

**The Role of Quality Management Practices on Organizational
Performance: A study of selected SMEs in Nigeria's Hospitality and
Tourism industry.**



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Abstract

The increasing number of small and medium-sized enterprises in the hospitality and tourism industries of Nigeria reiterates the pivotal role they play in the growth of the nation's economy. While these businesses show a lot of potential, many of them are often plagued by issues related to poor quality management practices (if present at all). Hence, this study investigated the association between the identified quality management practices (training, customer centric focus, knowledge and process management) and organizational performance among SMEs, while considering the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the hospitality and tourism industry. This study used a cross sectional descriptive survey and a sample size of 205. Quantitative analysis were performed and the findings revealed that the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria is positively and negatively associated with quality management practices such as training, knowledge and process management, and customer centric focus. Particularly, training showed a significant positive correlation, customer centric focus showed a positive correlation, while knowledge and process management had variables that showed both positive and negative correlation with organisational performance. With these findings, it could be asserted that with the appropriate implementation of these quality management practices, SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry can improve their overall performance and further make positive contributions to Nigeria's economy.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study area is of interest to the researcher based on previous experience with small and medium sized enterprises while working in the banking sector of Nigeria as a product manager. During this time, the researcher noticed that some of the major problems faced by small and medium sized businesses who are often seeking funds for expansion or growth are lack of proper organizational structure, poor service delivery, low patronage, and inexperienced labour.

In Nigeria, small and medium-sized businesses employ more than 80 % of the total of the country's workforce. Moreso, 70% of manufacturing industry labor and 60% of the overall agricultural labor is provided by small and medium-sized enterprises (Agbeyi *et al.*, 2020). Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Nigeria generated 48 percent of the country's GDP during the previous years (National Bureau Of Statistics and SMEDAN, 2017). Additionally, Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring team discovered that 82 percent of Nigerians believe that entrepreneurship is a suitable option for a profession, with 72 percent rating it as having a high level of positive outcome (Elam *et al.*, 2021).

Hence, the expansion and survival of these small and medium sized business is important. For instance, the hospitality and tourism service industry is a budding space for many small and medium sized business in Nigeria. Furthermore, the quality of service delivered to customers depends on the proper management of vacation destinations, activities, transportation, and tourist facilitators and security networks. According to research conducted by Barišiü and Mariü, (2012), efficient tourism management is related to the performance of the hospitality sector and contributes to the expansion and advancement of tourism. While there are other managerial issues plaguing the performance of small and medium size business in Nigeria, the focus of this study is on quality management practices. The role of quality management practices in the improving processes and service quality cannot be overemphasised.

1.2 Research Purpose

The emergence of the COVID-19 virus presented the hotel and tourist sector with a problem that had never been seen before. Efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus such as temporary lockdowns, social distancing, compulsory quarantine, travel

and mobility limitations led to the closure of numerous hospitality and tourist enterprises and considerably diminished demand for those that were permitted to continue operating (Bartik *et al.*, 2020). The government requested all restaurant establishments to restrict their operations to takeout only. The stay-at-home orders given by the government and the travel bans placed on public gatherings created a steep fall in hotel revenues and rental rates. This was because fewer people were able to travel and move freely.

With less stringent social distancing requirements and limited capacity, eat-in restaurants could resume operations, while travel restrictions within Nigeria and abroad were eased. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant influence on how firms function and the goods or services they supply, even if the sector is still recuperating. Hence, it is worth noting that scholars in the area of quality management system are intrigued by the influence of its practices on organisational performance (Asenge *et al.*, 2019; Abdul *et al.*, 2019). There are a number of empirical studies that have sought to study the links between quality management practice and organisational performance in diverse settings.

However, some researchers (Patyal and Maddulety, 2015; Kumar *et al.*, 2018)) claimed that it is extremely challenging to establish links between various aspects of quality management and the success of most businesses. Studies like (Bashan and Armon, 2019) paint an extremely pessimistic view of the advantages of integrating quality management practices. However, other researchers (Kumar, Maiti, and Gunasekaran, 2018) and (Panuwatwanich and Nguyen Thanh, 2017) contend that quality management practices have favourable influence on the performance of organisations.

The current body of research on quality management methods and organisational performance demonstrates a variety of conflicting findings as to the nature of the link that exists between the two variables. Therefore, having a more concrete perspective on how quality management practices influence the performance of the Nigerian hospitality and tourist business is central to this research. A combination of customer centric focus, knowledge and process management has yet to be researched in the hospitality and tourism sector of Nigeria. There is a scarcity of empirical evidence to

back up the relationship between quality management and SMEs performance in Nigeria's hotel and tourism industry. This is particularly problematic since a positive link could mean a positive implication for the success of these businesses. Quality management studies have grown significantly over the last decade, resulting in the establishment of a unique subfield of research centred on the strategies and commitments of businesses to quality management practices. As such this study set out to investigate this subject area in line with the following objectives:

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

This study aims to investigate the link between quality management practices and organization performance among SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria, while considering the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the various quality management practices and the challenges faced by SMEs when implementing them in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.
2. To examine the relationship between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.
3. To examine the relationship between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria
4. To examine the relationship between knowledge and process management on SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.
5. To introduce a new conceptual framework that depicts the relationship between quality management practices and organization performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the various quality management practices and the challenges faced by SMEs when implementing them in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria?

3. What is the relationship between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism industry?
4. What is the relationship between knowledge and process management and SMEs performance in hospitality and tourism industry?
5. What are the conceptual gaps of quality management practices in the hospitality and tourism sector? And what practices can be included in a new conceptual framework to show and robustly explain the relationship between quality management and organizational performance among SMEs in Nigeria's hospitality and tourism sector?

1.5 Significance of Research

The concept of quality management practices is relevant for corporate leaders in the management discipline. Particularly, the internal and external processes are highly relevant in quality management, but the emphasis on internal processes distinguishes it from other approaches (Bergman and Klefsjö, 2010). Additionally, there seem to be a conflicting interest on the subject of quality management practices among SMEs because it is required to maintain a balance between firmness and flexibility (enhancing products, services and quality of processes).

Both scholars and industry experts rely on quality management practices as a tool to explain and comprehend the essentials for organisational effectiveness. This study is especially crucial for workers at all levels, as well as those in people management that are involved in the recruitment, training, and coordinating management activities.

1.6 Research Outline

This dissertation is segmented into five major sections. The subject concepts, research rationale, objectives and significance of the study are discussed in the first section. The following section involves a critical review of relevant literature on the subject matter such as books, peer reviewed papers, and official publication of professional organisations. A theoretical foundation for quality management practices is provided through the examination of relevant published literature. The section three covers a great detail on the research methodology, including the study design, strategy, research approach, sample procedure, data collecting device, and analytic method, as well as ethical issues and reasoning behind the choice of methodology.

Furthermore, the fourth section discusses the data gathered from primary sources and presentation of results, and the findings are reviewed with supporting or opposing viewpoints from other writers. This takes place following the discussion in the third chapter. The researcher offered some reflections on the study results contribution, as well as its limitations and suggestions for future research directions in the concluding chapter of the dissertation. Additionally, the implications of the investigation were emphasised and explored in regard to the findings of the research served as a conclusion to the study.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter provides perspectives, theories, and critical analysis on important ideas in the field of quality management, small and medium sized enterprises, hospitality and tourism industry. The concept of quality management is briefly discussed before delving into quality management practices in sub-section 2.2, followed by the importance of the roles of quality management practices to organisations 2.2.2. Likewise, sub-section 2.2.3 to 2.2.5 discussed SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry. The sub-section 2.2.6 down to 2.2.8 show the trends of quality management practices and organisations performance in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, section 2.3 reviewed theories on quality management practices, while section 2.4 looked into the impact of quality management practices from an empirical lens. A conceptual underpinning is outlined in sub-section 2.5. While the framework provides context for the study's objective, it also suggests new research pathways. Final paragraphs of sub-section 2.6 summarily examine literature leading to the next chapter.

2.2 Conceptual review:

2.2.1 What is quality management practice/system?

A company's service or product quality is described as its capacity to satisfy or, ideally, to surpass the expectation customers (Bergman and Klefsjo, 2010). A quality management system (QMS) refers to the processes and procedures put in place to ensure business operations are carried out seamlessly to achieve set objectives and goals. A company's internal control system could be effectively managed by using a quality management system. The goal of a robust quality management system is to improve the practices and operations in a business, so that there is more uniformity in the quality of its products and services (Martin *et al.*, 2020). To ensure that specific quality requirements are attained, quality management principles and practices must be adhered to. For any company to implement an effective quality management system, certain practices must be considered. These practices include but not limited to training, knowledge and process management, and customer focus (Martins, 2020).

2.2.2 What are the roles of quality management practices in business or companies in general?

The tasks and responsibilities of a quality management professional are regarded as both restricted (Burcher *et al.*, 2008) and diversified (Elg *et al.*, 2011). These two descriptions are accurate based on validation from existing literature. According to Sorqvist, (2014), the role of a quality management professional or expert is often one that is both vague and lacking in clarity. This complexity underscores the necessity to address the subject matter at the practice level to have a clearer understanding and appreciation of the role it plays in an organisation. This approach to critically analyse the subject matter is further driven by the rapid evolving pattern of quality management, which has historically progressed from holding a largely internal, specialised, and operational emphasis to include a more outward, changing, and strategic perspective (Antony, 2013). This approach is a departure from a broader coverage of quality management to a more specific and direct pathway. When it comes to the topic of quality management, the incremental quality of a service is one of the most important roles of quality management demonstrated by process improvement and training programs.

The growing focus on service quality has resulted in a significant influence on quality management activities. Previous research service and quality (e.g Psomas and Jaca, 2016) especially as regards to practice requirements and the must have skillsets or ability to execute the tasks. The growing focus on service quality has resulted in a significant influence on quality management activities (Grönroos, 2015). The idea of service logic refers to the establishment of value for consumers by means of the offering of services as an ongoing, relational activity that takes place between a company (service provider) and its client (Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber, 2011).

Martin, (2020) carried out a comprehensive assessment of the relevant literature, classifying a number of different quality management approaches (**see figure 2.1**). Several papers have used a role perspective to assess quality management approaches (such as Elg *et al.*, 2011; Evans and Board, 2013). Also, the Swedish Association for Quality, the European Organization for Quality, and the American Society for Quality are only a few examples of professional organisations that adopt the role views (Martin, 2020). It is asserted that the broad definition for the role of quality management is the integrated sets of particular practices required in specified settings to carry out process improvement activities effectively.

Consequently, a quality management function requires a specialised ability to carry out techniques that represent unique quality management activity.

Figure 2.1 Quality Management Practices

Quality management practice (Zu, 2009)	An understanding of the practice (Zu, 2009)	Normative presumptions expressed as the main related quality management principles (Dean & Bowen, 1994)
Top management support	The responsibility, performance evaluation, active involvement and formulation of quality strategies and goals	Teamwork, customer focus
Customer relationship	Learning customer needs and performing expectation measurements, involving customers and an understanding of customer satisfaction	Customer focus
Supplier relationship	Involving suppliers, quality evaluation, training and technical assistance	Customer focus, teamwork, continuous improvement
Workforce management	Recognising employee performance, teamwork, training and empowerment in quality issues	Teamwork, continuous improvement
Quality information	Collecting and making data available throughout the organisation, using data for quality improvement	Customer focus, continuous improvement
Product/service design	Employing thorough review processes, involving multiple departments, simplifying design for manufacturability	Customer focus
Process management	Using statistical process control [SPC], optimising processes and planning.	Continuous improvement

Source: Martin, (2020)

Quality management practices are placing emphasis on long-term sustainability as one of their primary parameters for success. (Choo *et al.*, 2004) explains how an increasing attention to corporate responsibility contributes to the effective adoption of quality management systems. The authors Siva *et al.*, (2016) contend that adopting quality management techniques need to be established to comply with regulatory principles. This progression is mirrored in the papers that have been written by professional associations. According to Martin (2020), quality management techniques play a variety of functions in business and organisations. Three of these practices are mentioned below:

- **Training/employee involvement:**

Small and medium-sized firms are searching for extra strategies to produce and maintain organisational knowledge as a result of limited finances and the growing worldwide competition (Bourletidis and Triantafyllopoulos, 2014). Regular training in relation to the focus of quality management is essential since this sector is susceptible to a number of transitions and initiatives linked to constitutional provisions, legal and economic changes. This circumstance is of particular concern to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), due to the frequency with which they are handled by individuals who have little expertise in the relevant subject areas (Gherghina *et al.*, 2020). Incredibly, some owners of SMEs fail to see the significance of a quality management system in their day-to-day operations. Indeed, it is often seen as a burdensome set of restrictions that will only serve to stiffen existing company's operations further (Jabeen *et al.*, 2015). Hence, it is crucial to provide training program, and also tools for continual training, in order to ensure that the capabilities of personnel can be effectively managed throughout time, in the hospitality and tourism industry (Martin, 2020). Particularly, since SMEs sometimes stay without partners or employees, it is important that these individuals are engaged with proper training programmes irrespective of their geographical locations. Additionally, online trainings can be utilised with the help of smart gadgets or personal computers to acquire internationally recognised certificates on quality management and understand the most important quality standards (Abdul *et al.*, 2019). One of the most thorough and effective method to improve employee performance is quality training, which also helps to ensure high levels of employee participation in the business performance. It is noted that when clients' expectations are surpassed by an organization's products and services, the goal of training has been met. Encouraging employees to be involved and actively participate in implementing change, solidifies the quality management system that is tightly integrated in the company's overall performance strategy and will make an effort to shift the focus of the whole organisation toward quality and process enhancement (Donald *et al.*, 2015). Engagement and participation of workers at all levels is necessary to enhance the quality of both existing products and future services.

The Quality management system ensures that all workers get the required training to develop their abilities to do their jobs more effectively. Ensuring that workers are engaged and doing their duties to the needed levels is a key part of any successful

business strategy. Goetsch and Davis, (2010) recommended that there should be a training needs assessment to determine whether staff require more training. In any case, employees could be more knowledgeable about the sector as well as the organisational structure of the business if they get enough training. Furthermore, capacity building helps boost employees' dedication to the organisation, enthusiasm, and productivity levels. Maintaining positive interactions with employees is vital for fostering a culture of collaboration and improving workflow.

According to the findings of previous research, the level of organisational performance, staff performance, innovativeness, customer outcomes, growth projections, and financial success are all positively linked to training of employees (Mackelprang *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, Rungtusanatham *et al.*, (1998) in their study found a negative link between organisational performance and training which is negligible. One of the possible reasons for this negative link is that some personnel who were not fully committed to the quality management system. Some employees may claim that quality management methods are an extra obligation, time wasting and costly process, and a tough one to adopt in some circumstances.

Employee engagement in the service creation and delivery process might be more productive if they are adequately trained on how to produce trustworthy and high-quality goods and/or services in the hospitality and tourism sector. Consequently, service quality will rise and complaints from customers will decrease.

- **Knowledge and process management:**

A company's ability to function successfully and efficiently is directly correlated to its ability to provide its workers with relevant, reliable, credible, and timely data and information. Monitoring the quality of data or information is an essential component of efficient process improvement, which can be accomplished with the use of knowledge and process management strategies (Abdul *et al.*, 2019). Regular process management places an emphasis on current audit systems, management assessments of company performance, and process improvement that are based on specific outcomes. The continuous management of both knowledge and processes is an essential component of service delivery, which entails a continual pursuit for rapid progress in addition to value creation (Sadikoglu and Zehir, 2010). Knowledge

transferred or acquired is necessary for workers to achieve certain desired levels of productivity.

The process of obtaining an International Standard Organisations (ISO) certification demonstrates that a global agreement on excellent management practices has been reached with the intention of guaranteeing that customers get high-quality services (Andiva and Simatwa, 2018). As a result of an increase in the number of businesses that are working to adhere to international standards, acquiring certification as a means to upskill and advance knowledge of practice has evolved into a common practice.

An organisation that has been awarded the ISO 9001 certification maybe perceived as a more credible and better performing employer by its workers in comparison to organisations that do not have this certification (Muindi *et al.*, 2014). This is the perception that the employees have about the performance of the company. This suggests that the perception towards any two ISO certified firms are not generally the same in terms of the determinants of customer-oriented performance. According to Kimani *et al.*, (2011), there is a correlation between high quality service and higher profitability for firms. Additionally, high service quality is considered because it offers a competitive edge by producing repeat purchases, referral, positive feedback, customer retention, and the competitive differentiation of product and service.

Workers in a company are often impacted by the dissemination of information in a variety of unique ways (Martin, 2020). Firstly, shared information helps workers better and makes better use of what they have learned. Learning on this scale enables the organisation to mature and become more adaptable to new circumstances. Secondly, the act of exchanging information in the workplace by providing workers with more flexibility in their job and by ensuring that they are satisfied with their employment. This is accomplished by assisting workers in developing their capacity for learning in order to confront and resolve the myriad of challenges that are presented by the operations of the company (Abdul *et al.*, 2019). Employees in an organisation may be active in recognising and analysing their own limits, as well as the firm's performance to improve their competency and share valuable experiences and knowledge. Workers who are involved in the decision-making process are more likely to share their expertise and make significant contributions to the business in terms of innovation, initiative, and team work (Martin, 2020). According to Al-Hanawi *et al.*, (2020), sharing knowledge among employees in a company is essential for promoting the growth of

novel business strategies. The goal of enterprises to attain high level of quality in their processes and deliverables is an important driver behind the necessity of sharing information.

- **Customer centric focus:**

Quality management inclined companies often place a strong emphasis on providing high value service to their external clients. They acknowledge that meeting the needs of consumers by providing goods and services that meet their needs and expectations (Bashan and Armon, 2019). When good customer focus initiatives are used, operations may be set up to address the wants, needs, and complaints of consumers. This enables businesses to provide high-quality goods and services that can be relied upon, on time, while also increasing their levels of efficiency and production (Olowokudejo and Adeleke, 2011). As a result of exceeding client expectations, a company's profits and market position could rise, as well. Customer centric focus can be defined as the extent to which a company consistently meets or exceeds consumer expectations (Karani *et al.*, 2012). Okwiri, (2013) noted that customer centric focus could be assessed by the availability of the predicted implications that are associated with organizations that place a strong emphasis on customer value. When a company prioritize the presence of quality systems to assess the need of customers, the demands of the customers who have been recognised, and the operations which are used to produce value could be improved with accurate data. Increasing client happiness will lead to a gain in sales revenue, and hence an increase in profits (Phan *et al.*, 2011). Customer-focus is a major principle of value creation; it helps to consider the customer's needs and wants without neglecting the business primary objective of making profit and other stakeholders' interests to achieve long-term viability.

2.2.3 How important is quality management practices to hospitality and tourism businesses?

The rapid escalation of the COVID-19 issue threw the international hospitality and tourist business into complete disarray and caused huge consequences. For instance, this sector in the United States suffered a loss of almost \$30 billion from March 2020 to May of that year (Ozdemir *et al.*, 2021). Many British hotels were severely affected by the crisis, with decreased rental rates and profit declines occurring within a matter of days, and 75 million employments were at risk due to a 30% decrease in foreign

tourist visits (Spanaki *et al.*, 2021). With so many reservations being cancelled at the height of the epidemic, 75% of Chinese hotels had to shut their doors as a direct result of the crisis (Abubakar and Rosbi, 2020).

Contextually, Nigeria saw a number of tourist sites temporarily shut down, while restaurants and hotels adopted a strict social distancing measure or risk shut down for good (Sharma and Nicolau, 2020). Due to government-imposed health measures, such as curfews, social distance, compulsory stay-at-home directives and travel/mobility limitations put on companies and individuals to alleviate the ravages of this outbreak, the market for hospitality and tourism business services decreased significantly (Bartik *et al.*, 2020).

Gössling *et al.*, (2020), noted that the events in the global business environment requires hospitality and tourism - related enterprises to make considerable adjustments to protect their workers' health and safety and increase customer satisfaction. Small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourist and hospitality sectors are particularly important at the moment since they are seen as an important source of GDP contribution for Nigeria. As Burhan Ismael *et al.*, (2021) note, employees are critical to the success of businesses in this sector since they provide service customers. For instance, if hotel workers do not provide high-quality services to visitors, it could lead to negative review and feedback, and decline in patronage. Similarly, when employees provide the high-quality service to customers with a pleasant experience, and they may choose to return (Abdul *et al.*, 2019). As a result, putting into practice quality management procedures is an absolute must if one want to enhance the performance of a firm (Abdullah and Othman, 2019).

Hence, the highlighted quality management principles are very essential to companies of all sizes, but particularly to SMEs. As an example, training is a way for workers to learn new skills, acquire new information, and change their attitude and behaviour to performance at work. Training has become an increasingly important investment for businesses as a means of bolstering the capabilities of their human resources. Training has the potential to be used as a strategy for the creation of a competitive edge for a business (Martin, 2020). Also, knowledge and process management is a key quality management practice that is required for employees and managers to function effectively (Wanza *et al.*, 2017). Yet, a focus on the needs of the client is

another essential quality management technique needed by small and large businesses alike. The belief that consumers are always right is one of the reasons strategic firms try to guarantee that customers are at the forefront of each and every product or service they offer.

2.2.4 What is an SMEs and how important are they in Nigeria's Economy?

When it comes to employment, small and medium-sized businesses (also known as SMEs) often outnumber major corporations in terms of the number of people they employ. However, smaller businesses, on the other hand, frequently lack the ability to implement a structured approach to improving processes and operations. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Agency of Nigeria defined SMEs based on several factors including revenue and the number of workers and total assets they possess (National Bureau Of Statistics and SMEDAN, 2017). A small enterprise has about 10 – 49 employees with a total asset base of N5m to less than N50m while a medium-sized enterprise has 50 to less than 200 employees with a total asset base of less than N500m (Agbeyi *et al.*, 2020).

More than eighty percent of Nigeria's workforce are engaged by small and medium-sized business industry. Also, over seventy percent of industrial sector jobs and sixty percent of agriculture sector jobs are provided by small and medium-sized enterprises. Small and medium-sized businesses (also known as SMEs) in Nigeria are responsible for around forty eight percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) over the previous years (Agbeyi *et al.*, 2020). They make up almost half of all manufacturing output, with a total workforce of roughly 17.4 million people, and they make up over ninety percent of all businesses in the manufacturing industry (Agbeyi *et al.*, 2020).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring report revealed that 82% of Nigerians consider Entrepreneurship as a good career choice with 72% high status of success rate (Elam *et al.*, 2021).

Research by Egbetokun *et al.*, (2009) have shown that SMEs in Nigeria focus more on incremental product and process innovations based on customer expectations. Such innovations are targeted at providing quality products to the market. However, despite their attempts at imbibing a culture of innovativeness, the quality of products or services they offer in the market is generally regarded as low-quality, which ultimately has an impact on their level of performance (Etale and Light, 2021). The

low-quality of products offered by SMEs and indirectly their poor state of performance has been a cause of concern to both the government and the academic researchers. It is on this note that this research investigated quality management training and performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (Bourletidis and Triantafyllopoulos, 2014; Bashan and Armon, 2019).

2.2.5 Improvements (if any) of QMP in the SME performance

Quality management practices including training and customer focus have been shown to have a good impact on operational performance (Martin, 2020), inventory management (Wanza et al., 2017), staff performance (Sadikoglu and Olcay, 2014), innovation performance (Abdul *et al.*, 2019), customer outcomes (Manishimwe et al., 2022), market and financial performance (Alomari et al., 2017).

Furthermore, studies revealed that knowledge and process management have a statistical positive link with control/feedback and the effectiveness of inventory management, the outcomes for customers, the advantages over the competition, and the overall success of the company (Abdul *et al.*, 2019).

Further research suggests that a company's ability to increase sales by focusing on its customers is directly related as seen in the Nigerian food and beverage industry (Nwokah and Maclayton, 2006). Also, research has shown that a favourable correlation exists between customer centric services and client satisfaction in the insurance industry of Nigeria (Olowokudejo and Adeleke, 2011).

2.2.6 Organizational Performance

There are empirical literature on the conceptualization organisational performance. The term "organisational performance" relates to how well an organisation meets its goals and achieves its objectives in comparison to the outputs, aims, and expectations (Jon and Randy, 2009). There are different types of organisational outcomes such as employee's performance, customer satisfaction, and service quality. Furthermore, financial outcomes like returns on equity and assets are also used as a measure of organisational performance (Waddell and Pio, 2014).

To enhance the quality of both products and services, a firm might need to turn to quality management (Moore, 2012). Throughout the years, quality management has been marketed as a product and a potential solution to address a variety of organisational issues such as poor performance. Furthermore, the contingency theory

states that excellent performance results from the harmonization of organisational structures and procedures with relevant context elements (Martin, 2020). The vast majority of research point to a positive correlation between quality management and performance, although a few studies point to a negative correlation. To put it another way, a firm's performance may be described as the result that shows or represents the efficiency or inefficiency of a business (Khandekar and Sharma, 2006). Employee performance on the job is measured by how successfully they carry out their responsibilities (Rowold, 2011).

According to Rowold (2011), in order to realise business goals and improve the efficiency of an organisation, it is necessary to have work practices and systems that are capable of producing high levels of performance. When workers' attitudes and actions align with the organization's strategic objectives, it results in increased employee engagement and, as a consequence, organisational performance.

Wang *et al.*, (2010) asserts that work performance involves not just the ability to do the job but also situational factors like interpersonal relationships and commitment, all of which combine to provide a two-dimensional view of what it means to do well at work. Hence, a business's performance must be compared to a specific aim to establish whether it has indeed been fulfilled.

2.3 Empirical review:

A number of studies have looked at the relationship between quality management systems and the performance of organisations. As an example, Zehir, Ertosun, Zehir and Muceldilli (2012) investigated the influence of quality management training on the outcomes of enterprises in Marmara region of Turkey. Continuous improvement proved to have no significant impact on business performance. According to Sadikoglu and Olcay, (2014), process management, leadership, and customer centric approach have an influence on the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The researchers conducted a cross-sectional study on a sample size of 242 based in the Kocaeli-Gebze Organizing Industrial Zone. Customers' centric focus and process management were judged to be crucial, notwithstanding leadership's lack of significance to both the financial performance and market success of the firms.

Jabeen *et al.*, (2015), also conducted cross-sectional research to investigate the impact that quality management training on the company performance of its

respondents on continuous process improvement, managerial leadership, and customer focus. A sample size of 367 small businesses in Punjab, Pakistan was used. The results showed that managerial leadership was a significant predictor of company success, although the other two variables were not. Mahmood *et al.*, (2014) further examined the effects of customer centric approach, senior level management support, as well as continuous improvement on the productivity of textile manufacturing enterprises in Punjab, Pakistan. In the research, there were a total of 90 participants, and multiple regression statistical test was used. Results indicated that continuous process improvement had a substantial impact on organisational success, but senior level management support and customer focus did not show any positive links as predictors.

Additionally, Bayo and Horsfall, (2020) conducted research to explore the influence of continuous process improvement on the performance of commercial banks that were functioning in the city of Port Harcourt in Nigeria. For the purpose of validating the hypothesis, the research utilised a representative sample of 260 participants using the Spearman correlation technique. The authors observed that commercial banks in Nigeria function better when they are constantly improving. A study by Asenge *et al.*, (2019) examined the impact of senior level management support, customer centric approach, and continuous process improvement on the performance of commercial banks Benue state, Nigeria employing 32 managerial staff of chosen banks from Makurdi metropolitan. The authors used a regression test to determine if senior management support, customer centric approach, and continuous process management with each having a substantial positive influence on the performance of commercial banks.

Nwokah and Maclayton (2006) used a representative sample of 72 people in their investigation of the influence that a company's focus on its customers' needs has on the company's overall success. According to the findings of the authors, there is a clear correlation between an organization's attention to the needs of its customers and rise in the sale of its food and drinks products. There was no obvious impact on revenue, profits, or proportion of market. Related research conducted by Olowokudejo and Adeleke (2011) investigated the question of whether or not there is a correlation between providing customer centric services and the satisfaction of clients in the insurance market of Nigeria. Based on responses from 149 participants in the study,

the research found a link between customer centric services and the satisfaction of clients in the insurance industry of Nigeria.

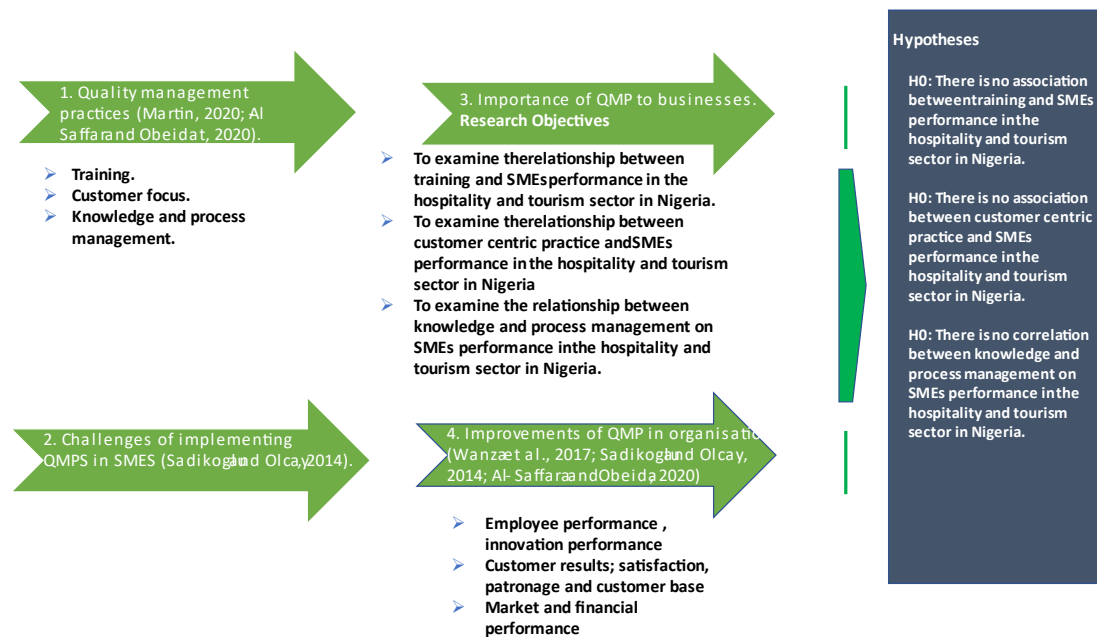
Ibidunni *et al.*, (2017) conducted an investigation on the influence of ongoing process improvement and senior management support on the performance among telecommunications firms in Nigeria. This investigation was part of a linked research. MTN and Globacom were both included in the sample, which included a total of 122 participants. According to the findings of Ibidunni *et al.* (2017), ongoing process improvement showed a significantly positive influence on performance, however the association between senior management support and performance did not show any significance. There is also evidence that managerial leadership had an impact on company success, although customer centric and ongoing process improvement did not have any statistically significance on small businesses.

Despite a plethora of empirical evidences on the subject of quality management practices, there exist a gap in literature as regards methods adopted and the industries considered (the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria has not been explored).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The framework below illustrates the relationship between the study's dependent and independent variables, as well as the ideas that were investigated, the goals of the research, and the hypotheses that will be tested. This conceptual framework is used to underpin the research process. That is, moving from concepts and theoretical reviews to empirical evidence and field study to test the identified hypothesis and answer the research question.

Figure 2.2: Schematic of Conceptual Framework



Source: Author (2022)

2.5 Summary of chapter

This critical review of literature detailed various relevant concepts related to quality management system, practices, and organizational performance of SMEs in Nigeria's hospitality and tourism industry. The scope covered comprised definition of quality management practice, roles of QMP, the importance of QMP to businesses, contributions to businesses in general. After determining the missing links of existing literature, a fresh conceptual framework was developed that included the study's goals and hypotheses. Furthermore, the study focuses on the roles of quality management practices such as training, customer focus, knowledge and process management on organizational performance, considering the employees performance, operational outcomes, customer satisfaction outcomes. This chapter of the thesis establishes the research's main aim and the theoretical foundation upon which the assessment of quality management practices' impact on organisational performance was established.

Hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- *H0: There is no association between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*
- *H0: There is no association between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

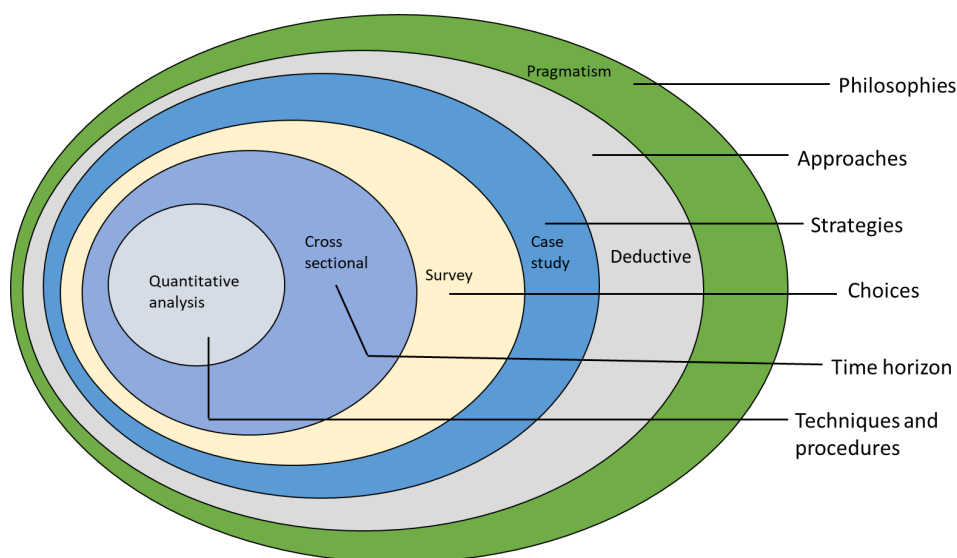
- *H0: There is no correlation between knowledge and process management on SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research technique that was used in this study. It discusses the steps that go into conducting the study, including the sample size, the sampling, the research instrument for gathering data, and the ethical considerations involved in doing research. Saunders et al. (2009) The proposed "Research Onion" framework serves as the foundation for this chapter (see figure 3.1), which is made up of the research philosophy, design, approach, strategy, and methods. This framework was chosen to serve as a directional compass for this study. The primary goal of this research is to examine the role of quality management practices on organizations performance, specifically in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

Figure 3.1: Study's Research Onion



Source: (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

3.2 Research Philosophy

The phrase "research philosophy" refers to a body of concepts and principles about the process by which new knowledge is acquired (Saunders, Lewis and Thronhill 2009).

The Pragmatist school of thought holds that ideas are only valuable if they lead to workable plans (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). Positivity and objectivity should coexist

in harmony, as should a wide range of experiences and perspectives, all of which should be taken into account in order to get to an informed and well-reasoned insight. This philosophy encompasses ideas, conceptions, hypotheses, and factual studies (Saunders, Lewis, and Thronhill, 2009). To pragmatists, resolving the research problem is of utmost significance. According to Kelemen and Rumens (2008), pragmatic researchers may resort to utilising a method or a variety of approaches in order to guarantee a reliable data gathering procedure and analysis in their study.

This implies that the researcher's intent is focused on addressing the research issues that were discussed earlier. Thus, this research adheres to a pragmatic approach.

3.3 Research Design

In this study, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted. This design makes use of both descriptive and inferential statistics drawn insights from the data collected and to make conclusions (Saunders, Lewis, and Thronhill, 2009).

3.4 Research Approach

The authors (Saunders et al., 2009) argues that there are three types of research approach a researcher can adopt, namely, inductive, deductive, and abductive, which each have their own advantages and disadvantages. Nonetheless, this study employs a deductive research strategy. A deductive research approach, often dubbed a "top-down" process, reviews ideas and theories, makes assumptions or formulates hypothesis that are tested via statistically (Burney and Saleem, 2008). As a consequence of this, the outcomes of the investigation, as well as its interpretation, debate, and conclusions, would be founded on known empirical studies. Deductive research is commonly employed in quantitative investigations (Blaikie, 2010). Since this research made use of the practice theory, the hypotheses that were found will be statistically tested using the data that was collected from the field. Using established criteria, these theories will be approved or discarded. In addition, previous empirical data will be compared to the results of this study to help resolve the research issues.

3.5 Population of Study

The entire population of this study are small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria, comprising of 25 firms from Hospitality and 25 from Tourism with an average of 10 – 49 employees (SMEDAN, 2017). The estimated population will be 2,450 (i.e 50X49) employees cut across various job roles in the industries.

3.6 Sampling Technique and Sample Size Calculation

For this study, a simple random sampling method of selection was used to pick the sample for the investigation. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2008) argue that researchers could make that all respondents (staff) have equal probability of being picked when using this sampling technique. The appropriate number of participants for this research was determined with the use of a trustworthy statistical tool available online (www.calculator.net). “To ensure a 95% confidence level that the margin of error is within 5% of the measured/surveyed value, a total of 333 workers must be included in the sample.” (See figure 3.2 below).

Figure 3.2: Calculation of Sample size

Find Out The Sample Size

This calculator computes the minimum number of necessary samples to meet the desired statistical constraints.

Result

Sample size: **333**

This means 333 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within $\pm 5\%$ of the measured/surveyed value.

The image shows a web-based calculator interface for determining sample size. It features four input fields with dropdown menus and text boxes, each with a help icon (question mark in a circle) to its left. The fields are: Confidence Level (set to 95%), Margin of Error (set to 5%), Population Proportion (set to 50% with the text 'Use 50% if not sure' to its right), and Population Size (set to 2450 with the text 'Leave blank if unlimited population size.' to its right). Below the input fields are two buttons: a green 'Calculate' button with a right-pointing arrow, and a grey 'Clear' button.

3.7 Research Strategy

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) posit that a strategy is the actual plan or blue print used to solve the research questions. To achieve the goals of this research, a method consisting of a survey questionnaire and case study were implemented. A case study is employed to critically investigate real-world problems and events. As a result of this, it aims to answers the research questions that have been posed.

3.8 Research Methods

In this study, the research design is a descriptive survey based on a quantitative research technique. This approach was selected because large sample of the

population is required for a more reliable reflection of the characteristics of the whole population. It is also more straightforward and affordable to carry out when compared to an interview (this entails a lower sample size and is sometimes beset by ethical obstacles and access issues). Moreover, this study involves less logistical and access problems.

3.8.1 Data collection Instrument

In order to gather data from participants, this research employed survey questionnaire, distributed via online platforms (Telegram, Whatsapp, Email, and LinkedIn). The researcher designed the survey questionnaire using constructs/questions from existing literature as their basis. The study had 24 constructs that were derived from or patterned after the papers of (Wanza et al., 2017; Al- Saffara and Obeidat, 2020; Sadikoglu and Olcay, 2014; Al- Saffara and Obeidat, 2020; Manishimwe et al., 2022; Martin, 2020).

Few of the questions (14-24) were constructed based on a scale that ranged from 1 to 5. The first segment of the questionnaire consisted of nine different questions centered on the respondents' demographic information. The remaining chapters were split up and given to each of the three primary dependent variables. During a pilot testing, the survey received feedback from participants and clarification of any misinterpreted items was corrected.

3.8.2 Validity and Reliability

Prior to launching the pilot testing, a document containing all questionnaire items were forwarded to the research adviser, who provided feedback (face validity) of the questions and also suggestions for correction. Additionally, in order to determine the dependability of the survey instrument, the pilot study consisting of fifty-six participants from a variety of organisations was performed. The Cronbach's Alpha test yielded a result of .829, which is regarded satisfactory since it is more than 0.7. (see table 3.1 below for breakdown of acceptance criteria).

Table 3.1 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test criteria

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

Source: (Taber, 2018).

3.9 Data Analysis Approach

A quantitative methodology was used to analyse the data. As such, computer supported application known as SPSS version 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was utilised to conduct all analysis based on dataset obtained from the survey participants. Excel was used for data cleaning, organisation, and visualisation (Tableau was also used). Both descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation) were conducted and the results are presented in the fourth chapter. The categorical and scale data were coded into continuous data (e.g Male =1 and Female =2) on Excel for easy analysis on SPSS. These statistical tests were of assistance in discovering which independent factors have an impact on the variable that is being tested.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

When doing research, moral standards are of the utmost importance. Because the actions of the researcher must be checked in relation to the rights of the participants and the GDPR (General Data Protection Rights) guideline and the ethical committee position on data collection. Thus, the primary ethical considerations are as described in the following:

Respondents' data privacy/Anonymity: Survey takers' personal information was safeguarded by using an anonymous survey questionnaire distribution setting on SurveyMonkey web platform (see www.surveymonkey.com). As a result, the semi-structured questions did not inquire about the participant's personal information, the IP address or names of those who took part in the study were not collected..

Volunteer involvement: The participants of this study were informed that they are free to stop participating if they choose not to be part of the data collection process.

3.11 Limitations of the study

This research has its share of flaw in management discipline despite the discoveries and policy implications discussed above.

First, the study was conducted in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria, making the scope limited to only these two interrelated industries. Although the response rate was above average (62%), it could be higher (85-100%) in order to strengthen the predictive ability of the sample sizes. Also, when it comes to parametric tests such as Pearson correlation, sample size plays an important role. In order to meet the submission requirements for the thesis, the surveymonkey form was not left open for a longer time to allow the conduct of analysis. This is considered as a major constraint to the data gathering process. Additionally, surveymonkey cost a subscription fee of 40 euro per month which also posed a constraint to the extension of the service beyond a month for the data collection process. Key features on surveymonkey were limited after expiration.

This research data collected from 205 managers and some executives who work hotels, restaurants, resorts, lounges in Nigeria. Clearly, the opinions of 205 business owners and senior managers are informative, modest, and intelligent, yet they may be insufficient and unrepresentative.

The aforementioned constraints, if pursued, might greatly improve the generalisation and prediction of subsequent study findings.

3.12 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, an in-depth discussion of the research technique that was used in the study. Due to the quantitative structure and the researcher's involvement, this study was based on pragmatic principles. This research takes a deductive approach to its data collection. Regardless of the slightest form of bias or limitations of the research approach, reasonable steps have been taken to counteract any negative effects that may arise throughout the course of the research. Every precaution that were taken to conduct this ethically inclined research. The next chapter provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the findings with discussions based on existing body of research.

4. Presentation of Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This section covers the data analysis results and discussion based on relevant existing body of research. This section is broken up into two parts. Firstly, descriptive statistics in tables and charts (frequencies and percentages) are used to show the demographics, perspectives, and knowledge of the topic held by the respondents. Next, inferential statistics concerning the research variables are detailed, followed by a concluding discussion and summary of the findings with reference to previously published research.

4.2 Descriptive results

A total of 24 constructs/items were used in the survey to collect data on the respondent's demography and other variables such as training, customer focus, knowledge and process management, and organizational performance.

Table 4.1 show the responses received by the researcher from the survey form distributed to participants. A total of 333 (100%) responses were expected, although only 205 (62%) were received. This means more than half of the expected participants responded to the questionnaire which indicates a strong predictive ability of results.

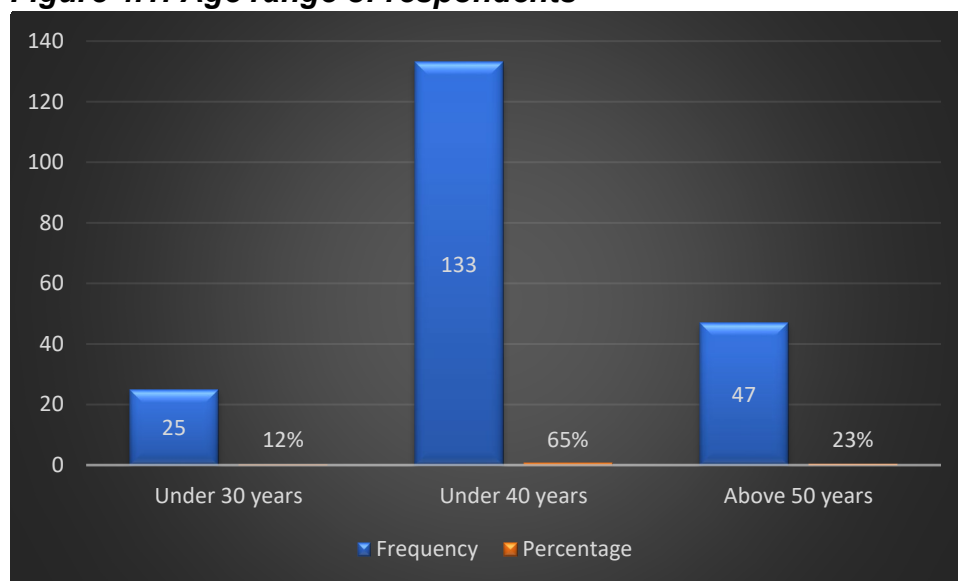
Table 4.0 Response rate of respondents to survey questionnaire

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Returned responses	205	62%
No response	128	38%
Total response expected from respondents	333	100%

1. Which age range do you belong to?

The visualised data in figure 4.1 and table 4.1 (see appendix A) represent the age range of respondents with 25 (12%) under 30 years, 133 (65%) are under 40 years, 47 (23%) are above 50 years. This shows that majority of the household members who participated in this study are between the age of 18-40 years. Consequently, the results revealed that majority of the respondents fall under 40 years of age (matured adults).

Figure 4.1: Age range of respondents

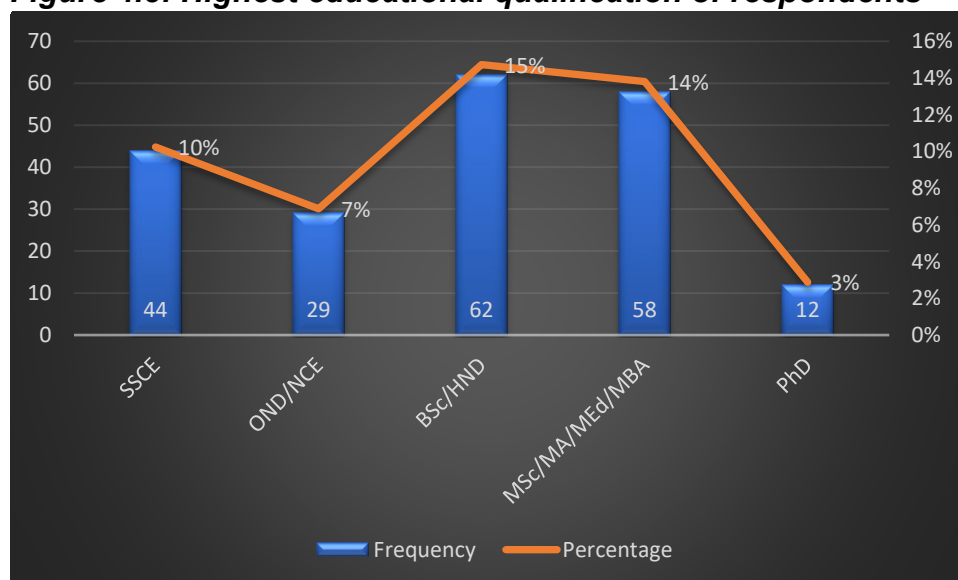


Source: (Field study, 2022)

2. What is your highest level of qualification?

The visualised data in figure 4.3 and table 4.3 (see appendix A) represent the highest qualification level of respondents with 44 (10%) who possess SSCE, 29 (7%) OND/NCE, 62 (15%) have B.SC./HND, 58 (14%) MSc/MA/MBA and 12 (3%) PhD. The revealed that the participants have a minimum of Senior Secondary School Leaving Certificate, while majority hold a bachelor degree.

Figure 4.3: Highest educational qualification of respondents



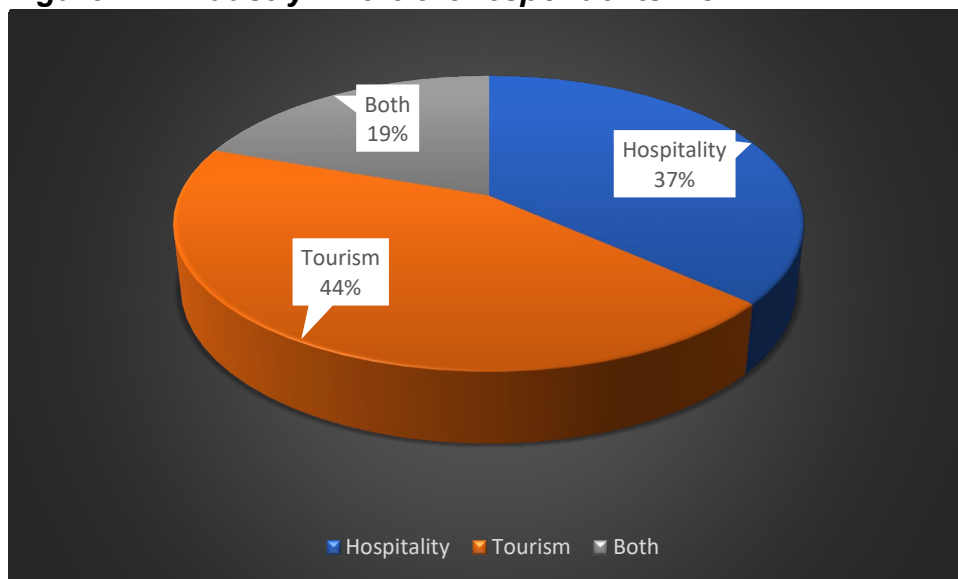
Source: (Field study, 2022)

3. Which of the following industry do you work in?

The visualised data in figure 4.4 and table 4.4 (see appendix A) represent the industry each respondent works with 35 (37%) from hospitality, 90 (44%) from tourism, and 40

(19%) from both. The results revealed that the respondents were split between the hospitality and tourism industry with more of them from the tourism industry.

Figure 4.4: Industry where the respondents work

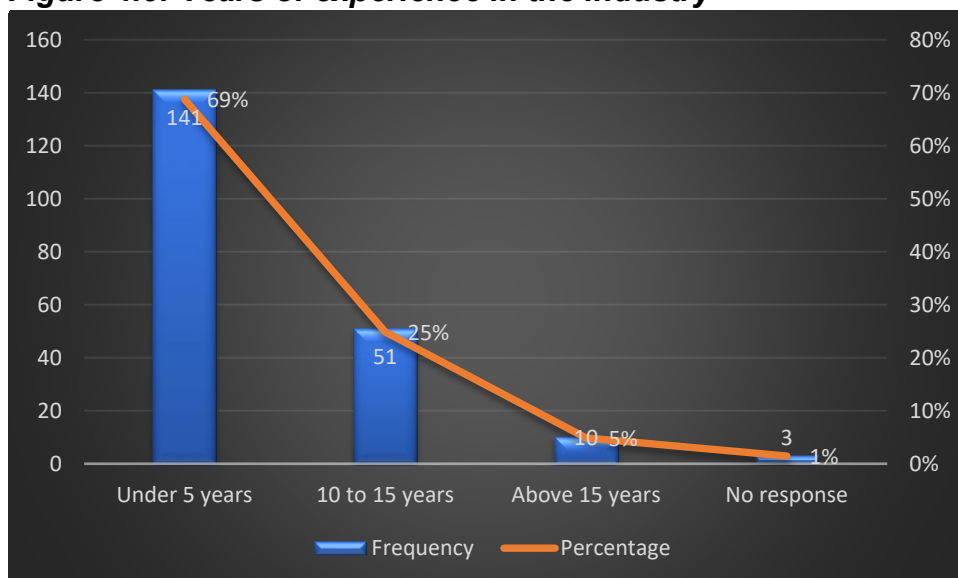


Source: (Field study, 2022)

4. How long have you worked in this industry?

The visualised data in figure 4.5 and table 4.5 (see appendix A) represent the number of years participants have worked in the industry with 141 (69%) under 5 years, 51 (25%) between 10 to 15 years, 10 (5%) above 15 years, while 3 (1%) did not respond to the question. The results revealed that most of the respondents had less than 5 years of industry experience, with 25% having between 10-15 years of work experience in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria.

Figure 4.5: Years of experience in the industry

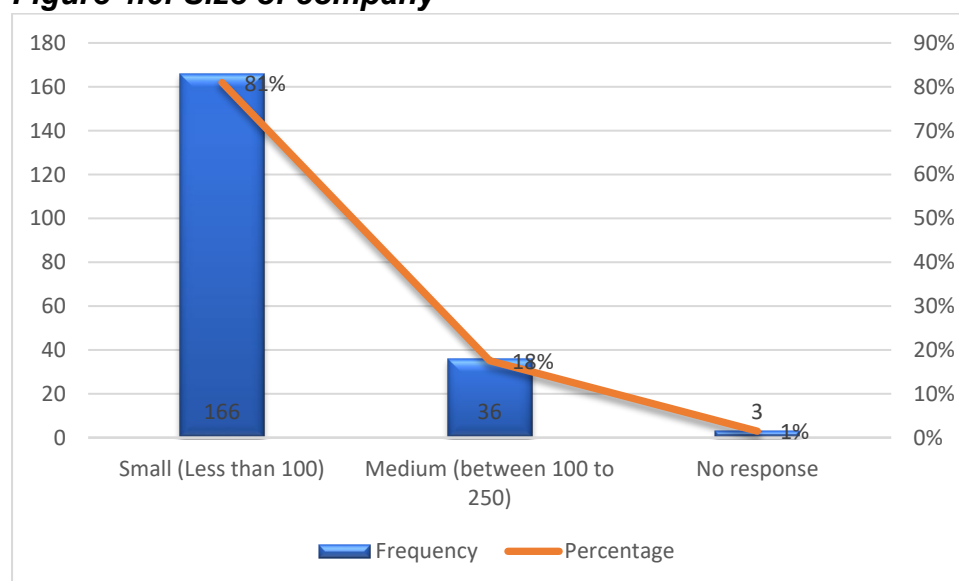


Source: (Field study, 2022)

5. How many employees are in your company?

The visualised data in figure 4.6 and table 4.6 (see appendix A) represent the number of employees in the respondents' company with 166 (81%) less than 100, 36 (18%) between 100 to 250, while 3 (1%) did not respond to the question. The results revealed that most of the respondents work in a company having less than 100 employees, which suggest by description that the company is operating at a small scale in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria.

Figure 4.6: Size of company

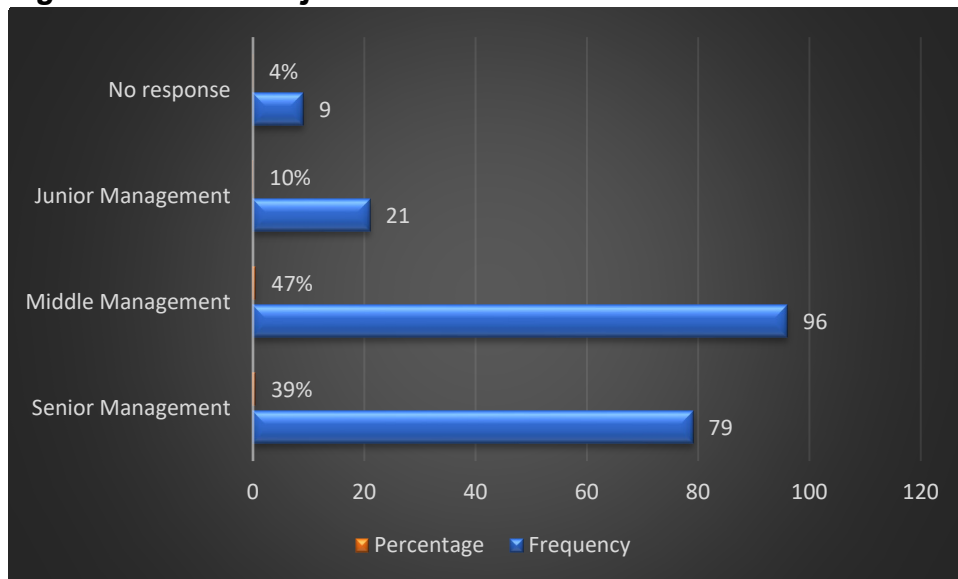


Source: (Field study, 2022)

6. What is your current job level?

The visualised data in figure 4.7 and table 4.7 (see appendix A) represents the current job level of the respondents with 79 (39%) as senior management staff, 96 (47%) middle management staff, and 21 (10%) junior management staff, while 9 (4%) did not respond to the question. This shows that majority of the participants in this study are currently at the middle level of management in their respective organisations.

Figure 4.7: Current job level

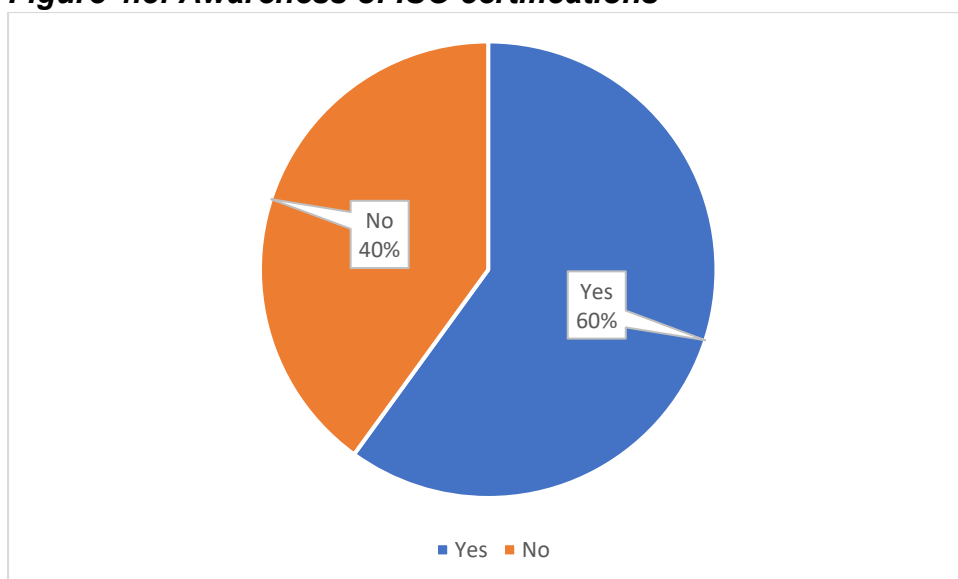


Source: (Field study, 2022)

7. Do you know about the International Standard Organisation (ISO) certification on Quality Management Practices (e.g. training, customer focus, knowledge and process management)?

The visualised data in figure 4.8 and table 4.8 (see appendix A) represent whether respondents know about the international standard organisation certification on quality management practices. 123 (60%) of the respondents noted that they know about ISO certifications on QMP, while 82 (40%) noted that they are not aware. This result suggests that although majority are aware of ISO certifications on QMP, a significant percentage of them are not aware of these certifications.

Figure 4.8: Awareness of ISO certifications

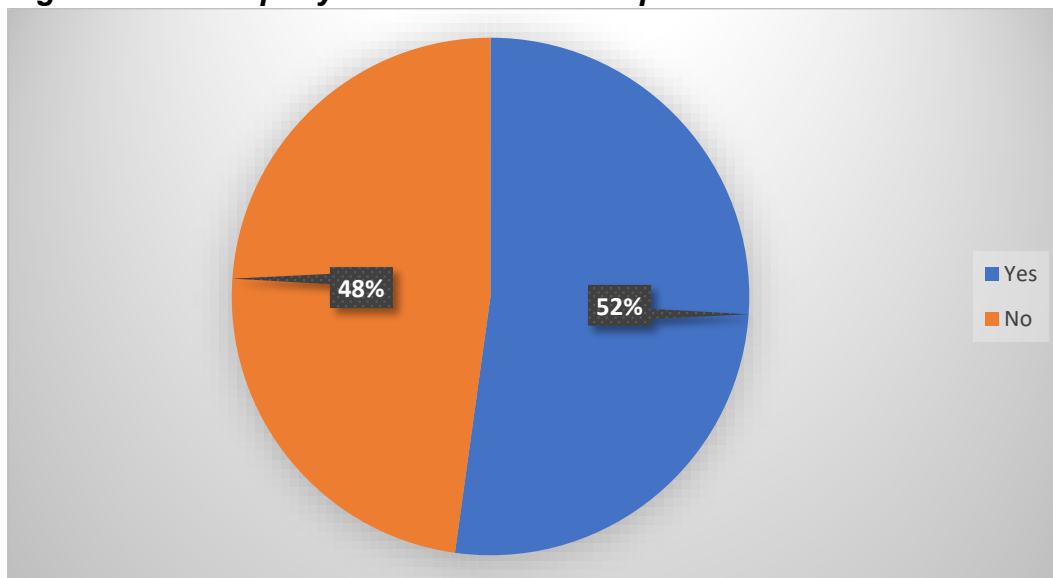


Source: (Field study, 2022)

8. Does your company require you to have an International Standard Organisation certification on Quality Management practices?

The visualised data in figure 4.9 and table 4.9 (see appendix A) represent whether respondents are required by their companies to have an international standard organisation certification on quality management practices. 107 (52%) of the respondents noted that they are required to have an ISO certification on QMP, while 98 (48%) noted that they are not required to have any before working. This result suggests that more than half of the staff are required by their company to hold an ISO certification on QMP, while a considerable number of the companies in the hospitality and tourism industry do not mandate their staff to possess any certification to work.

Figure: 4.9: Company ISO certification requirement



Source: (Field study, 2022)

9. Reasons why some companies do not ask employees for ISO certification.

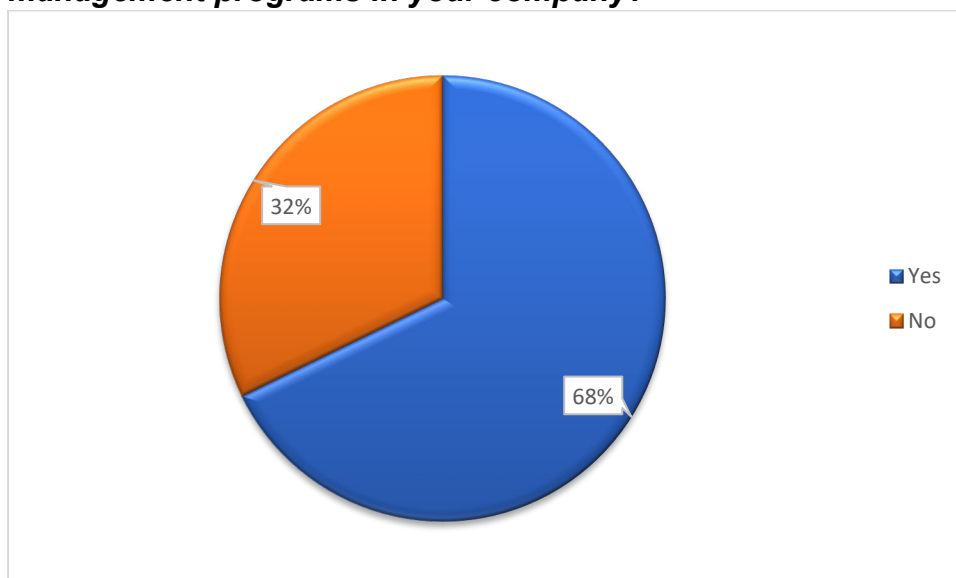
The visualised data in figure 4.10 and table 4.10 (see appendix A) represent some of the reasons why respondents (staff) are not required by their companies to have an international standard organisation certification on quality management practices to work. 25 (12%) of the respondents noted that the companies they work with are still building structure, 27 (13%) have not reached that stage yet, 29 (14%) had no specific reason, 124 (61%) did not respond to the question. This result suggests that the major reason some companies in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria do not

require their staff to hold an ISO certification on QMP is because they are still at their early development stage as SMEs.

10. Employee involvement in quality management programs.

The visualised data in figure 4.11 and table 4.11 (see appendix A) represent whether it is compulsory for respondents (staff) to be involved in quality management programs in the company. 139 (68%) noted that it is compulsory, while 66 (32%) noted that it is not compulsory. This result suggests that majority of the companies require employees to be involved in quality management practices programs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria.

Figure 4.11: Is it compulsory for all employees to be involved in quality management programs in your company?



Source: (Field study, 2022)

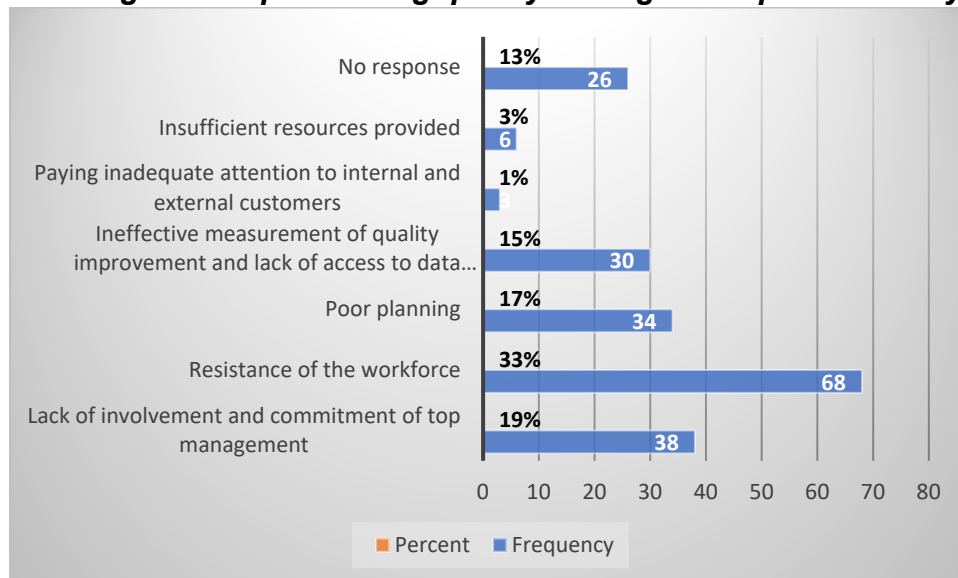
11. Reasons why it is not compulsory for all employees to be involved in quality management programs.

The visualised data in table 4.12 (see appendix A) represent some of the reasons why it is not compulsory for staff to be involved in quality management programs at work. 5 (2.44%) of the respondents had no comment, 3 (1.46%) noted that it is not compulsory because staff are required to participate in the programs based on their individual business units or levels, 197 (96.10%) did not respond to the question. This result suggests that the reason some companies in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria do make it compulsory for all staff to participate in quality management programs is because the programs are organised based on units and levels.

12. Challenges of implementing quality management practices.

The visualised data in figure 4.13 and table 4.13 (see appendix A) represent the challenges faced by SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry when implementing quality management practices. 38 (19%) of the respondents indicated lack of involvement and commitment of top management, 68 (33%) resistance of the workforce, 34 (17%) poor planning, 30 (15%) ineffective measurement of quality improvement and lack of access to data and results, 3 (1%) paying inadequate attention to internal and external customers, and 6 (3%) insufficient resources provided by the company. Meanwhile 26 (13%) did not respond to the question. This result suggests that the core challenge of implementing quality management practices for SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria is resistance from employees, lack of involvement and commitment of top management, and poor planning.

Figure 4.13: Based on the following, what do you think are the major challenges to implementing quality management practices in your company?



Source: (Field study, 2022)

13. Departments' participation in training workshops.

The visualised data in table 4.14 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents to all department' participation in training workshops. The result indicate that majority (78%) of the respondents agree that all departments in their organisation participate in training workshops.

14. Employees' commitment and involvement in quality management process.

The visualised data in table 4.15 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on employees' commitment and involvement in quality management process. The result indicate that majority (56%) of the respondents agree that employees are commitment and involvement in quality management process of their company.

15. Employees seek to enhance competence, knowledge and experience.

The visualised data in figure 4.16 and table 4.16 (see appendix A and B) represent the opinion of respondents on employees' desire to enhance competence, knowledge, and experience. The result indicate that majority (70%) of the respondents agree that employees are commitment and involvement in quality management process of their company.

16. Understanding of knowledge and process improvement among employees.

The visualised data in table 4.17 (see appendix A and B) represent the opinion of respondents on their understanding of knowledge and process improvement among employees. The result indicate that the respondents (53%) are neutral or unsure about the level of employees understanding of knowledge and process improvement in the company.

17. Business learning structure and resources (talent and capital) required to manage process improvement.

The visualised data in table 4.18 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on whether there is an adequate learning structure and resources to manage process improvement. The result indicate that most (57%) of the respondents are in agreement that the company they work with does not have adequate learning structure and lacks the resources to manage process improvement.

18. Customer complaint handling

The visualised data in table 4.19 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on whether customers' complaints are effectively handled. The result indicate that most (74%) of the respondents are in agreement that customer complaints are effectively handled in the company.

19. Employees awareness of their organisations' customer centric focus.

The visualised data in table 4.20 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on whether all employees are made aware to focus on customer needs in order to improve quality of services provided. The result indicate that most (51%) of the respondents' opinion is largely split between those who are in agreement and those who are not sure about their company's customer centric focus. And a few who disagree that their company's effort towards creating awareness among all employees on customer centric focus.

20. Effective communication with customers.

The visualised data in table 4.21 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on whether there are effective ways of communicating with customers being practiced in the company. The result indicate that the opinion of respondents show that there is no general consensus on whether there is an established and effective means of communicating with customers in their company, although the opinion of those who agree (45%) is the highest.

21. Implementing quality knowledge and process management helps improve operational outcomes.

The visualised data in table 4.22 9 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on the implementation of quality knowledge and process management to improve operational outcomes. The result indicate that the opinion of most respondents (69%) are in agreement that implementing quality knowledge and process management helps improve operational in their company.

22. Implementing customer centric approach helps to increase customer patronage.

The visualised data in figure 4.23 and table 4.23 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on the implementation of customer centric approach to help increase customer patronage. The result indicate that the opinion of most respondents (86%) are in agreement that customer centric approach helps to increase customer patronage in their company.

23. Implementation of QMP based on ISO standard increases the market and financial performance of organisations.

The visualised data in table 4.24 (see appendix A) represent the opinion of respondents on the implementation of quality management practices based on ISO standard increases the market and financial performance of organisations. The result indicate that the opinion of most respondents (70%) are in agreement that quality management practices based on ISO standard increases the market and financial performance of organisations.

4.3 Inferential Result

Here, the results of the items consistency (reliability) and statistics test of correlation was performed to establish a link between quality management techniques and business outcomes.

4.3.1 Test for reliability of dataset

Cronbach's alpha test report shows that $\alpha = .829$. (for more details on reliability test, see table 4.25). The survey contained of 24 constructs, but only 11 scale items were used to test for reliability (the questionnaire is based on a semi-structure with both open ended, perceptions, and attitude scale measurement questions). The findings confirmed that the consistency of the survey instrument is reliable following the described criteria in Chapter 3 (see the tables 3.1, 4.25, and 4.26 for more details).

Table 4.25: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.828	.829	11

Source: (Field study, 2022)

4.3.2 Parametric test (Pearson correlation)

The Pearson's correlation test was used to ascertain how the variables on quality management practices (training, customer centric focus, knowledge and process management) and organisational performance among SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria.

Therefore, the null hypotheses (H_0) below were tested:

- *H0: There is no association between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

The findings revealed a significantly positive association between training and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria (**see appendix C**).

- *H0: There is no association between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

The findings revealed a significantly positive association between customer centric focus and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria (**see appendix C**).

- *H0: There is no correlation between knowledge and process management on SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

The findings revealed a significantly positive association between knowledge and process management and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria (**see appendix C**).

4.4 Discussion of Findings

An in-depth and extensive discussion of the findings discovered from the field research (see chapter 3) is presented here. Existing literature are used to support the discussions. The research questions for this study are basis for the discussion that follow in the next sub-sections.

1) What are the various quality management practices and the challenges faced by SMEs when implementing them in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria?

This study discovered certain quality management practices from existing literature such as commitment and support of top management, customer relationship, workforce management (training), knowledge and process management, among others (Martins, 2020). The goal of a robust quality management system is to improve the practices and operations in a business, so that there is more uniformity in the quality of its products and services. To ensure that specific quality requirements are attained, quality management principles and practices must be adhered to. For any

company to implement an effective quality management system, certain practices must be considered.

However, quality management practices are not without challenges. This discovered several challenges faced by SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry when implementing quality management practices. One of the major challenges identified is the resistance of the workforce (33%), followed by lack of support and commitment of top management (19%), poor planning (17%), and ineffective measurement of quality improvement and lack of access to data and results (15%). This result suggests that the core challenge of implementing quality management practices for SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria are resistance from employees, lack of involvement and commitment of top management, and poor planning.

The aforementioned findings are further corroborated by the findings of Asenge et al. (2019) who examined the impact of senior level management support, customer centric approach, and continuous process improvement on the performance of commercial banks Benue state, Nigeria. The authors used a regression test to determine if senior management support, customer centric approach, and continuous process management with each having a substantial positive influence on the performance of commercial banks. Singling out the support and commitment of top management as a fundamental factor to ensuring the smooth implementation of quality management practices demonstrates the reason why most SMEs are facing challenges in this regard. This study discovered that the reasons respondents (staff) are not required by their companies to have an international standard organisation certification on quality management practices to work is because these SMEs are still building structure or are yet to consider ISO certifications on quality management. This result suggests that the major reason some companies in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria do not require their staff to hold an ISO certification on QMP is because they are still at their early development stage as SMEs. Perhaps it is the same reason why some of them do make it compulsory for all staff to participate in quality management programs.

2) What is the relationship between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria?

One of the most thorough and effective method to improve employee performance is quality training, which also helps to ensure high levels of employee participation in the

business performance (Al- Saffara and Obeidat, 2020). It is noted that when clients' expectations are surpassed by an organization's products and services, the goal of training has been met. Encouraging employees to be involved and actively participate in implementing change, solidifies the quality management system that is tightly integrated in the company's overall performance strategy and will make an effort to shift the focus of the whole organisation toward quality and process enhancement (Gulali et al., 2015).

This study discovered a significantly positive association between training and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria

According to Talib, Rahman and Qureshi, (2010), engagement and participation of workers at all levels is necessary to enhance the quality of both existing products and future services.

This study further discovered a positive correlation between the number of years of employee experience and their desire to actively seek opportunities to enhance competence, knowledge, and experience. The negative correlation coefficient implies that an increase or decrease in the number of years of employee experience also means a change in the desire of employees to actively seek personal development opportunities to improve on their competence, knowledge, and experience. Thus, it can be asserted that quality management system ensures that all workers get the required training to develop their abilities to do their jobs more effectively.

From the descriptive results of this study, it was discovered that majority (56%) of the respondents agree that employees are commitment and involvement in quality management process of their company. However, this study also discovered the respondents are mostly (53%) neutral or unsure about the level of employees understanding of knowledge and process improvement in the company.

As such, ensuring that workers are engaged and doing their duties to the needed levels is a key part of any successful business strategy. Goetsch and Davis, (2010) recommended that there should be a training needs assessment to determine whether staff require more training. In any case, employees could be more knowledgeable about the sector as well as the organisational structure of the business if they get enough training. Additionally, workers' commitment to the company, their level of motivation, and their overall productivity at work will all increase as a result of good training (Phan et al., 2011; MacKelprang, Jayaram and Xu, 2012).

3) What is the relationship between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism industry?

Quality management inclined companies put a strong emphasis on providing high value service to their external clients. They acknowledge that meeting the needs of consumers by providing goods and services that meet their needs and expectations (Karani and Bichanga, 2012).

The findings of this study revealed that customers' complaints are effectively handled as indicated by 74% of the respondents in agreement with the question. Furthermore, the findings revealed that not all employees are made aware to focus on customer needs in order to improve quality of services provided as indicated by a split agreement between those who agree and those who are not sure about their company's customer centric focus.

Okwiri (2013) noted that customer centric focus could be assessed by the availability of the predicted implications that are associated with organizations that place a strong emphasis on customer value. When a company prioritize the presence of quality systems to assess the need of customers, the demands of the customers who have been recognised, and the operations which are used to produce value could be improved with accurate data (Phan et al., 2011). Customer-focus is a major principle of value creation; it helps to consider the customer's needs and wants without neglecting the business primary objective of making profit and other stakeholders' interests to achieve long-term viability (Nwokah and Maclayton, 2006).

The findings also indicate that the opinion of respondents show that there is no general consensus on whether there is an established and effective means of communicating with customers in their company, although the opinion of those who agree (45%) is the highest.

Additionally, the findings show that there is a significantly positive association between customer centric focus and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. This implies that when good customer centric initiatives are used, operations may be set up to address the wants, needs, and complaints of consumers. This enables businesses to provide high-quality goods and services that can be relied upon, on time, while also increasing their levels of efficiency and production. As a result of exceeding client expectations, a company's profits and market position could rise, as well.

4) What is the relationship between knowledge and process management and SMEs performance in hospitality and tourism industry?

A company's ability to function successfully and efficiently is directly correlated to its ability to provide its workers with relevant, reliable, credible, and timely data and information (Al- Saffara and Obeidat, 2020). Monitoring the quality of data or information is an essential component of efficient process improvement, which can be accomplished with the use of knowledge and process management strategies (Al-Saffara and Obeidat, 2020).

The findings of this study revealed that respondents (53%) are mostly neutral or unsure about the level of employees understanding of knowledge and process improvement in the company. Additionally, the findings revealed a significantly positive association between knowledge and process management and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria.

The continuous management of both knowledge and processes is an essential component of service delivery, which entails a continual pursuit for rapid progress in addition to value creation (Sadikoglu and Zehir, 2010). Knowledge transferred or acquired is very necessary for workers to achieve certain desired levels of productivity.

Also, this study discovered that there is no adequate learning structure and resources to manage process improvement as indicated by 57% of the respondents that are in agree with the question.

Obtaining an International Standard Organisations (ISO) certification demonstrates that a global agreement on excellent management practices has been reached with the intention of guaranteeing that customers get high-quality services (Muindi, 2014). This study discovered that more than half (52%) of the staff are required by their company to hold an ISO certification on QMP, while a considerable number (48%) of the companies in the hospitality and tourism industry do not mandate their staff to possess any certification to work.

Muindi (2014) provides confirmation that excellent service has become more widespread and is now even being welcomed by most organisations. An organisation that has been awarded the ISO 9001 certification maybe perceived as a more credible and better performing employer by its workers in comparison to organisations that do not have this certification (Muindi, 2014). This suggests that the perception towards

any two ISO certified firms are not generally the same in terms of the determinants of customer-oriented performance. According to Kimani, Kagira, and Kendi (2011), there is a correlation between high quality service and higher profitability for firms. Additionally, high service quality is considered because it offers a competitive edge by producing repeat purchases, referral, positive feedback, customer retention, and the competitive differentiation of product and service.

5 Conclusion, Implication of findings and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The global COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the operations and process of businesses of all kinds and sizes, especially SMEs in diverse ways. In Nigeria, the hospitality and tourism industry is still recovering from the shocks of the global pandemic. As the competition for market share is getting stiffer, businesses are constantly looking for ways to survive or risk facing liquidation. One of the ways to survive and thrive is to embrace new strategies such as quality management practices which if implemented appropriately, can increase the chances of survival and growth. This study examined the role of quality management practices on SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector of Nigeria. Among the many ground breaking discoveries of this study, it was revealed that the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria is associated with quality management practices such as training, knowledge and process management, and customer centric focus.

The core objectives of this study were accomplished and the hypotheses were tested in line with best statistical practices. The first objective sought to identify the various quality management practices and the challenges faced by SMEs when implementing them. The discovery of this study showed that there are several quality managements practices (training, knowledge and process management, and customer centric focus) and major challenges faced by SMEs in the hospitality sector when attempting to implement them include but not limited to lack of support and commitment from top management and employee resistance. This finding was corroborated by previous research in other sectors such as banking and insurance (see Asenge et al. 2019; Nwokah and Maclayton, 2006).

For example, it was noted by respondents that it is not compulsory for all employees to be involved in quality management programs because staff are required to participate in the programs based on their individual business units or levels. The result also show that although majority (60%) of the respondents are aware of ISO certifications on QMP, a significant percentage (40%) of them are not aware of these certifications. This could be a possible reason why a considerable number of the SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria are still struggling to implement quality management practices despite its high probability of positively influencing organisational performance.

The second objective sought to determine the association between training and SMEs performance. The study discovered a significantly positive association between training and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. Additionally, the study discovered a positive correlation between the number of years of employee experience and their desire to actively seek opportunities to enhance competence, knowledge, and experience. And a negative coefficient which implies that an increase or decrease in the number of years of employee experience also means a change in the desire of employees to actively seek personal development opportunities to improve on their competence, knowledge, and experience. Hence, it can be asserted that quality management system ensures that all workers get the required training to develop their abilities to do their jobs more effectively.

The third and fourth objectives also showed a positive correlation. Thus, suggesting that customer centric focus, knowledge and process management are positively associated with SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector.

The fifth and also last objective was addressed in the second chapter of this study. The gaps in literature were identified and a robust schematic depicting the conceptual framework (drawn from the critical review of literature and findings of this study) is presented in figure 2.2.

The discoveries of this study forms the basis of the assertion that quality management practices are fundamentally relevant to SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector of Nigeria and it plays a significant role in their organisational performance. Moreover, international standard organisation certified SMEs on quality management practices stand a greater chance of increasing their business value through quality product and services delivered on the basis of improved processes and operations.

5.2 Implication of findings

In theory, the findings of this study implies that quality management practices can serve as a post COVID-19 pandemic recovery strategy for SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry of Nigeria. Specifically, quality management practices could serve as a valuable tool in filling existing gaps in previous literature, as this study provides significant insight. As a second finding, this research confirms the relevance of quality management practices in making predictions about the performance of SMEs would be of great relevance to this academic field of research.

For the academic community, using the correlation statistical test, scholars can confirm that quality management practices are associated with the performance of small and medium-sized companies.

Furthermore, this research shows that training and customer centric focus aspects of quality management system are very effective in predicting firm performance. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, entrepreneurs or managers with transformational orientation need to push quality management practices that have an influence on organisational performance.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are formed:

- As a starting step, owners, managers and senior executives of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry should consider the use of quality management practices to improve their business performance metrics. Particularly, training is proven to be a catalyst for employee performance while knowledge and process management remain useful in maintaining the quality standard of products and services.
- Additionally, customer centric focus should be at the forefront of every SMEs process management and service or product delivery in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.
- When planning and implementing quality management practices the hospitality and tourism industry, managers should keep in mind that cost, calculated risk, and firm capacity are factors to be considered but not used as a yardstick to avoid customer centric focus.
- SMEs owners should endeavour to get ISO certification on quality management practices and also implement policies to encourage employee participation in building quality throughout the entire organisation.
- Regular workshops, training sessions, and customer centric awareness campaigns should be used to sensitize and create a workplace that encourages quality standard adherence among SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector.
- Future research should replicate this study in other industries of Nigeria to validate and expand the study's conclusions. In addition, future studies should explore the use of qualitative approach as an alternative to quantitative method

to gain deeper insights. Researchers could also make use of a mixed-methods approach to compare and enhance their results.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: List of Tables

Table 4.1: Age

	Frequency	Percentage
Under 30 years	25	12.2
Under 40 years	133	64.9
Above 50 years	47	22.9
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.3: HQL of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	44	21.5
OND/NCE	29	14.1
BSc/HND	62	30.2
MSc/MA/MEd /MBA	58	28.3
PhD	12	5.9
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.4 Industry

	Frequency	Percentage
Hospitality	75	36.6
Tourism	90	43.9
Both	40	19.5
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.5 How long have you worked in this industry?

	Frequency	Percentage
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Under 5 years	141	68.8
10 to 15 years	51	24.9
Above 15 years	10	4.9
No response	3	1.5
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.6: How many employees are in your company?

	Frequency	Percentage
Small (Less than 100)	166	81.0
Medium (between 10 to 250)	36	17.6
No response	3	1.5
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.7: What is your current job level?

	Frequency	Percentage
Senior Management	79	38.5
Middle Management	96	46.8
Junior Management	21	10.2
No response	9	4.4
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.8: Do you know about the International Standard Organisation (ISO) certification on Quality Management Practices (e.g training, customer focus, knowledge and process management)?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	123	60.0
No	82	40.0
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.9: Does your company require you to have an International Standard Organisation certification on Quality Management practices?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	107	52%
No	98	48%
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.10: If No, could you please state your reasons.

	Frequency	Percentage
Just building the structure for the company	25	12.2
We have not gotten to that stage	27	13.2
No specific reason	29	14.1
No response	124	60.5
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.11: Is it compulsory for all employees to be involved in quality management programs in your company?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	139	68%
No	66	32%
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.12: If No, could you please state your reasons.

	Frequency	Percentage
No comment	5	2.4
It isn't compulsory. Staffs are required to participate in the programme based on their unit and levels.	3	1.5
No response	197	96.1
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.13: Based on the following, what do you think are the major challenges to implementing quality management practices in your company?

	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of involvement and commitment of top management	38	18.5
Resistance of the workforce	68	33.2
Poor planning	34	16.6
Ineffective measurement of quality improvement and lack of access to data and results	30	14.6
Paying inadequate attention to internal and external customers	3	1.5
Insufficient resources provided	6	2.9
No response	26	12.7
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.14: All departments are expected to participate in quality management training workshops.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	4	2.0
Disagree	10	4.9
Neutral	31	15.1
Agree	87	42.4
Strongly Agree	73	35.6
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.15: Employees in the company are committed and involved in the quality management programs.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	15	7.3
Disagree	25	12.2
Neutral	51	24.9
Agree	82	40.0
Strongly Agree	32	15.6
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.16: Employees in the company actively seek opportunities to enhance competence, knowledge, and experience.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	5	2.4
Disagree	18	8.8
Neutral	38	18.5
Agree	105	51.2

Strongly Agree	39	19.0
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.17: There is a lack of understanding on the importance of knowledge and process improvement among employees.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20	10%
Disagree	18	9%
Neutral	109	53%
Agree	37	18%
Strongly Agree	21	10%
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.18: The business does not have adequate learning structure and lacks the resources to improve process management.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	7	3.4
Disagree	26	12.7
Neutral	54	26.3
Agree	87	42.4
Strongly Agree	31	15.1
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.19: External customers' complaints are effectively resolved.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	1.0

Disagree	10	4.9
Neutral	42	20.5
Agree	112	54.6
Strongly Agree	39	19.0
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.20: All employees are made aware to focus on customer needs in order to improve quality of services provided.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	13	6.3
Disagree	24	11.7
Neutral	64	31.2
Agree	75	36.6
Strongly Agree	29	14.1
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.21: Effective ways of communicating with customers are determined and practiced in the company.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	12	5.9
Disagree	47	22.9
Neutral	54	26.3
Agree	63	30.7
Strongly Agree	29	14.1
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.22: Implementing quality knowledge and process management improve effective and efficient operational outcome.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	6	2.9
Disagree	10	4.9
Neutral	47	22.9
Agree	96	46.8
Strongly agree	46	22.4
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.23: Implementing customer centric approach increases customer patronage.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	1.0
Disagree	7	3.4
Neutral	20	9.8
Agree	95	46.3
Strongly Agree	81	39.5
Total	205	100.0

Table 4.24: Generally, implementing QMP according to ISO standard increases market and financial performance of organisations.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	3	1%
Disagree	18	9%
Neutral	40	20%
Agree	93	45%
Strongly Agree	51	25%

Total	205	100.0
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Table 4.25: Pearson Correlation

		Q1 4	Q1 5	Q1 6	Q1 7	Q1 8	Q1 9	Q2 0	Q2 1	Q2 2	Q2 3	Q2 4	INDU STRY	IS O	YEARS OFEX
Q14	Pears on Correl ation	1	.3 02 **	.3 18 **	.4 27 **	.4 03 **	.1 83 **	.2 10 **	.1 36 **	.3 17 **	.3 67 **	.3 90 **	.100	.1 1 5	.020
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 09	.0 03	.0 51	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.153	.1 1 0	.781
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 4	205	1 9 6
Q15	Pears on Correl ation	.3 02 **	1	.6 33 **	.2 87 **	.4 16 **	.3 23 **	.3 45 **	.2 59 **	.3 34 **	.3 29 **	.2 76 **	.102	- 0 8 2	-.136
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.0 00		.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.145	.2 5 2	.053
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 4	205	1 9 6
Q16	Pears on Correl ation	.3 18 **	.6 33 **	1	.2 36 **	.3 74 **	.3 89 **	.2 73 **	.1 84 **	.2 13 **	.4 78 **	.3 54 **	.069	.0 1 7	-.177*
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.0 00	.0 00		.0 01	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 08	.0 02	.0 00	.0 00	.327	.8 1 3	.012
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 4	205	1 9 6

Q17	Pears on Correl ation	.4 27 **	.2 87 **	.2 36 **	1	.4 14 **	.1 12	.0 64	.1 06	.2 56 **	.1 25	.1 57 .	.204**	.0 0 2	-.048
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.0 00	.0 00	.0 01		.0 00	.1 08	.3 61	.1 30	.0 00	.0 75	.0 25	.003	.9 8 1	.498
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 4	205	1 9 6	202
Q18	Pears on Correl ation	.4 03 **	.4 16 **	.3 74 **	.4 14 **	1	.2 18 **	.2 91 **	.2 21 **	.3 25 **	.2 31 **	.2 60 **	.068	- .1 0 1	-.145*
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00		.0 02	.0 00	.0 01	.0 00	.0 01	.0 00	.335	.1 5 7	.040
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 4	205	1 9 6	202
Q19	Pears on Correl ation	.1 83 **	.3 23 **	.3 89 **	.1 12	.2 18 **	1	.3 99 **	.2 03 **	.2 34 **	.4 52 **	.3 63 **	-.025	- .0 1 2	-.051
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.0 09	.0 00	.0 00	.1 08	.0 02		.0 00	.0 04	.0 01	.0 00	.0 00	.721	.8 6 7	.468
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 4	205	1 9 6	202
Q20	Pears on Correl ation	.2 10 **	.3 45 **	.2 73 **	.0 64	.2 91 **	.3 99 **	1	.5 82 **	.4 09 **	.2 80 **	.3 93 **	-.013	- .0 6 0	-.004
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.0 03	.0 00	.0 00	.3 61	.0 00	.0 00		.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.0 00	.857	.4 0 3	.952

	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	205	1 9 6	202
Q21	Pearson Correlation	.136 **	.259 **	.184 **	.106	.221 **	.203 **	.582 **	1	.348 **	.152 *	.268 **	.015	.083	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.000	.008	.130	.001	.004	.000		.000	.029	.000	.832	.250	.848
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	205	1 9 6	202
Q22	Pearson Correlation	.317 **	.334 **	.213 **	.256 **	.325 **	.234 **	.409 **	.348 **	1	.334 **	.360 **	.064	-.017	.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000		.000	.000	.360	.817	.926
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	205	1 9 6	202
Q23	Pearson Correlation	.367 **	.329 **	.478 **	.125	.231 **	.452 **	.280 **	.152 *	.334 **	1	.509 **	.012	.048	.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.075	.001	.000	.000	.029	.000		.000	.865	.505	.852
	N	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	20 5	205	1 9 6	202
Q24	Pearson Correlation	.390 **	.276 **	.354 **	.157 *	.260 **	.363 **	.393 **	.268 **	.360 **	.509 **	1	.010	.057	-.041

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.025	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.887	.425	.564
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	195	201
INDUS TRY	Pears on Correl ation	.100	.102	.069	.204	.068	-.025	-.013	.015	.064	.012	.010	1	-.030	-.154*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.153	.145	.327	.003	.335	.721	.857	.832	.360	.865	.887		.676	.029
	N	205	205	205	205	205	205	205	205	205	205	204	205	196	202
ISO	Pears on Correl ation	.115	-.082	.017	.002	-.001	-.012	-.060	.083	-.017	.048	.057	-.030	1	.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	.252	.813	.981	.157	.867	.403	.250	.817	.505	.425	.676		.387
	N	196	196	196	196	196	196	196	196	196	196	195	196	196	193
YEARS OFEX	Pears on Correl ation	.020	-.036	-.077	-.048	-.045	-.051	-.004	.014	.007	.013	-.041	-.154*	.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.781	.053	.012	.498	.040	.468	.952	.848	.926	.852	.564	.029	.387	
	N	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	202	201	202	193	202
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).															

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix B: Survey questionnaire

Dear respondent,

My name is Idem Solomon. As part of the requirement for the award of Masters in International Business, I am independently conducting a research project titled "**The Role of Quality Management Practices on Organizational Performance: A study of selected SMEs in Nigeria's Hospitality and Tourism industry.**"

The role of quality management in organisational performance is an important research area for industry professionals and scholars alike. Hence, I would like you to respond to the survey questions to the best of your knowledge and experience in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Note: This survey is designed to collect information on an anonymous basis. As such, information provided are solely for research purpose and will be kept confidential.

Thank you for participating.

Construct/ Themes	Research questions	Literature sources
Demography		
	<p>1.What age category do you belong to:</p> <p>Under 20 years []</p> <p>21 – 30 years []</p> <p>31 – 40 years []</p> <p>51-60 years []</p> <p>61 and above []</p> <p>2. What is your gender:</p> <p>Male: []</p> <p>Female []</p> <p>Others []</p> <p>3.How long have you worked in this industry?</p>	

	<p><1 year []</p> <p>2-4 years []</p> <p>4-6 years []</p> <p>4. Which industry do you work in Industry?</p> <p>Hospitality []</p> <p>Tourism []</p> <p>Both []</p> <p>5. How many employees are in your company?</p> <p>Small (less than 100) []</p> <p>Medium (between 100 and 250) []</p> <p>Large (more than 250) []</p> <p>6. What is your Job title?</p> <p>Junior Management []</p> <p>Middle management []</p> <p>Senior Management []</p> <p>7. Do you know about the International Standard Organisation (ISO) certification?</p> <p>Yes []</p> <p>No []</p> <p>8. Do you have an ISO certification?</p> <p>Yes []</p> <p>No []</p> <p>9. What are the challenges of implementing QMP?</p> <p>Lack of involvement and commitment of top management. []</p> <p>Resistance of the workforce; inadequate use of empowerment and teamwork; failure to develop employee participation. []</p> <p>Poor planning. []</p> <p>Ineffective measurement of quality improvement and lack of access to data and results. []</p> <p>Paying inadequate attention to internal and external customers. []</p>	
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	Insufficient resources provided [].	
All constructs are measured using Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Where SA is 5 and SD is 1.		
Training and employee involvement		
	All employees in the organisation are involved in quality management training programs.	(Sadikoglu and Olcay, 2014)
	All departments participate in quality management training workshops.	
	Employees are motivated, committed and involved in quality management programs.	(Wanza et al. 2020)
	Employees actively seek, opportunities to enhance competence, knowledge and experience.	
Knowledge and process management	There is lack of understanding on the importance knowledge and process improvement	(Martin, 2020)
	The business does not have adequate learning structure and lacks the resources to improve process management.	(Al- Saffara and Obeidat, 2020).
	There is illiteracy and unawareness among the employees	
Customer centric/focus	External customers' complaints are effectively resolved	(Al- Saffara and Obeidat, 2020).
	All employees are made aware to focus on customer needs	
	Effective ways of communicating with customers are determined and practiced	
Organisational performance	Implementing quality training increases employee's performance	(Wanza et al., 2017)
	Implementing quality knowledge and process management improve effective and efficient operational outcome	
	Implementing customer centric approach increase patronage from previous customers and customer base.	
	Generally, implementing QMP according to ISO standards increases market and financial performance of organisations.	

Appendix C: Hypothesis testing

- *H0: There is no association between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

- *H0: There is no association between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*
- *H0: There is no correlation between knowledge and process management on SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.*

Decision rule for the hypotheses testing: Reject H_0 if p-value <0.05. Accept H_1 if p-value >0.05.

1) Association between training and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism sector in Nigeria.

The findings revealed a significantly positive association between training and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. The constructs “*all departments participate in quality management training workshops*” and “*implementing quality training increases employee’s performance*” revealed that $r=.259$, $n=205$, and $p=.000$; while “*employees are motivated, committed and involved in quality management programs*” revealed $r=.184$, $n=205$, and $p=.008$. Also, there is a positive correlation between the number of years of employee experience and their desire to actively seek opportunities to enhance competence, knowledge, and experience as represented by $r=(-1.45)$, $n=202$, and $p=0.040$. The correlation coefficient (-1.45) implies that an increase or decrease in the number of years of employee experience also means a change in the desire of employees to actively seek personal development opportunities to improve on their competence, knowledge, and experience.

Following the results above, it is safe to reject H_0 because all p values are less than 0.05. Thus, the findings show that quality management training is associated with SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria.

2) Association between customer centric practice and SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The findings revealed a significantly positive association between customer centric focus and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. The constructs “*all employees are made aware to focus on customer needs*” and “*implementing customer centric approach increase patronage from previous customers and customer base*” revealed that $r=.280$, $n=205$, and $p=.000$; while “*external customers’ complaints are effectively resolved*” revealed $r=.452$, $n=205$, and $p=.000$. Following the results above, it is safe to reject H_0 because all p values are

less than 0.05. Thus, the findings show that customer centric practice is associated with SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria.

3) Correlation between knowledge and process management and SMEs performance in hospitality and tourism industry.

The findings revealed a significantly positive association between knowledge and process management and the performance of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. The constructs “the business does not have adequate learning structure and lacks the resources to improve process management” and “implementing quality knowledge and process management improve effective and efficient operational outcome” revealed that $r=.409$, $n=205$, and $p=.000$; while “there is illiteracy and unawareness among the employees” revealed $r=.348$, $n=205$, and $p=.000$.

Following the results above, it is safe to reject H_0 because all p values are less than 0.05. Thus, the findings show that knowledge and process management is positively associated with SMEs performance in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria.