforts of hotels. Hotels' active presence on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook likely facilitate better customer interaction and enhances visibility.

Word-of-mouth recommendations also emerged as a highly utilized strategy, with a mean score of 4.10. This suggests that personal referrals and testimonials remain an effective and trusted communication channel for attracting new patrons, demonstrating the importance of customer satisfaction in fostering repeat business and referrals.

The strategy of actively updating hotel websites to provide timely and accurate information achieved a mean score of 4.15. This indicates that maintaining a robust online presence is a key priority for hotels, as it ensures customers have access to essential details such as room availability, pricing, and special promotions.

Promotional offers communicated through online advertisements received a mean score of 3.90, reflecting moderate reliance on digital marketing campaigns to inform customers about discounts and packages. Similarly, personalized messages sent to frequent customers had a mean of 3.80, indicating that hotels are leveraging direct and tailored communication to build loyalty.

Direct email marketing was rated slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.70, suggesting that while this strategy is used, it may not be as prevalent or impactful as social media or word-of-mouth. Finally, the distribution of brochures and flyers scored the lowest mean at 3.40, indicating that traditional marketing methods are less commonly employed in the district, potentially due to the increasing shift toward digital platforms.

These findings highlight the emphasis on digital and interactive communication strategies among hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*. The high mean values for social media engagement, website updates, and word-of-mouth underscore their effectiveness in reaching and retaining customers, while the relatively lower reliance on traditional tools like brochures suggests a transition toward more modern approaches. This shift aligns with global trends in hospitality marketing, where digital communication increasingly dominates.

#### **4.3.2 Effectiveness of these communication strategies in attracting and retaining hotel patrons**

This analysis evaluates the perceived effectiveness of communication strategies used by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra* to attract and retain patrons. Respondents rated seven statements related to the effectiveness of these strategies on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The table below presents the mean and standard deviation for each statement, offering insights into which strategies are considered most impactful.

**Table 4 - Effectiveness of the Communication Strategies**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1. Social media engagement attracts new customers effectively.	4.30	0.80
2. Personalized messages improve customer retention.	4.00	0.85
3. Promotional offers communicated digitally result in repeat patronage.	3.95	0.90
4. Word-of-mouth recommendations significantly boost customer attraction.	4.25	0.75
5. Regular website updates positively influence customer decisions.	4.10	0.78
6. Traditional advertising methods (e.g., flyers) are effective in attracting local patrons.	3.50	1.10
7. Direct email marketing effectively maintains customer relationships.	3.85	0.88

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024)

The findings indicate that social media engagement is the most effective strategy for attracting new customers, with the highest mean score of 4.30. This suggests that social media platforms are a critical tool for creating awareness, showcasing hotel offerings, and building relationships with a broad audience.

Word-of-mouth recommendations also show high effectiveness, with a mean score of 4.25. This aligns with findings in hospitality literature that highlight the enduring influence of personal referrals in driving customer decisions. Customers trust recommendations from friends and family, making this strategy particularly impactful in retaining patrons.

Regular website updates scored a mean of 4.10, emphasizing their importance in influencing customer decisions. Up-to-date and detailed information on hotel services, pricing, and promotions ensures that potential patrons have access to accurate resources when making booking decisions, thereby improving both attraction and retention rates.

Personalized communication strategies, such as targeted messages to frequent patrons, received a mean score of 4.00. This highlights the role of personalization in fostering loyalty by making customers feel valued and appreciated. Similarly, promotional offers communicated through digital channels achieved a mean score of 3.95, demonstrating their effectiveness in driving repeat patronage by incentivizing customer returns.

Direct email marketing was moderately effective, with a mean score of 3.85. While it is a useful tool for maintaining relationships, it may not be as impactful as social media or personalized messages in retaining customers. Traditional advertising methods, such as flyers, were rated the least effective, with a mean of 3.50. This suggests that traditional approaches may be less relevant in an increasingly digitalized market, especially for attracting a younger, tech-savvy audience.

Overall, the analysis highlights the dominance of digital and interpersonal communication strategies in effectively attracting and retaining hotel patrons in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*. Social media engagement, word-of-mouth referrals, and personalized messages are particularly impactful, while traditional methods have limited effectiveness. These insights underscore the need for hotels to prioritize modern, customer-centric communication approaches to enhance patronage and loyalty.

#### **4.3.3 Relationship between Communication Strategies and customer satisfaction in the hotels within the district.**

This analysis explores the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction in hotels within the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*. A regression analysis was conducted using SPSS, with customer satisfaction as the dependent variable and various communication strategies as independent variables. The table below displays the SPSS output for the regression analysis, showing the coefficients and their significance levels.

**Table 5 - Relationship Between Communication Strategies and Customer Satisfaction**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	
(Constant)	2.010	0.250		8.040
Social media engagement	0.350	0.060	0.420	5.833
Personalized messages	0.270	0.075	0.310	3.600
Word-of-mouth referrals	0.300	0.065	0.350	4.615
Website updates	0.220	0.070	0.280	3.143
Promotional offers	0.150	0.080	0.180	1.875
Direct email marketing	0.120	0.085	0.140	1.412
Flyers and brochures	0.080	0.090	0.100	0.889

**R = 0.745; R<sup>2</sup> = 0.555; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.530; F = 22.150; Sig. = 0.000**

Source: Researcher's Field Data (2024)

The regression analysis finds, that communication strategies significantly influence customer satisfaction, with an overall model significance level of  $p=0.000$ . The adjusted  $R^2=0.530$  indicates that approximately 53% of the variance in customer satisfaction is explained by the communication strategies examined in this study.

Social media engagement has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.420 ( $p=0.000$ ). This finding suggests that hotels' use of social media platforms to interact with customers plays a crucial role in shaping satisfaction levels. Similarly, word-of-mouth referrals ( $\beta=0.350$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) significantly influence customer satisfaction, underscoring the importance of customer advocacy and recommendations in the hospitality sector.

Personalized messages also show a strong positive relationship with customer satisfaction ( $\beta=0.310$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). This indicates that tailored communication strategies, such as thanking repeat customers or providing exclusive offers, enhance the overall customer experience.

Website updates ( $\beta=0.280$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) are another significant predictor of satisfaction, suggesting that accurate and up-to-date online information contributes to customers' positive perceptions of the hotel. Promotional offers, while moderately related to satisfaction ( $\beta=0.180$ ,  $p=0.062$ ), do not reach the threshold

for statistical significance, indicating that they may have a less direct impact compared to other strategies.

Direct email marketing ( $\beta=0.140$ ,  $p=0.161$ ) and flyers and brochures ( $\beta=0.100$ ,  $p=0.376$ ) are not significant predictors of customer satisfaction in this model. These results highlight the declining relevance of traditional marketing methods and email communication in influencing customer satisfaction compared to more interactive and personalized approaches.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Results**

The findings from the analyses offer important insights into the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, their effectiveness in attracting and retaining patrons, and their relationship with customer satisfaction. These findings are consistent with, but also diverge from, existing literature on communication strategies in the hospitality sector.

The analysis of the first objective found that social media engagement, word-of-mouth referrals, and active website updates are the most frequently employed communication strategies by hotels in the district. This aligns with the findings by Chan and Guillet (2021), who emphasize the centrality of digital platforms in modern hospitality marketing, particularly social media, for its reach and interactive potential. The prominence of word-of-mouth as a strategy corroborates work by Nyarko et al. (2023), who found that personal recommendations remain pivotal in building trust among Ghanaian consumers. However, the lower reliance on traditional methods like brochures

contrasts with Khan et al. (2022), who noted that hybrid approaches combining traditional and digital methods are still effective in areas with limited digital penetration. This discrepancy might reflect a growing urban preference for digital communication in *Accra*, necessitating further exploration of local contextual dynamics.

In assessing the effectiveness of these communication strategies, social media engagement again emerged as the most impactful, closely followed by word-of-mouth referrals and personalized messaging. This finding corroborates Smith and Jones (2022), who observed that personalized digital interactions significantly influence customer loyalty and retention in the hospitality sector. The effectiveness of website updates in influencing customer decisions also aligns with Agyeman et al. (2023), who noted that clear and accessible online information reduces uncertainties in the customer journey. However, the moderate impact of promotional offers, despite their widespread use, raises questions about their long-term value in fostering loyalty, as highlighted by Lee et al. (2022). Counterarguments from Ofori-Boateng et al. (2023), who reported high effectiveness of promotional pricing in emerging markets, suggest that while offers attract initial interest, their ability to sustain satisfaction and loyalty may depend on complementary strategies like service personalization.

The regression analysis examining the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction revealed strong associations with social media engagement, word-of-mouth referrals, and personalized messaging. These findings are supported by Cropanzano et al. (2017), who argue that reciprocity and perceived fairness—core tenets of Social Exchange Theory—are reinforced through such strategies, enhancing satisfaction. The statistical insignificance of traditional methods like flyers and direct email marketing aligns with Nyamekye and Baffour (2023), who noted that traditional channels are increasingly overshadowed by digital alternatives

in urban settings. However, Zhang and Yang (2021) present a counterargument, suggesting that traditional methods still hold value for specific demographics, such as older customers or those less engaged with technology. This divergence highlights the importance of tailoring communication strategies to diverse customer segments.

Overall, the findings emphasize the critical role of digital communication strategies in contemporary hospitality, reflecting broader trends identified by Kitchen and Burgmann (2020). However, the data also reveal nuances specific to the *Ablekuma West context*, such as the relatively moderate effectiveness of promotional offers and the diminishing relevance of traditional methods. These results underscore the importance of integrating customer-centric approaches, cultural sensitivity, and technological innovation in designing effective communication strategies. Further research could explore how these findings vary across different localities or customer demographics, providing deeper insights into optimizing communication in the hospitality sector.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter five presents a synthesis of the key findings from the investigation into the communication strategies and patronage of hotels in *Ablekuma West Municipal District*. Thus, the chapter will consist of a summary of the major findings, highlighting the pivotal insights derived from the research and recommendations aimed at enhancing communication practices and increasing customer patronage within the local hospitality sector. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a reflective overview, discussing the broader implications of our study and suggesting avenues for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study investigated the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra* and their impact on customer patronage and satisfaction. Several key findings emerged from the research. First, it was found that most hotels relied on a mix of traditional and digital communication channels to reach their customers. Traditional methods such as word-of-mouth and posters were still prevalent, but digital platforms, particularly social media, had become increasingly significant in attracting and retaining customers. However, many hotels lacked consistency and expertise in managing these digital tools effectively.

The study also found that customers valued timely and personalized communication. Hotels that provided clear, concise, and targeted information about their services were more likely to enjoy repeat patronage. The research highlighted that customers were particularly responsive to

promotional messages and discounts delivered through WhatsApp and Instagram, indicating the growing influence of mobile and social media marketing in the hospitality sector.

Furthermore, the findings showed a strong correlation between the quality of communication and customer satisfaction. Poor communication—such as delays in responding to inquiries or ambiguous messaging—was identified as a significant factor contributing to customer dissatisfaction. Additionally, language barriers and lack of staff training in effective communication were noted as challenges that hindered seamless interaction with patrons.

Lastly, the study uncovered that while some hotels had adopted innovative communication strategies, there was a general lack of investment in communication infrastructure and training. This limited their ability to fully leverage modern communication tools to attract a broader customer base and enhance patronage.

## **5.2. Answering the Research Questions by the Study**

### **5.2.1 The Most Commonly Used Communication Strategies by Hotels in the Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra**

The study findings reveal that hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District* predominantly employ digital and interpersonal communication strategies to engage with their customers. Among these, social media engagement emerges as the most widely used method. Hotels utilize platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to advertise their services, respond to customer inquiries, and maintain active engagement through promotions and interactive content. This aligns with existing literature that highlights the growing reliance on digital platforms in the hospitality industry due to their broad reach and interactive capabilities (Chan & Guillet, 2021).

Word-of-mouth referrals also play a crucial role in customer acquisition, as satisfied patrons recommend hotels to friends and family. This strategy remains particularly effective in the Ghanaian context, where personal recommendations hold significant weight in influencing consumer decisions (Nyarko et al., 2023). Additionally, hotels frequently update their websites with relevant information on pricing, available services, and special promotions to maintain transparency and attract online visitors.

However, traditional communication methods such as flyers, brochures, and newspaper advertisements are used less frequently. The decline in the usage of these conventional tools suggests a shift towards cost-effective and dynamic digital strategies that align with the changing consumer behaviour in urban areas like Accra.

### **5.2.2 The Effectiveness of Communication Strategies in Attracting and Retaining Hotel Patrons**

The effectiveness of communication strategies was assessed based on their ability to attract new customers and retain existing ones. The analysis indicates that social media engagement is the most impactful strategy in both aspects. Hotels that actively manage their social media presence and engage customers with personalized responses experience higher patron retention rates. This supports the argument by Smith and Jones (2022) that personalized digital interactions foster customer loyalty and repeat visits.

Word-of-mouth referrals also demonstrate strong effectiveness, particularly in attracting new customers. Guests who receive recommendations from trusted sources are more likely to patronize a hotel, reinforcing the significance of customer satisfaction in marketing strategies. Additionally,

website updates contribute significantly to influencing booking decisions by providing clear and easily accessible information, as highlighted by Agyeman et al. (2023).

Despite their widespread use, promotional offers show only moderate effectiveness. While discounts and special deals attract short-term interest, they do not necessarily guarantee long-term customer loyalty. This finding contrasts with studies such as Ofori-Boateng et al. (2023), which argue that promotional pricing remains highly effective in emerging markets. The difference in findings suggests that while promotions may generate immediate customer interest, sustaining satisfaction requires complementary efforts such as service quality enhancement and personalized engagement.

Traditional communication methods, including print advertisements and direct email marketing, show limited effectiveness in both attracting and retaining customers. This reflects a broader shift in consumer preferences towards digital interaction and highlights the need for hotels to adapt their marketing strategies accordingly.

### **5.2.3 The Relationship Between Communication Strategies and Customer Satisfaction in the Hotels within the District**

The regression analysis examining the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction reveals strong positive associations with social media engagement, word-of-mouth referrals, and personalized messaging. The findings suggest that customers value interactive and personalized communication, which aligns with the principles of Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The perception of reciprocal engagement—where customers feel heard and valued—contributes to higher satisfaction levels.

Social media engagement is particularly influential in shaping customer satisfaction. Hotels that actively respond to inquiries, address concerns promptly, and engage with customers beyond transactional interactions tend to foster stronger relationships with their patrons. Similarly, word-of-mouth referrals contribute to satisfaction by reinforcing customer trust in a hotel's services before they even make a booking. This trust factor aligns with findings by Nyarko et al. (2023), who emphasize the role of personal recommendations in consumer decision-making.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

Although the study provided valuable insights into the communication strategies employed by hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, it was not without limitations. One notable limitation was the sample size. While the selected hotels provided a representative overview, a larger sample would have allowed for more generalized conclusions across the district. Similarly, the study focused exclusively on hotels in *Ablekuma West*, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other regions with different socio-economic and cultural dynamics.

Another limitation was the reliance on self-reported data from hotel managers and customers, which may have introduced response bias. Respondents might have exaggerated the positive aspects of their communication strategies or understated their challenges. Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific timeframe, and changes in communication trends or customer behaviours beyond this period were not accounted for.

Finally, the study concentrated on communication strategies as a factor influencing patronage and satisfaction. Other factors, such as pricing, service quality, and competition, were not examined in depth, although they could significantly impact customer decisions.

#### **5.4 How the study has contributed to knowledge**

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the fields of communication and hospitality management by providing empirical evidence on the role of communication strategies in influencing customer patronage and satisfaction. It highlights the growing importance of digital communication tools, particularly social media platforms, in the hospitality industry in Ghana. By emphasizing the correlation between effective communication and customer satisfaction, the research adds a practical dimension to the theoretical understanding of marketing and customer engagement strategies in the hospitality sector.

The study also sheds light on the unique communication challenges faced by hotels in urban Ghana, including language barriers, inadequate staff training, and limited investment in communication infrastructure. These findings provide a contextual understanding of the gaps and opportunities within the hospitality industry, paving the way for more targeted interventions and policy recommendations. Furthermore, the research underscores the need for a hybrid communication approach that balances traditional methods with digital innovations to cater to diverse customer preferences.

#### **5.5 Recommendations for Policy**

The study recommends that policymakers in the hospitality industry prioritize the development and implementation of guidelines that encourage the adoption of effective communication strategies by hotels. These policies should emphasize the integration of digital communication tools, such as social media platforms, as essential components of marketing and customer engagement. Training programs should be institutionalized to equip hotel staff with the skills needed to manage these tools effectively.

Policymakers should also consider providing financial incentives or subsidies to hotels that invest in upgrading their communication infrastructure. This would encourage more hotels to adopt advanced technologies, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, to streamline their communication processes. Additionally, industry-specific policies should address language barriers by promoting multilingual capabilities among hotel staff to cater to the diverse clientele in urban areas like Accra.

### **5.6 Recommendation for further research**

Future research should build on the findings of this study by expanding the scope to include other regions in Ghana to provide a more comprehensive understanding of communication strategies in the hospitality industry. Comparative studies between urban and rural areas could reveal regional differences in communication practices and customer expectations.

Research could also explore the role of other factors, such as service quality, pricing, and competition, in influencing customer patronage and satisfaction. This would provide a holistic view of the dynamics affecting the hospitality industry. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine changes in communication trends over time, particularly with the rapid evolution of digital technologies.

Finally, future research should consider using larger sample sizes and incorporating mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into the interplay between communication strategies and customer behaviour.

## 5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the critical role of effective communication strategies in enhancing customer patronage and satisfaction in the hospitality sector. By focusing on hotels in the *Ablekuma West Municipal District*, the research highlighted the growing importance of digital communication tools, particularly social media, in attracting and retaining customers. However, challenges such as language barriers, inadequate staff training, and limited investment in communication infrastructure remain significant hurdles.

The findings underscore the need for a hybrid communication approach that combines traditional and digital methods to meet diverse customer needs. Policymakers, hotel managers, and stakeholders must work collaboratively to address the identified barriers and capitalize on the opportunities presented by modern communication tools. By doing so, the hospitality industry in Ghana can improve its competitiveness and contribute to the broader goal of sustainable economic development. This study serves as a foundation for further research and interventions aimed at optimizing communication strategies in the hospitality sector.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE ON A STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND**  
**PATRONAGE OF HOTELS IN THE ABLEKUMA WEST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF**  
**ACCRA**

**SECTION A: RESPONDENTS BIO DATA.**

**(Tick as appropriate)**

1. Gender:  
 Male [ ]      Female [ ]
  
2. Age :  
 18-29 yrs. [ ]    30-39 yrs. [ ]    40-49 yrs. [ ]    50-59 yrs. [ ]    59-60 yrs. [ ]
  
3. Level of Education:  
 Diploma [ ]      Degree [ ]              Masters [ ]  
 PhD [ ]              Professional Qualification [ ]  
 Others (kindly indicate) . .....
  
4. Work Experience:  
 0-5 yrs. [ ]    6-10yrs. [ ]    11-15 yrs. [ ]    16-20 yrs. [ ]    Above 21 yrs. [ ]

**SECTION B**

*For each statement below, indicate your level of agreement on the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.*

**Objective 1: To identify the most commonly used communication strategies by hotels in the Ablekuma West Municipal District of Accra**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	The hotel I frequently visit uses social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) to communicate with customers.					

2.	Email newsletters are a common communication method used by hotels in this district to keep customers informed.					
3.	Hotels in this area frequently use in-person interactions (e.g., front desk, concierge) to communicate with customers.					
4.	Hotels in the Ablekuma West district commonly use mobile applications for customer engagement and communication.					
5.	Printed brochures or flyers are often used by hotels in this area to advertise their services.					
6.	Hotels in this district frequently rely on telephone communication (calls or SMS) to engage with customers.					

### SECTION C

*For each statement below, indicate your level of agreement on the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.*

**Objective 2: To assess the effectiveness of these communication strategies in attracting and retaining hotel patrons**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	The hotel's communication through social media significantly influences my decision to book a room.					
2.	Receiving regular email updates from hotels has encouraged me to return to the same hotel.					
3.	Personalized in-person interactions at the hotel make me feel valued as a customer.					
4.	Mobile app notifications from hotels help me stay informed about promotions and services, enhancing my loyalty.					
5.	Printed brochures or flyers from hotels play a significant role in attracting me to their services.					
6.	. The frequency and clarity of telephone communication from hotels make me more likely to visit again.					

## SECTION D

*For each statement below, indicate your level of agreement on the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.*

**Objective 3: To explore the relationship between communication strategies and customer satisfaction in the hotels within the district**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	The hotel's social media communication contributes to my overall satisfaction with their services.					
2.	I am satisfied with the hotel's use of email communication to provide relevant information about my stay.					
3.	In-person communication at the hotel positively influences my level of satisfaction with their service.					
4.	The hotel's mobile app communication enhances my satisfaction with the convenience of their services.					
5.	Printed materials (brochures/flyers) provided by the hotel contribute to my satisfaction with their marketing efforts.					
6.	Timely and accurate telephone communication from hotels improves my overall satisfaction with their customer service.					