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The impact of customer relationship management to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage for Touristic hotels (An analytical study)

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Annotation: The research aims to determine the role of customer relationship management in achieving the competitive advantage of the hotels under study. The research sample included all managers of tourist hotels operating in the holy city of Karbala. A random image sample of 40 managers was selected, and the following statistical methods were also relied on (arithmetic mean, standard deviation). and relative importance) in order to give a statistical description of the researched sample. Provided to customers, followed by interest in the processes related to managing relationships with customers) and the research came out with a set of recommendations, the most important of which is working to permanently improve the quality of services provided to customers, as studies have proven that the quality of services directly affects the degree of loyalty of customers.

Keywords: Customer relationship management, sustainable competitive advantage, Touristic hotels

Introduction

Researchers continue to study and analyze the issue of customer relationship management as a modern marketing orientation commensurate with the nature of the competitive environment in which the goods and services provided to customers are similar, and the technological development has contributed to bringing about a change in the behavior of customers and how they receive the marketing message, as electronic communication media have provided many additional opportunities to provide Alternatives to customers, so it became necessary to reach a marketing strategy that ensures that hotels remain within the competitive environment. The Customer Relations Department aims to classify customers into similar groups based on evaluating the degree of profitability of the current and future customer, so that it seeks to win and maintain profitable customers by building long-term relationships with them that ensure that the hotel does not turn them into competitors, and this classification must be derived from a customer database that The hotel collects and analyzes them to know the needs and expectations of customers and meet them in a manner that is convenient for customers and profitable for the hotel at the same time. Customer relationship management consists of interaction and integration between components and administrative functions that directly affect customers and affect their satisfaction and loyalty, and



the dimensions of customer relationship management interact, which is the collection of information and private data Customers. All studies and research related to customer relationship management indicate that it plays a positive role in achieving a competitive advantage for hotels. In this context, the research was divided into five sections, where the first topic included the research methodology, the second topic was managing customer relations, and the third topic included the sustainable competitive advantage. The fourth topic came statistical analysis of the questionnaire data and testing the research hypothesis. The fifth topic included the most important conclusions and recommendations.

Section One The Methodology

1.1 The Problem

The research problem is embodied in asking the following questions- :

1. What is the role of customer relationship management in achieving the competitive advantage of the hotels in question.
2. Do managers in the hotels in question have a clear vision of the impact of customer relationship management in achieving competitive advantage.
3. What is the level of interest of hotel managers under consideration in the dimensions of customer relationship management?
4. What is the level of interest of hotel managers under consideration in sources of competitive advantage?

1.2 The Importance of the Study

The importance of the study is to try to arouse the interest of managers in the hotels in question to the importance of the role of customer relations in achieving the competitive advantage in order to enhance the ability of those hotels to survive and grow and to overcome all the obstacles that stand in the way.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The research seeks to achieve a basic goal, which is to show the impact of customer relationship management in achieving the competitive advantage of the hotels under study. Several goals branch from this goal that can be identified as follows- :

1. Providing intellectual and conceptual foundations for the activities of customer relationship management in order to create awareness and raise the interest of managers in hotels about the importance of customer relationship management.
2. Determining the role of customer relationship management in achieving the competitive advantage of the hotels in question.
3. Presenting a set of suggestions and recommendations based on the results of the research for the hotels in question, in a way that contributes to employing the Customer Relations Department in achieving the competitive advantage.

1.4 The Hypotheses

The research was based on the following hypothesis:

There is a significant effect of customer relationship management in achieving competitive advantage.



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1.5 The Sample of the Study

The research community consists of all managers of tourist hotels operating in the holy city of Karbala, and a sample of 40 managers was randomly selected.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

In testing its hypotheses, the research relied on the descriptive analytical approach by studying the relationship between the main variables by collecting and analyzing data related to the research variables, as well as the field method represented by the questionnaire form to explore the opinions of the sample.

1.7 Statistical Methods

The following statistical tools were used (arithmetic mean, standard deviation and relative importance). In order to give a statistical description and in general to the answers of the research sample on the paragraphs related to each variable, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were extracted based on the statistical program (Spss). As for the relative importance, it was extracted by dividing the arithmetic mean of each paragraph in the questionnaire by the sum of the arithmetic averages for all the paragraphs, and determine the level of the answers in light of the arithmetic averages by determining their belonging to any category and because the search questionnaire depends on the five-point Likert scale, there are five categories to which the arithmetic averages belong, and the category is determined by finding the length The range ($4=1-5$) and then divide the range by the number of categories (5) ($0.80=5/4$) and then add (0.80) to the lower limit of scale (1) or subtract from the lower limit of scale (5) and the categories are as follows :

(1-1.80 = very low, 2.60-1.81 = low, 4.0-2.61 = moderate, 4.20-3.41 = high, 5.0-4.21 = very high).

Section Two

customer relationship management

2.1 The concept of customer relationship management

The idea of the so-called customer relationship management systems came, which is a set of automated systems and technical tools that allow companies to make correct marketing decisions in terms of timing and quality, to maintain the level of profitability and development of their business, and to provide customer relationship management systems valuable assistance in many areas, for example help These systems allow companies to face the challenges and difficulties of providing quality services to their customers and solving their problems. They allow them to get to know their customers fully and guarantee their satisfaction as well as their loyalty to the company and instead of the current expenses that companies looked at to maintain customer satisfaction only once. Then it begins to reap the benefits of the long and fruitful relationship that it will link with its customers, and these systems depend on the principle of understanding the thinking of customers' behavior and analyzing their needs through databases that must be full of all kinds of information, so that companies can get close to them and answer all their questions and deliver those they want Hence the challenges come when we have different categories of subscribers, such as those of telecommunications companies, banks, and major service institutions, because defining the types and categories of customers, and what they want from products, and what problems they suffer, especially in terms of services, is one of the most important factors in maintaining Customer loyalty, where major companies suffer customer leakage. The basic idea of customer relationship management is emanating from the interest of modern or contemporary marketing on the customer and considering it one of the basic pillars of the organization in achieving success, growth and



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survival when building bridges and interconnected relationships with customers. The concept of contemporary marketing came in the second half of the twentieth century to replace the merchandise and sales concepts that were prevalent and ruled the thinking of organizations since ancient times and achieving value for it (Al-Ta'i and Al-Abadi, 2009: 191-192).

Customer Relationship Management has been recognized since the mid-nineties of the last century, due to the fact of the increasing demand from customers for quality, ground, and clear and less disruptive access to service. Perhaps the most important thing to mention is that the technological growth and the Internet revolution in the nineties all provided the basis for managing customer relations by establishing direct sales channels with quick customer interaction and shorter saleswomen. And he defined customer relationship management as a work philosophy through which to know the organization's customers and provide them with the appropriate services at the right time, in order to achieve their goals and to enhance confidence in the relationship that leads to a profitable benefit for both parties (Al-Qaisi and Ahmed, 2012:9). Proper customer behavior, motives, behaviors, costs and profitability is an important step towards improving the performance of business organizations in this environment. With the revolution of information technology, especially the global network, which helped to find opportunities for business organizations to build relationships with customers better than they were in the past in an unconnected world, by combining the capabilities of direct response to customer requests with high interaction, allowing them today a greater capacity than ever before. He went on to establish, nurture, and support long-term relationships with clients. Which is called today the customer relationship management, which is one of the successful solutions and is now spread all over the world and its main goal is to increase customer satisfaction and gain their loyalty while providing better and more support and reducing the cost of the targeted products by linking the functions of marketing, sales, research and development and customer support services together (Al-Hakim and Zwain, 2009:4).

This concept appeared in the field of marketing during the second half of the twentieth century, where studies showed that the customer is the basis for the survival of organizations, and it is more profitable. Organizations need at least one customer, and they do not think about profits as much as they think about attracting the customer to them. Therefore, the customer is one of the sources of business organizations that benefit from it to know the changes taking place in the market (Mirza, 2012: 229). Organizations of all kinds, including public or business, have become focused on managing customer relations, because it is a central point of orientation in the academic circles of the general business environment. And businesses that focus on managing customer relations, the traditional methods of attracting customers. It is feasible for contemporary organizations, especially with the presence of a highly competitive environment. Customer relationship management is a step of priority and great importance for many organizations and is based on a logic with broad restrictions among the public in building and strengthening strong relationships with customers. A number of definitions of customer relationship management have been presented from the point of view of Many researchers show it in the following table:-

Table No. (1) The concept of customer relationship management according to the opinions of some writers and researchers

researcher	concept
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Al Bakri 2011	A business philosophy that focuses on the customer and affects many of the organization's work in its various departments
Al-Anzi 2010	It is an integrated business strategy that works to increase customer acquisition, strengthen the relationship with them and retain them through long-term relationships
Amroush, 2009	A methodology to understand the customer and influence his behavior by communicating with him with the aim of improving three things: obtaining the customer, retaining him, obtaining his loyalty, and making a profit

Source: Prepared by the researcher

Customer relationship management is a priority step of great importance for many organizations and is based on a logic that has wide acceptance among the public in building and strengthening strong relationships with customers. And customer relationship management focuses on understanding the customer's needs and desires, which are achieved by bringing these needs and desires into the heart of the business and integrating them with the organization's strategy, people and business process technology (Al-Abadi, 2008:28).

2.2 Objectives of customer relationship management

Customer relationship management adopts a set of tangible goals such as satisfaction, loyalty, customer acquisition, and intangible goals, such as profits, costs and revenues.

Table No. (2) The objectives of customer relationship management according to the opinions of some writers and researchers

researcher and year	concept Customer relationship management goals
Al-Anzi, 2010	Dealing with the customer exceptionally
Al-Bajari, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revenue increase • Increase profit margins • Improve customer satisfaction • Use integrated information to provide excellent service • Improving the service provided to customers
Mirza, 2012	Maximizing lifelong customer relationships

Source: Prepared by the researcher

2.3 Forms of customer relationship management

1. Operational Customer Relationship Management

Through this form of customer relationship management, each interaction with the customer is added to the customer contact history, so that the staff of companies and organizations can retrieve information about customers from the database. Customer tools automate sales force, call centers, customer service support, and automate marketing.

2. Analytical customer relationship management

Customer data is used to create a beneficial relationship between tourism companies and organizations and its customers, and helps in improving information sources to provide a better understanding of customer behavior, and then helps to communicate with him in a highly personal



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way, and customer data stored in the central customer database is analyzed through a series of analytical tools to generate Profiles or a brief summary of the customer's life, identifying his behavioral patterns, and determining his level of satisfaction. The information and knowledge gained from the analytical customer relationship management will help in developing appropriate marketing and promotional strategies.

3. Collaborative Customer Relationship Management

The goal of this form of customer relationship management is to provide mechanisms for customers to interact with companies and organizations, and that collaborative customer relationship management works to provide two-way communication and uses a coordinated mix of customer interaction channels (multi-channel management) such as online shopping and call centers. (Al-Saffar, 2012:35-36).

2.4 The importance of customer relationship management

The importance of customer relationship management stems from its contribution to the following :

1. The Customer Relations Department worked to determine the total value of the customer in the event of his continuing relationship with the company and the cost of his loss in the case of damaged customers as a result of the company's dealings with him on the basis of the transaction and thus its inability to achieve his satisfaction.
2. Helping researchers and designers to innovate and design products according to the needs of customers because they know what they invent and design, they are the ones who come up with ideas based on their needs, and this is in contrast to the traditional relationship that kept the customer away from any interference in the work of researchers and designers (Abdul Reda and Al-Tai, 2012: 45- 46).
3. Customer relationship management helps in building individual relationships with customers and employees, and this contributes to improving and developing a sense of customer satisfaction (Al Abdul Wahed, 2012: 41).
4. Reducing the cost of acquiring new customers.
5. Determining the clients who achieve the greatest profitability for the institution (Dawai and Kazem, 2013: 189-188).

Section Three

sustainable competitive advantage

3.1 The concept of sustainable competitive advantage

The crystallization of a clear concept of sustainable competitive advantage requires knowledge of three terms on which this concept is based (advantage, competitiveness, and sustainable), and Webster's Dictionary included a definition of these terms, as he defined the advantage as "the position, status, or distinctive benefit resulting from the course of the organization's work", either Competitiveness is "the characteristics that characterize the company compared to its competitors", and sustainable is defined as "that can be maintained for the longest possible period of time." Sustainable competitive advantage is "the unique characteristics that distinguish the business organization from its current and potential competitors." (Abu al-Fahm, 2009:92)

The basic rule for above-average performance in the long term is the sustainable competitive advantage, that is, the extent to which the organization has the sustainable competitive advantage, and therefore the organization can acquire a lot of strengths over its competitors.



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The concept of sustainable competitive advantage can be defined as the organization's ability to attract customers and build a good relationship with suppliers for a long period of time, and work to keep pace with the events it faces in the competitive environment by seeking to overcome internal and external obstacles.

3.2 Types of sustainable competitive advantage

There are two basic types of sustainable competitive advantage that an organization can possess, and they can be summarized in two main types (Boudhouch, 2008, 12):-

1. The lowest cost advantage: The organization achieves this advantage if it is able to reduce the costs of its value-producing activities to the lowest levels compared to those achieved by its competitors, which makes it able to impose a price lower than the price of competitors.
2. Distinguishing feature: There are many approaches to distinguish an organization's product from competing organizations, which are different product configurations, product features, excellent service provision, spare parts provision, engineering design and performance, extraordinary (distinguished) quality, technological leadership, and a wide range of The services provided, the presence of a complete line of products, and finally a good reputation. The most important areas of discrimination that achieve a better competitive advantage and for a longer period of time are (discrimination on the basis of technical superiority; discrimination on the basis of quality; discrimination on the basis of providing greater consumer assistance services; and discrimination on the basis of providing the product with more value for the amount paid for it).

3.3 The importance of competitive advantage

The importance of competitive advantage is highlighted by the following points (Hamdan, 2002: 37):-

A- The importance of the location of the competitive advantage in the study of strategic management, as studies and research within the strategy and its management, especially during the past two decades, are not devoid of the concept of competitive advantage.

B - The competitive advantage is an important and essential factor for the work of organizations of all kinds and their production because it is the basis around which competitive strategies are formulated and other factors or variables interact to support this advantage and the emergence of the organization's comprehensive competitive strategy.

C- The advantage represents an important criterion for successful organizations because the successful variables are the ones that create new models of competitive advantage. Although the importance of competitive advantage is embodied in several areas, the most important thing is the extent to which business is able to secure the mobility and sustainability of competitive advantage, as it is a moving target, especially since the dynamic environment Competitiveness forces everyone to seek to renew sources of creativity and excellence.

3.4 Dimensions of sustainable competitive advantage

Because of the developments and environmental changes and the changing needs and desires of the customer over time, the dimensions of competition have changed and developed. After the organizations were adopting cost reduction as a basic dimension of competition, other organizations searched for new ways to distinguish themselves in order to increase their market share, and these organizations were able to possess the competitive advantage. By offering higher quality products



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and becoming the basis for competition. And when the duration of competition increased and because many organizations adopted the quality dimension as a basis for competition, the need arose again to search for a new competitive dimension. Other organizations have flexibility, and thus today's organizations that want to remain at the forefront seek to search for a continuous and orderly flow of competitive advantages over the time that prompted them to build more from a distance to achieve superiority over their competitors (Hashem, 2004: 75). Competitiveness occupies great importance in contemporary literature because of the fundamental changes that our world is witnessing today to express the ability to produce goods and services and provide them to customers individually from what other competitors offer, which requires organizations to strive to build and develop their capabilities in order to quickly adapt to changing opportunities to face The Challenge (Al Kubaisi, 2001: 67).

The success of the organization in determining the appropriate dimension on which it competes depends on its ability to determine the needs and desires of its target market and the possibility of satisfying these needs and desires better than its competitors. On the basis of which the organization will compete, and these dimensions constitute the competitive advantages, and certainly the capabilities of the organization play the largest role in this, as the competitive advantage comes through some of the activities of the organization and its ability to achieve the largest possible range of value for the customer, or from the ways in which the organization coordinates its activities with each other. Some of which creates and achieves competitive advantages for the organization. Some believe that organizations will analyze the competitive advantage when they distinguish their products in their target market in several ways, such as being the least expensive, the best, the latest or the fastest. He sees them as performance characteristics, and others see them as competing priorities. Whatever these labels are, the end result is translating the needs and desires of the consumer into specific indications that contribute to achieving the greatest perceived value for the customer relative to competitors.

Section Four

Descriptive Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

The research relied on the questionnaire mainly in the research. Likert pentagonal scale was used to measure the paragraphs of the scale distributed over five paragraphs and for each paragraph weighed strongly agreed (5 degrees), agreed (4 degrees), neutral (3 degrees), disagreed (2 degrees), and did not agree severity (1 degree), and the following is an analysis of the axes of the resolution: -

4.1 The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the response of the research sample vocabulary towards the research variables (resolution paragraphs).

In this section, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation and the relative importance of the research items (research variables) will be extracted: -

Table (3) The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the independent variable (customer relationship management)

NO	Questionnaire paragraphs	average values	standard deviation	Relative importance %
1	The hotel is conducting extensive promotional	4.27	1.18	%9



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	campaigns to gain the largest number of customers			
2	The hotel has a special database to store data related to its customers	4.67	0.75	%10
3	The hotel management is working on establishing good relations with customers and working to develop them constantly.	4.90	0.26	%11
4	The hotel seeks to retain the customer by achieving his satisfaction with the services provided to him.	4.77	0.30	%10
5	The hotel is keen on the satisfaction of existing customers for their role in gaining new customers	4.90	0.79	%11
6	The hotel relies on the customer's database to design an appropriate service for each customer	4.82	1	%11
7	The hotel seeks to meet the needs and desires of customers to ensure their loyalty to the hotel	4.30	0.66	%9
8	The hotel provides distinguished services from other hotels to attract new customers	3.57	0.86	%8
9	Hotel staff can access stored customer data in a timely manner.	4.95	1	%11
10	The hotel chooses employees who are distinguished by kindness, courteousness and good dealing to strengthen the relationship with the customer.	4.77	0.21	%10
	Total	45.92	7.01	%100
	Average response for all items	4.592	0.701	

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the paragraphs of the questionnaire related to the first variable (customer relationship management) in Table No. (3) show that the trends of the



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research sample were positive towards all paragraphs, because the arithmetic averages for the performance of the study samples are greater than the average measurement performance (the hypothetical arithmetic mean equal to 3 for the scale Likert quintuple), and the standard deviation is less than half of the arithmetic mean, and the relative importance was close and high, where the average response to the customer relationship management variable was (4.592) and the standard deviation was (0.701). This indicates that hotels are working to establish good relations with customers and are keen to develop them constantly, as well as hotels seek to meet the needs and desires of customers to ensure their loyalty to the hotel.

Table (4) Results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the dependent variable (competitive advantage)

NO	Questionnaire paragraphs	average values	standard deviation	Relative importance %
1	The quality of the services provided is the way the hotel uses in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.	4.77	0.56	%11
2	The hotel seeks to provide the service on time to meet the needs of the customer.	4.62	0.76	%10
3	The hotel develops performance by training employees and developing their competencies and capabilities.	4.47	0.99	%9
4	The hotel seeks to follow the research and development trends of competitors to know their future directions	4.25	1	%9
5	The hotel strives to provide consistently high quality services.	4.55	0.86	%10
6	The hotel seeks to maintain efficient human resources with accumulated experience and creative ideas.	4.67	0.72	%10
7	The hotel adopts a strategy of differentiation from competitors through the quality of services provided to customers	4.52	0.86	%10
8	The service achieves superior quality when the customer	4.62	0.79	%10



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	realizes that the characteristics of this service give a higher benefit than what the competitors offer			
9	The hotel seeks to provide the service according to the customer's request and need and to a higher degree than the level of his expectations.	4.60	0.73	%10
10	The optimal use of available resources contributes to improving the reputation of the hotel and its future	4.85	0.42	%11
	Total	44.83	7.58	%100
	Average response for all items	4.483	0.758	

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the paragraphs of the questionnaire related to the dependent variable (competitive advantage) in Table No. (4) show that the trends of the research sample were positive towards all paragraphs, because the arithmetic averages for the performance of the study sample members are greater than the average of the measurement tool (the hypothetical arithmetic mean equal to 3 for the Likert scale Five), and the standard deviation is less than half of the arithmetic mean, and the relative importance was close and high, where the average response to the competitive advantage variable was (4.483) and the standard deviation (0.758), and this indicates that hotels adopt differentiation strategies from competitors through the quality of its services As well as the optimal use of available resources in improving the reputation of the hotel.

2.1 Testing the research hypothesis

In this paragraph, Simple Linear Regression was used for the purpose of testing the direct effect relationships between the dimensions of the main research variables, as well as using the coefficient of determination (R^2) to explain the influence of the independent variable on the changes that occur on the dependent variable as well as the standard coefficient of regression (Beta). Which measures the response of the dependent variable when the independent variable changes with one standard degree. Table (5) shows the results of the impact relationships of customer relationship management (X) in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Y). The numbers appearing in the table can be interpreted as follows:-

Table (5) Results of the impact relationship between customer relationship management and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT	
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THE DECISION	TABULAR (F) VALUE		R ²	Significance level (F)	COMPUTED VALUE (F)	Beta (b)	a	
Hypothesis acceptance H ₁	4.60		0.496	0.002	13.761	-0.064	45332432.77	SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
	%95	DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE						

- The value of (b) was (-0.064), which means that changing customer relationship management (X) by one unit leads to a change in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Y) by (0.064).
- The calculated (F) value of the simple linear regression model amounted to (13.761), which is greater than the tabular (F) value of (4.60) at the level of significance (5%) and with a degree of freedom (1-14), and this means that the effect relationship between the variables Statistically significant.
- The value of the level of significance (F) reached (0.002), which is less than the level of significance of 5%, which means that the results that have been reached can be relied upon by more than (99%).
- The value of the interpretation coefficient (R²) amounted to (0.496), which means that a percentage of (49.6%) of the changes that occur in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Y) can be explained by the contribution of the Customer Relations Department (X), and the remaining percentage is (50.4%) It refers to other variables not included in the current research.
- The decision was reached regarding the hypothesis of the impact relationship of customer relationship management (X) in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Y) that the existence hypothesis (H₁) is accepted, which states that there is a significant influence relationship for customer relationship management in achieving competitive advantage
-

Section Five Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 The conclusions

1. The results of the research showed that hotels' interest in customer relationship management has a major role in achieving competition, and came at the forefront of this interest (maintaining the privacy of customer data and information, as well as interest in services provided to customers, followed by interest in customer relationship management processes).
2. There is a desire for hotel managers to adopt customer relationship management as a basis for a successful business and superiority over competitors.



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3. Hotel managers in the surveyed sample seek to provide excellent and high-quality services to ensure the continued survival of customers, and to make their services unique.
4. The main objective of customer relationship management is to work on strengthening the hotel's relationship with the customer to ensure their loyalty to the hotel.
5. Hotel managers in the researched sample work to meet the needs and desires of customers and provide excellent services for their role in attracting new customers.
6. The hotel managers in question are interested in selecting workers with special characteristics (kindness, courteousness and good dealing) to strengthen the relationship with the customer, as well as working to preserve efficient human resources with accumulated experience and creative ideas

7.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Working on providing methods and processes for collecting data and information about customers and giving them great importance because they have a major role in strengthening relationships with customers.
2. Urging customers to disclose their data accurately and clearly by explaining the importance of this data and its role in providing services appropriate to their needs.
3. Emphasis on protecting the privacy of customers' data.
4. To direct all strategies and administrative processes towards achieving customer satisfaction. The results showed that the hotel's organizational culture is still oriented towards relationships, not services.
5. It is necessary to establish long-term relationships with customers and maintain them and earn their loyalty in order to achieve profits.
6. Working to permanently improve the quality of services provided to customers, as studies have proven that the quality of services directly affects the degree of loyalty of customers.
7. Working on promotional campaigns based on (establishing a long relationship with customers), which is mentally associated with the hotel, which constitutes an obstacle to its transformation into competitors, regardless of the type of campaigns offered in the market.

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