ABSTRACT

The hotel industry in Nigeria has come along way from the time when the colonial administrators introduced it into the country's business life. The first private hotel was built in 1944 and the first government hotel built in 1957. From that time till now there has been a lot of developments in this important sector of the economy.

The period of oil boom, was also a boom period for hotels. The height of the boom was during the 2nd World Black Festival of Arts and Culture in 1976. Then came the recession in the economy and room occupancy took a "nose dive".

At this time the study into "marketing the services of government owned hotel" is most relevant. The hotel business is basically a service industry where marketing is most important. For marketing to succeed the adoption of the marketing concept and the establishment of a marketing department is essential. In that light therefore the Imo Hotels Limited is been studied.

Four hypothesis where formed viz:

i) There is no difference in the level of demand due to the level of advertisement expenditure;

ii) There is no difference in the quality of service from trained and untrained staff.
iii) Patronage over the weekend is not higher than during the weekdays.
iv) The marketing concept is not applied in Imo Hotels Limited.

Two questionnaires were distributed. One for the guests and another for management and staff. The results of the survey and the statistical tests showed that poor advertisement is responsible for fall in demand for hotel services. Poor management and untrained staff affects the quality of service rendered by government owned hotels. More people patronise the hotel during the weekend and the marketing concept is applied in the Imo Hotels Group.

Another findings include that the period October, November, December, January and February have the highest patronage due to the Christmas holidays. Managers and workers are not adequately equipped educationally for their job. Location influences patronage and it appears that the majority of the hotel branches are located at prime sites.

As to recommendations, there is need for:
(a) Increased in-service training in which training bodies and management consultants are involved;
(b) increased advertisement;
(c) the establishment of a marketing department;