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**THE ROLE OF AVIS IN THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

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<p>Avis Nigeria has been a car hire company that came into existence in 2006. The company Turtle Car Rental got the franchise from Avis international, and immediately started its operation with its main head office in Lagos, and has branches all over the country. Avis has been providing services to mainly the business customers. The aim of this thesis was to look at the role Avis has played in the tourism development in Nigeria, by looking at the level of customer satisfaction, and service quality.</p> <p>The empirical part describes the qualitative method that was applied on this, which includes the interviewed. The semi structured interview was used because the nature of the research gives rise to the type of interview that was adopted which was the semi structured interview, because of the volatility of the research which is customers satisfaction this form of research was best adopted.</p> <p>The outcome of this research has shown the role, Avis has played in the tourism development in Nigeria; the conclusion drawn from the research findings was that Avis should renew some aspects of its service delivered to its customers.</p>		

Key words

Avis Nigeria, car rental, customer satisfaction, tourism development, quality service

ABSTRACT
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1 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria located on the western part of Africa, shares border in the north with Niger republic, Cameroun to the east, to the south the Atlantic Ocean and Benin to the west. Nigeria is a nation of 150million people, making it the most populous nation in Africa with 250 ethnic groups, 36 states and a Federal capital territory (FCT) Abuja which is the seat of power of the government. Nigeria is a member of OPEC which ranks it among the developing nations with prospect of becoming one of mixed emerging economy market. There has been development in many parts of the economy among which, one is the transportation sector. The sector is going through a new phase with the help of the government re-installing the railways lines in order to promote adequate and efficient transportation for consumers (Lagos state government, 2001.)

The Nigeria tourism sector is mostly centred on the culture due to the large number of ethnic groups available, nevertheless there is also rainforest, savannah, waterfalls, attractions, national parks, meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibition, (MICE) and much more. A large part of the sector is undergoing development.

Travel and transportation cannot be discussed without taking tourism into account. Also tourism cannot flourish without travel, which brings us to the idea of transportation as an inherent part of the tourism industry, and with the improvement of transportation tourism has also been elaborated.

Avis, pioneering the wheels of transportation in Nigeria, has brought about a huge development in the transport industry to enable the tourism development to achieve its goal. Transportation links the various destinations and ferries people, goods, and services. Tourism is all about travel; and the role of transportation in its operation is vital. It is largely due to the improvement of transportation that tourism has expanded. The advent of air travel has made the world smaller, and the motor vehicle has made travel to anywhere possible. This reality coupled with changing work patterns and innovative marketing has driven international mass tourism over the years. With the inception of Avis in Nigeria in 2006 enabling the issuance of license to Turtles car rental an indigenous company which operates car rental on the shores of Nigeria, the company has been faced with the task of trying harder to make everything about car rental a possibility throughout the whole nations and

Beyond. The risk of you getting to anywhere in the world being worried of getting an efficient and friendly service does not arise with Avis, since it has international network available all around the globe.

However, in this thesis much emphasis will be placed on the impact the transportation sector has had on the development of tourism in Nigeria; there has been tremendous development in tourism with the help of transport sector. There has been motivation to write about the topic, because the future is bright in the field of transportation in Nigeria. Avis is providing a corporate car hire service to the public and the masses, and also looking for a way to improve the services rendered to the customers. The company is also looking at future plans to improve on the development of tourism.

1.1 Research problem

Customer satisfaction is an essential aspect of any service industry. This thesis will be looking at the level of customer satisfaction achieved by Avis through their provision of services to their various customers, and also to ascertain the level and impact the company has had on developing the tourism sector. In the view of how important tourism is to a nation, the problem connected to the transport sector is certainly a serious problem. Avis is a multinational company in Nigeria providing services to companies, and there was a need to look at the services provided to customers, and how satisfied the customers are, and this motivated this research.

1.2 Aim and objectives of the thesis

The main aim of writing this thesis is to look into the role Avis Transportation Company is playing in the tourism development in Nigeria, with regards to transportation services, and quality services rendered to its customers. Avis provides its services to mainly the business tourists and some other tourist at request. The aim is to determine the customer satisfaction which Avis provides to its clients at all time, a thorough study on how the customers are satisfied with the services they are paying for. The qualitative study can give useful information for developing tourism in Nigeria.

During the course of this research the business tourists that employs the services of Avis Nigeria, will be looked into in the area of Lagos, Nigeria. The main head office of the company itself is Lagos, and most of its corporate clients are also having their offices there. Lagos state is known for its competence as “the centre of excellence” which is the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria with a population of around nine million residents, and estimated to be the third largest mega city of the world by 2015, after Tokyo Japan, and Bombay India, according to united nation (Population of Lagos.) Lagos state is located in the southern part of Nigeria. It was formerly the capital of Nigeria before the capital was moved to Abuja in 1991. The federal capital territory is the military head of state. The state has both an international and a local airport, and a major sea port which links the country to other parts of the world. Lagos state has a lot of business and leisure tourists, which is why Avis is able to provide services to tourists upon request.

Looking at the presence of both leisure and business tourists in Lagos state, and Nigeria as a whole, there is a need to look at the services provided to them by some of the tourism products (Avis Nigeria), and create a developmental plan to boost the growth of the tourism industry in Nigeria. This research will also summarise opinions and views from individual respective clients and also from customer care personnel of the company. The researcher intends to carry out an interview with the clients on how satisfied they are with the services they receive from Avis Nigeria, and also with the customer care personnel on how they best intend to improve the services rendered to their clients.

The objectives of the thesis are as follows, market the services provides by Avis Nigeria, discover and reach the prospective customers, describe the desire and want of the customers, improve the quality of services offered by Avis Transportation Company.

1.3 Limitation to study

During the course of carrying out this research there can be a lot of limitations, which can also alter the main aim of the study. Some limitations expected during the research is that the interviewees are not giving their full support or cooperation to the researcher. Some of the respondents might be afraid to give in vital information to the researcher simply due to the fear that it might be used against them. Some of the respondents might decide to withhold critical information that might be crucial to the research work. Some of the other

limitations that the researcher can be posed with is the unavailability of time by the respondent, due to the nature and busy schedules among the respective respondents.

This thesis consists of three main parts: the introduction, theoretical frame work, and the empirical study. The introduction describes the aim of the study, and objective of Avis for the tourism development in Nigeria, research problems and limitations. The theoretical part discusses the tourism products, while the empirical part discusses about the research method used for the research, the interview type used and the presentation of the interview questions presented to the respondent. The empirical part describes the carrying out of the process, and also presents the analysis of the outcome of the interview, resulting in findings and research, and conclusion and recommendations for the future.

2 TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

Planning is a cardinal element of tourism development. The concern for the future management of tourism takes a vital role in any economic development. The government's wish is to help partners in the tourism industry with the tourism development by allowing tourism to grow in the country with the help of stake holders; destinations, agents, tour operators, airlines, hoteliers, restaurants, transportation sector, in order to promote tourism to the next level. Tourism development in a society brings about good standard of living among masses, creates wealth in areas of unemployment and at the same time gives room for job creation. (Singh 2010, 136-137.)

2.1 Tourism product

Tourism maybe defined as the sum of the process, activities and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and the surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting, transporting, hosting, and management of tourists and other visitors (Weaver & Lawton 2010, 2.) Having taking into consideration all these processes there are lots of products and agents that contribute to the development of tourism among which a few will be discussed.

Transportation is the movement of goods, people, freight, and other valuables that is essential for human needs in a day-to-day activities, and it has emerged as one of the more ubiquitous and complex global economic sectors. It forms the backbone of national and international commerce by acting as a mechanism for the movement and as a result, growth in transportation system synergies with growth in tourism and vice versa. The improvement of transportation has led to the expansion of tourism, that is to say there are more forms or modes of transports today which gives room for tourism to expand more, and gives easy access to destinations. The choice of mode of transport by visitors is related to purpose of travel and also affected by distance, time factors, static, comfort, safety, and utility (Duval 2007, 1.)

According to Banister (1995), transport is recognised as a key ingredient for economic development. It is understood that without transport the driving force of an economy will go a long way to development. Transportation also plays an important role in the hosting of tourists. It is also said to be one of the most dominant ways by which tourist get into a

destination for the purpose of tourism. In 2000, 97% of same day and 56% of overnight travellers travelled to USA from Canada by means of car (Transport Canada 2001.) The pursuit of tourism long ago has stimulated a steady growth in the range of destinations visited by tourists, which as a result has been recognised as having had a developing impact upon different countries and places. This is related to changes in transport technology and affordability, or diffusion of tourism from travelling elite to a wider mass market. In the 19th century when the advent of railway lines came into existence, this brought about mass and cheap fares paid by tourists, and also availability of leisure time. Transportation can be said to be a vital facilitator of tourism which gives room to tourists to be able to travel from their home (origin) to another destination and to return back to their origin (home) (Page 2007,123.)

Air transport has been in existence as far back as 1919 after the First World War and it went into expansion after peace was restored after the Second World War. Air travel has played a key role in the world's largest industry, travel and tourism. According to air transport action group in 2005, the air transport supports a total of 29 million jobs (Hanlon 2007, 1). This is a fundamental chain in the global tourism interaction sphere. Air transport is of much interest when it comes to tourism development, which has to be understood properly because it can shape the flow of tourists at any particular destination. In other words, air transportation plays a major role as an agent for tourism development (Duval 2007, pg152.)

As a commercial activity, air transportation is divided into scheduled airlines, charter airlines, and private jets, the private jet being the smallest and most individualised. The difference between scheduled and charter airline is the flexibility of charter, while schedule has the ability of charter to accommodate specific requests from organisations or tour operators. The comprehensive array of services demanded by the government, contemporary travellers have led to the development of airline industry alliances, among which is the Star alliance, One world, and Sky team. This gives room for expanded route networks, and ease of transfer between airlines integrated services (Weaver & Lawton 2010, 137.) Different airlines have different types of aircrafts that they use. Boeing is one of the leading companies in the production of aircrafts. International Air Transport Association (IATA) is the governing body which regulates the price and service quality provided by each airline.

The air transport is of interest to tourism development and tourist flow, because it is a fundamental cog in the global tourism interaction sphere, meanwhile Avis Nigeria is playing an important role by being in partnership with some airlines in carrying out their daily activities and helping with the continuous flow of the chain of tourism development.

Road transport is an integral part of tourism development and includes coaches, caravans, and car rentals. The coaches are very important to the tour packages, because, they serve as facilitators, as a means of transportation from the airport to the hotel. The caravan serves a double purpose on its own. It can serve as accommodation and also as a means of transportation. The rental cars are important because some tourists prefer to use them (Weaver & Lawton 2010, 139.)

Railways play a marginal role in tourism but a significant role in the economic growth of many countries. Looking at how rail transport could be linked with tourism, there are two main sub-modes that were noticed: the inter-destination rail transport and the intra-destination rail transport. The inter-destination is a form of rail transport that links regions, cities, attractions and destinations, while the intra-destination rail transport is the one that links tourists from destinations or attractions (Weaver & Lawton 2010, 139.)

Sea transport can generally be split between the transport of goods and the transport of people. Mobility by sea is at the heart of revising which gives room for the creation of cruise tours. Sea transport can be categorised into two main parts: the ferry and the ocean-going cruise. The ferry is mostly used for commuting of passengers and freight from an island to the mainland while the ocean-going cruise is a bigger ship which cruises across the ocean. The ocean-going cruise depends on the route the cruise ship is enrouted to as far as the transportation of vehicles and merchandise is required on short sea crossings, ferries offer inexpensive, reliable and safe services. They are also the only possibility in the case of remote and small islands which have not airports (Cooper, C. Fletcher, J, Fyall, A, Gilbert, D. & Wanhill 2008, 417.)

In a destination region, accommodation services are important for the tourism development. This is because they determine the flow of tourists in this destination region since they need a place of good comfort. The basic infrastructure to accommodate visitors, business travellers and tourists contributes to the tourism development. One of the critical functions that have to be looked into in any country's tourism sector, is the accommodation sector, which is paramount to tourism development; a tourist will be looking into available

accommodation before going on any trip abroad or locally. Tourists usually secure an accommodation before embarking on a trip or buying a ticket. The evolution of commercial hotels has made entrepreneurs to modify and develop the sector by providing different attractions in the hotel e.g. resorts (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001,159.)

Accommodation ranges (the upper market, five star hotel, hostels, bed and breakfast and summerhouse, caravans,) can also be classified by size, price, purpose and wish (Page 2007, 203.) The purpose of a trip determines the type of accommodation, thereby given room for type of accommodation to be used during the trip. To a business or non-leisure tourist, the appeal of the accommodation and destination is not as important as it is for the for holiday and leisure tourist.

Attractions are a key that make tourist visit a particular destination. Attractions should also be open for the purpose of public consumption. When a tourist visits a destination, attractions are fundamental; they have been divided into many categories by tourism researchers. Attractions are mainly viewed in either natural attractions or man-made attractions (Page 2007, 103.)

Natural attractions are places that occurred naturally without been built or altered from their natural state. Some examples of those are The Olumo Rock in Ogun state Nigeria, and Ikangosi warm spring in Ekiti Nigeria. Man-made attractions are the form of attractions been built as a result of the request by tourism operators for the development of tourism in a particular area. Some examples of the man-made attractions are the Disney World California in the United States of America, Linnamaki amusement park in Helsinki, and the Eiffel tower in France. There are also some other forms of attractions which bring tourists to lots of places like the mass tourism. One example of that is like sport tourism for football lovers who travel to different destinations to watch their respective team's matches at a particular time. The motivation to travel is the attraction of the activity special events, concerts or festivals (Page 2007, 108.)

Restaurant is another major agent of tourism development. In any given destination the tourist will want to have a good food. A good tourist destination boasts of a good, quality, and affordable meal for the tourist at all time.

One of the most important ways in which the tourism industry communicates with tourists is through the help of an intermediary which is the agent or tour operators. They facilitate

partnership directly or indirectly with other agents of the tourism to promote different products of the tourism industry. The tour operators organize and package together different factor experiences and they sell these experiences to the public through the media, brochures, leaflets, bulletins and advertisement. The packages include transport, accommodation, attractions and other forms of services for the consumption of the tourist at a particular time at a given price. The tour operator has the ability to buy services and other elements of tourism experience from other principals or suppliers at substantial discounts by buying these said services in bulk. (Page 2007, 233 - 235.)

The major issues faced by tourism organisations are the operational issues. It is because tourism is a service industry which involves large labour-intensive operations existence. The seasonal nature of tourism gives room for seasonal staffs at different points or areas like hotels, airport, resorts and transport operators. When considering visitor management, there is said to be some measures that needed to be adopted in the management, depending on the region itself: the hard measures and the soft measures (Page 2007, 407.)

The hard measures are the strict measures put in place by the government for the destination to curtail the number of tourists coming into the region at a particular time in order to be able to sustain and maintain the rich culture of that particular region. The soft measures are the ones used by the government or host to improve the marketing of the destination in order to get more tourists to the region. The visitor's management involves planning extensively on the improvement of the region and drawing out a good measure to co-ordinate the visitors coming to the region (Page 2007, 407.)

Considering the future of visitors' management, the impact of tourism will air ethical quandary for both planners and the managers. The government on the other hand will be seeking to develop more socially society where the principle of tourism for all will be put in place (Page 2007, 410.)

The tour guide is a technical know-how, who is kept with the responsibility of informing the tourists about the particular attraction in a particular destination for the purpose of tourist consumption. The tour guide has the general knowledge of the attraction. The guide equips the tourist with adequate information of the destination, attractions, museum, gallery, church, monumental sites, or scenery and has the ability to answer any question about the site. The tour guide should also be ready to communicate in a language the tourist can understand for the purpose of communication (Page 2007, 410.)

The government plays an important role as an agent of tourism development; the government is involved in one way or the other in tourism through a direct action (developing facilities and area) or indirect (raising organisation that foster tourism). The government is posed with the duty of managing the immigration, visa requirement, and the landing rights for all airlines. The government allocate these responsibilities to different ministries to oversee the day-to-day activities on behalf of the government. The government has much interest in tourism because; this is a versatile sector that needs to be regulated due to environmental and economic effect.

The government is also posed with the responsibility of providing adequate and necessary infrastructures that attracts tourists to the destination like the building of parks, provision of water, roads, electricity, and affordable transport which can also serve local communities to benefit on the government improved infrastructure (Page 2007, 339.)

The community plays an important role as an agent of tourism development in any growing economy, the land owners are the people who own the land in a particular community. The government as an agent of tourism development has to reach an agreement with the land owners before building any structure for the purpose of tourism in that particular area. The land owners also influence the development of tourism in any given areas by communicating with its community on how best to help build their community for the purpose of tourism. The leaders of the community also play an important role (Page 2007, 410.)

Stakeholders are the group of people or individual with political and social influence. They have the power to either prevent the overall implementation of the marketing plan or ensure its success. These are the people with financial, emotional, or political stake in either retaining the status of quo or in support of change. Stakeholders might include government officials, bank managers, trade union leaders, big business, civil organisation leaders, community members and neighbourhood group and property owners

The stakeholders play a vital role in the tourism development. Without the help of the stakeholder, tourism will need to go a long way before it is developed (Kolb 2006, 56.)

2.2 Tourism in Nigeria

Nigeria offers a wide variety of tourist attractions, such as extended and roomy river and ocean beaches ideal for swimming and other water sports, a unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forests to a magnificent waterfall, some new rapidly growing cities and climatic conditions in some parts particularly conducive to holidaying. Other attractions include traditional ways of life preserved in local customs; rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products depicting or illustrative of native arts and lifestyle, and the authentic unsophisticated but friendly attitude of many in the Nigerian population.

However, many of these attractions are still largely untapped and even at their raw states, they are still being enjoyed by few outsiders, either very rich visitors in quest of exoticism or adventurous people in search of new challenges and experiences.

The lack of required modern infrastructural facilities and in some parts of the country acute conditions of underdevelopment and poverty can be seen as problems that many potential Nigeria-bound tourists may not like to be confronted with.

These are impediments to tourism, which the new administration has been tackling since assumption of office. Investors, both foreign and local are therefore called upon to come and invest in the abundant tourism potentials in the country. The richness and diversity of Nigeria's tourism resources coupled with economic liberalisation policies will provide investment opportunities in various areas (Lagos state government, 2001.)

3 AVIS NIGERIA

In 2005, Turtles car rental was incorporated into Nigeria. It is an indigenous car hire company which started with the operation of car hire services. The company was running as a car hire, van and truck company throughout Nigeria. By 2006 the company was issued a licence to operate as Avis car hire, van and truck for the territory of Nigeria, which brings about the birth of Avis car onto the Nigerian market. The value of Avis is mainly based on whom they are and what they do, because at Avis “they try harder” to make everything about car hire as simple and transparent as possible and give excellent services and value for money.

Being an international company gives it a competitive edge to win over any other competitors in the industry. That makes them as a qualitative and competent company in the field of transportation. Avis is a global rental company with over 415,000 vehicles worldwide at nearly 5000 rental locations in over 160 countries, connected with a computerised base system (Avis wizard system). They have for an online 24hours booking service linked with every location in the world, with commitment of highest standard of safety. Avis is known for its outstanding service of over 60years of existence, and over 150 customer service department (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.1 Target group

Avis Nigeria is known for its profound quality and efficient services it provides to its outstanding clients, with a comprehensive network base of over 400 customers. Avis provides services to different clients in different fields for example in the oil and gas sector, government, professional firms (lawyers), telecommunications, financial services, the entertainment industry, engineering firms, manufacturing companies, shipping companies, the navy, tour operators and individual renting. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.2 Services offered by Avis

Avis Nigeria is a car hire company, with quality service in car rental business; the company not only provides car hire services but also has some other external services which correlates with its quality services rendered to the general public and its customers, among which some of them will be discussed next.

3.2.1 Airport transfers

Avis offers airport transfers to clients who are currently in need of such services, since it is a car hire company with a reputable name many companies are ready and always willing to entrust their expatriate from another country into their care for safe pick up from airport directly to their respective hotel and all through the expatriate' in Nigeria. At times it might be that it is just a pick up from the airport to the hotel or maybe drop off from the hotel to the airport. The company has agreements with some of their respective clients regarding these forms of services; there is a fixed charge for it. It only takes a phone call from the company to Avis and give information about the inbound clients to be picked up from the airport and details of where to drop off the clients to.

3.2.2 Inbound and outbound bookings

An inbound booking is a form of booking where the company rents out their vehicles to clients using it within the countries. Outbound booking is a form of booking where the clients rent the car in order to make use of it outside the country. The clients are made to make some contract agreements with the company before renting the car. Avis is bound with the responsibility of providing chauffers for the clients throughout the rent. The company is also responsible for the provision of fuel throughout the lease depending on the agreement made by both parties. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.2.3 Long and short term rentals

Long term rental is a form of rental whereby the vehicle is being rented to a client for a minimum time of one month and a maximum of one year. The client has the sole responsibility of maintaining the vehicle during the rental period of rent and is also left with the responsibility of fuelling the vehicle depending on the agreement on ground. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.2.4 Telephone services

This is a unique service that is being provided by Avis for either business or leisure travellers visiting the shores of Nigeria in need of phone services. At request the company can provide the client with any of the available mobile networks available in Nigeria. Throughout the client's visit, there are various forms of networks to choose from among which one is Glomobile. There is also there is provision of a mobile telephone to use with the network. The client is going to be responsible for the payment of the service. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.2.5 Bars and restaurants

Being a service company Avis is willing to help clients by recommending at request for a good bar or restaurant available at any location of the country. Also there is also some online information given to the client also about the bars and restaurants available to make the stay a very successful one.(Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.2.6 Hotel reservation

Transportation co-operate with other sectors of tourism to achieve the same goal. Avis has network link with some of the leading hotels in Nigeria which are also working in correlation with Avis, and the company has a service provided to individual clients regarding the request for hotel reservation.

3.2.7 Flight reservation

Avis has been providing clients with reputable services at different stages. The company helps the incoming and outgoing clients with flight reservations in order to help them ease off their stress. They also help by providing information on flight reservations also at local airlines to other parts of the country. Avis Nigeria can also make payment for the flight for the client upon a request with a 10% service charge on such transaction (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.3 Fleet of vehicle

Avis Nigeria is equipped with different fleets of vehicles which are used in the carrying out of their day-to-day activity. As a competent company they parades vehicles of different brands and classes which they have divided into different categories. Each client's demand for a particular brand is met upon request at a particular brand.

There are various kinds of cars available for rental services at Avis. The company has state of the art vehicles for the operations of their services. In this category the cars are being grouped into small, medium and premium. The small cars are the ones with an engine of small size and are comfortable, durable, standard, economical and efficient for the satisfaction of the client, all the cars in this category are brand new cars with factory-fitted air conditioners due to the nature of the weather in Nigeria. The car can take four persons, two luggage's, with five doors; they have air-conditioning and also has either manual or automatic gear transmission. One example of this type of car is the Toyota corolla sedan 1.3XLII.

The medium group includes cars that are a bit more elegant with more facilities compared to the small group and which are in good conditions with more facilities compare to the small once among this group. An example could be the Toyota Camry SE, XLE, LE and the Hybrid, Toyota Avensis. The final category is the premium class which is much more elegant compared to the medium class. These cars have big engines and are fashionable, trendy and of higher class, like for example Mercedes Benz E-class. All cars are available on request at any point in time to provide effective services (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

The company is putting grand effort in meeting up with the demands of its clients, in the areas of truck renting. Avis has been providing services for some reputable companies which needs trucks for the day-to-day activities of their duties. The trucks are categorised into two major groups depending on the category the clients is interested in, the trucks used by Avis are the Toyota Hilux Truck 4X2 and Toyota Hilux Truck 4X4 respectively. The trucks can take four persons, six luggage, they have four doors, air-conditioning, and also have either manual or automatic gear transmission (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

Avis Nigeria also provides also sports utility vehicles (SUV) with state of the art facilities. The SUVs are always available upon request. This category belongs to the luxury group of cars for rentals at the company fleets. The SUV can take six persons, two luggage, it has five doors, and air-conditioning, and also has either manual or automatic gear transmission. In this category there are the Toyota Land Cruiser jeep, Toyota Prado and being brand new (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

Considering the various needs that Avis' clients have, there has been need for the company to include in their fleet busses for companies who go on tours and for some other purposes. The company has been known for its high class of services among other agents in the rental services. This group of vehicles is large due to the nature of its capacity; there are two main classes in this group: the Toyota Hiace buses and the Toyota coaster buses. The Toyota Hiace buses can take fifteen persons, two luggage's, they have five doors, they have air-conditioning and also has manual gear transmission The Toyota Coaster buses can take thirty people, six luggage's, have three doors, air-conditioning, and also has manual gear transmission (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.4 Fleet management

Fleet management is the management of a company's transportation fleet. Fleet management includes commercial motor vehicles such as cars, vans and trucks, as well as rail cars. Fleet (vehicle) management can include a range of functions, such as vehicle financing, vehicle maintenance, vehicle telematics (tracking and diagnostics), driver management, speed management, fuel management and health and safety management. Fleet management is a function which allows companies which rely on transportation in their business to remove or minimize the risks associated with vehicle investment,

improving efficiency, productivity and reducing their overall transportation and staff costs, providing 100% compliance with government legislation (duty of care) and many more. This is a form of services rendered to companies, or individuals on demand or request made to Avis for the purpose of managing their car, busses trucks or jeeps issues for the purpose of fleet management. These services are offered throughout Nigeria at any Avis branch on request. There is also provision of brand new vehicles and taking over of the old one from clients, these services also reduces the company's operating cost, by improving the company to focus on the core business. Its provides free internal resources for other purposes and not left out, the all year round mobility for employees and staffs of the company (Avis Nigeria, 2011).

To achieve prompt and timely repaired maintenance of Avis fleet, the company has a state of the art garage at the company head office in Lagos. The corrective and preventive maintenance, such as fleet routing services, major mechanical breakdown, accident repairs, tyre checks and painting are being carried out. Experts are available to check the aforementioned faults in the vehicles. The experts are mechanic technicians, auto electrician, body repairers, spray painters, and vulcanizers. At the garage stock there are some basic vehicle parts like the batteries, tyres, brake pads and some other routine service consumables (Avis Nigeria, 2011).

3.5 Human resource management

Human resource management is best understood as a philosophy rather than a set of hard and fast procedures. The hard procedure would be when the workers are viewed in a rational economic manner as an integral economic resource in which the business invests to produce economic return, while the soft refers it to be where employees are considered to be an asset and the main source of achieving competitive advantage. The employees are pursued in the belief that workers will regulate themselves towards achieving the organisational goal. As the quality of work life becomes an issue of importance for individuals, organisations and society, businesses are turning their attention to the development and programmes to address such issues (Lee-Ross & Pryce 2010, 7.)

3.5.1 Staff welfare

Been a leading company in rental business in Nigeria staff welfare is one of the paramount issues that Avis has taken into consideration and has been a key factor in the success story of the company. Avis has been putting first the welfare of the staff at all time and has been able to come out with a very good and unique package of an abundant amount of benefits to its staff. The prompt payment of salary at an early stage, pension scheme, tax payment, feedback and a relaxed atmosphere of working space are some examples of the prioritizing in action. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.5.2 Internal marketing

This is an on-going process whereby Avis Nigeria, aligns, motivates and empowers its employees, at all functions and levels to consistently deliver a positive customer experience that helps to achieve business objectives. The employees are consistently trained and orientated about the best and positive way of caring for their clients at all levels. The number one objective of the company is to always try harder to make sure the customer is satisfied. The management philosophy of promoting its firm and its policies to employees as if they were the (internal) customers of the firm, has been in the company ever since its inception in Nigeria. The company motto also speaks about the internal marketing “We try harder”. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.6 Partnership

Avis playing the leading role in car rental business has taken a step forward by going into partnership with a reputable airline company in Nigeria, Dana Air, for the purpose of always taking care of their customers by making a good offer to both companies. Avis Nigeria offers a 15% discount to any passenger flying with the airline both on business class and economy on any car rental made during the trip and also the airline Dana air is also offering a 15% discount to any of their customers flying with the airline upon presentation of receipt of original receipt of payment to Avis car rental. (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.7 Marketing

Marketing can be said to be the process whereby individuals and groups obtain the type of product or goods they value. This is widely acknowledged as a vital prerequisite for communicating the product or services offered by businesses or suppliers to the market. In order to meet a customer needs, the company has to analyse its own products or services in terms of its own business expertise and how competitor's products and services may affect them. Having taken into consideration the marketing mix consisting of the 7'ps which are product, price, promotion, place, people, process and the physical evidence, there is a need to elaborate more on the promotion of the known product which is Avis rental services (Page 2010, 313.)

With the advent of information technology since 1970, many companies are taking into consideration the use of e-marketing, giving room for organisations or companies to have more powerful tools for enhancing their efficiency, also making adequate use of the online services for the marketing of their various product and services. During the proliferation of the internet in the 1990s when the world turned into a global economy, this has changed the way organisations operates both locally and internationally, this did not develop just the global economy but also has influenced on the enterprise around the world considering their size, product, and geographical location. Even though the impact of the information technology revolution is more evident on the commercial world, the development has also intensified online trading and globalised the market for all types of products and services which is also transforming the market (Buhalis 2003, 31.)

Avis uses online marketing for their services and the company is accessible globally anywhere in the world at any point in time.

Avis car rental being a leading company with innovative ideas in Nigeria, the company has put so much effort in making its brand known all over the country, it has also made use of the bill boards, radio jingles, television broadcast, and all have been successful ways for the company in advertising its product to the members of the public.

Social medial has been a networking place where a lot of people come together to meet chat, market, discuss about certain issues and forum, for the purpose of getting a message through to the global world. With the use of internet sites, many organisations and companies have advertised their products on the social media sites. With the advent of the

social media, Avis also is not left out of the trend of making use of this service in advertising its products on the social networks, among which is the Twitter and also Facebook. Detailed information about the company is being discussed on the sites and some issues concerning the company are also discussed on these sites, some potential tourists also try to find out information about the company via their social media sites (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

The flier is also a medium used by the company for advertising its products and services to the outside world. Avis has made series of fliers regarding the products and services available with the company, the company also uses the fliers as a means of getting message and information across to the public on its current promotions like cars, rental rates, address, and its contact telephone number (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

3.8 Avis as an agent of tourism development

Tourism development is said to be a gradual process of growth on tourism, this form of growth involves all the products and agents of tourism development in any particular destination, or region. Tourism development is an integral part of any economy which benefits from tourism growth and the government, stakeholders and companies are all playing a vital role in the tourism development of any nation. Avis as an agent/ product of tourism development, is playing its own part by contributing immensely to this said growth, one of the ways the company is contributing to this growth is by providing available and quality services to the public. Avis is always trying harder to make sure that their respective client gets his/her respected service at the said given time. The company is also promoting tourism in Nigeria with its innovative, opulent, creative, ground-breaking ideas. With the advent of Avis in Nigeria the company is spreading across the country, making available its services and also creating employments for qualified respective job seekers (Avis Nigeria, 2011.)

4 RESEARCH METHODS

The primary motivation of this project is to visualise the positive impact Avis has been had on the development of tourism in Nigeria and the best way of achieving this is by carrying out a proper research and analysing the data properly in order to reach a conclusion on the outcome of the research.

4.1 Research method

There are different types of research methods that can be applied among which is the quantitative research method, which relies solely on the collection of statistical data, that are then analysed through a variety of statistical techniques or tools (SPSS). Based on the analysis, the conclusion is made about the research, while the qualitative research method is another type of research method that does not place its emphasis on statistics or statistical analysis, instead its emphasis is placed on words and sometimes images as the unit of analysis. The observation is another form of research method that involves gathering of information about people's behaviour without their consent, which is sometimes referred to as unobtrusive technique of research. Having noticed other forms or methods of research, it was concluded that the best method for this research is to make use of the qualitative research method, which includes the collection of data, analysis of quality information instead of making use of numerical data (Veal 2011, 125.)

4.2 Qualitative research method

Due to the nature of this research, the chosen method is the qualitative research methods, because of the fact that little is known about the role Avis Nigeria is playing in the development of tourism in the country. A structured interview was conducted among the corporate clients of Avis Nigeria; a thirty-minute of interview was carried out among each clients at time agreed time between the interviewee and interviewer, at an agreed location. During the course of the interview, the researcher took an initiative of recording all the respective interviews and every step of the interview was recorded. The researcher also informed the respondent of the confidentiality of the interview and that it will never be

disclosed without due permission from the respective interviewees, also the tape was promised to be destroyed after the conclusion of the research.

4.3 Presenting the results of the research

This research interview was been carried out and also conducted among the 400 different companies to which Avis Nigeria provide services to, a total number of twelve companies was involved during the research, among the interviewed companies were Hygeia, Mobile downstream, Flying dove, Ge international, Stanbic brokers, Samsung Nigeria, Lekki concession, Tetra pack, Nigerian breweries, Nicomtech group, Brass lng, Cisco systems. These clients ranged from oil and gas companies, the Government, telecommunication, professional firms, financial services, to information technology, and the customer service personnel of Avis Nigeria.

The estimated average age of the interviewee was between the ages of 30-55 years. Some of the interviewees declined revealing their ages for personal reasons. The total number of people that was interviewed was not enough to make a general conclusion, individual observations can be relied upon and some other information derived from word of mouth. This research will be concluded based on the type of research method applied during the research; the information that was received from the corporate clients will be relied on based on the positive and negative comments. Moreover, the information that was deduced from the customer care personnel will spotlight the much needed effort and planning by the company to promote good relations with its respective customers.

4.3.1 Presenting the corporate client interview

Theme one was about the background information of the organisation, area of operation, and what sector does the company belonged to. The reason for this question was to know the name of the company, the area of operation, and the parastatal which the company belongs to. Also the purpose of this was to know the area of operation which the individual company belongs to be it is oil and gas, law firm, information technology, finance, telecommunication, health care or any other line of business.

Moreover, this theme aimed to find out which sector the company belongs to, if it was a private owned company, government owned, or individual. Based on personal anticipation and individual point of view the interviewees gave their opinions of their respective companies. Interviewee A stated that their company was into oil and gas and it is government owned and the name of the company is Brass LNG. Interviewee B said that their company was into construction and that it is privately owned, the name of their company is Lekki concession company. Interviewee C stated that their company was into health scheme and that it is privately owned, the name of the company is Hygeia. Interviewee D stated that their company is into information technology and they are privately owned, the name of their company is Cisco Systems. Interviewee E stated that their company is a mobile technology company and that it is privately owned, the name of the company is Samsung Nigeria.

Theme two was about how most companies learn about Avis Nigeria, this was to get to know their general opinion about Avis, and also the reason for this question was to have an idea of how popular the company is to the general public and also if the marketing team has been making an impact on the growth of the company. These were the respondent's opinions and views about their knowledge of the company.

Interviewee G stated that:

we send out a legal tender, we normally send out tenders, for car services companies to apply, that was where Avis applied to and we pre-qualified them, and we send them our tender documents and they replied.

Interviewee B stated that:

hmm... they came here to market themselves that is how we got to know them.

Interviewee F stated that:

We go to know them through marketing.

Interviewee K stated that:

hmm i think they came here for marketing and that is how we started using them.

Interviewee E stated that:

it was through their marketing that we got to know them.

Theme three was about the frequency of using Avis' services. The reason for this was to ascertain the level of patronage each company is given by Avis, also to be able to have a broad view of how satisfied each company is with the services provided by Avis.

Interviewee A stated that:

very frequently as long as there are travellers in this place we use them every time, we make use of their services every now and then that is if they are available for us to use them every day and it also depend on their own availability.

Interviewee K stated that:

we make use of Avis very frequently.

Interviewee D stated that:

very almost all the time depending on their availability.

Interviewee H stated that:

we make use of their services all the time.

Interviewee E stated that:

we sometimes use the services of Avis but almost all the time because of the nature of our business we need to have to use them. Interviewee F stated that we use their services all the time although they are not the only car rental company that we use but we do make use of them.

Theme four was about the possibility of using Avis again. This question was asked in order to know if they would use their services again, even if there were issues or service failure during the service delivery.

Interviewee B stated that:

the contract is a two year contract and this is the second year, am not the one who decides if we use them or not, if the contract ends, we are going to retender and we will now check and there are other competitors, they are still

our contractor, they have the right to retender so we now check, that is where we now review their services. Then their services is not impressive at all we went for inspection before we use them, we had to use their car, they have nice cars, brand new cars, they have jeep to our standard because most of our chairman, MD, directors, they all use jeeps and they meet our standard, they meet the standard quite alright from what we saw, but the services, they have the control room everything, where they can monitor their vehicles, but the problem is their workers. Do you mean chauffeurs? The chauffeurs are up to standard but the management is, when i mean management, is the staff who manages them, for example you will call somebody when we call or send email that we need this thing, they will answer us, after some hours they will call us and say they are sorry they don't have vehicles for this activity that their vehicles have all been used and it is continuous. Have they promised sending the car? No when we make a request that we need a vehicle for someone of our staff, they will reply us with either email or phone sending the chauffeurs phone number, maybe later in the day they discover that the car is not in good and no replacement. So in your opinion you think they are not efficient in that way? Yes, customer satisfaction, they are not good but am just giving you an instances, service failure are more with them, you know during the Christmas period, they complained that their invoice are been delayed, every time, i notice mistakes from their invoice and it goes through finance, through me and to my head of department and to the manager of the department, and finally to the GM who will approves it, so for me been the first step to notice mistake, i had to correct it because if i don't correct it will impact on my job, because three of my bosses had to go through it, also look warm attitude you call them they will not show up, during the Christmas period i had a bill of four hundred and something thousand to pay them, that i wanted to make sure that i pay them for that end of, because when we close down on the 24th of December we are not coming back to office until 4th January and it is like tying down customer's money, i know how other company struggle to get their invoice, so i just feel maybe they have too much customers, so many clients and they are satisfied with maybe, in service industry it is not the duty of the client to be begging you, the contractor should be the one, they can call us the clients, they are not satisfying us, been a customer to them, on a rating i will rate them 50%.

Interviewee K stated that:

well i think yes we will.

Interviewee F stated that:

yes we will make use of their services again.

Interviewee D stated that:

hmmm..., am not in the best position to answer that but i think we should.

Interviewee C stated that:

wao, what a great question, from look of things yes we should be able to, depending on if we still have the need to use their services again.

Interviewee K stated that:

hmmm..... I don't know am not in the best position to determine that, my duty is just to be in contact with them and ask for vehicles for our officials who are going out.

Theme five was about the price range of Avis compared to other car rental companies. This was asked to ascertain the level of price control and how their prices might have affected their services rendered to the public.

Interviewee A stated that:

i don't think i am in a position to give such information, to the best of my knowledge their prices are competitive, they are ok, when i mean competitive to other company they are on the same range to others.

Interviewee D stated that:

their prices are much more okay compare to some other companies that we use.

Interviewee E stated that:

hmm i think it is ok regarding the services.

Interviewee K stated that:

it is lot more ok considering the level of service they provide. Interviewee I stated that the prices of Avis, is ok with us.

Interviewee F stated that:

we don't have problem with their prices, so i think it is ok.

Interviewee G stated that

it is not expensive for us compare to other companies so i think it is ok.

Theme six was about the prompt service response in times of problem with Avis. The reason for this question was to know, if Avis is really keen at responding to the customers wants all the time.

Interviewee J stated that:

in terms of problems, i have told you we don't have any problem with them the only problem we have with them is service failure, when you are supposed to come ...they just let us know, the means of communication i mean is zero, like now you can see from it they are sending you here and we are not informed, they don't send email, when we all have an email that we all communicate with and they know.

Interviewee G stated that:

we have not really had problems with them anyway so i can really say much on that aspect.

Interviewee C stated that:

hmm... i don't think there has been an issue like that but the problem is that there can be disappointment in getting a car to rent.

Interviewee A stated that:

we have never had issues with them on that, but probably there has been a time where the car was dirty but the chauffeur cleaned it when the complaint was made.

Interviewee E stated that:

we are yet to get a problem from them concerning this particular case.

Interviewee D stated that:

yes we do get prompt services from them anytime the need arises.

Theme seven was about the level of satisfaction with the customer care unit and responses when called upon. The reason for this particular question was to know if the customer care unit is functioning very well when called upon. These are the responses from the respondent.

Interviewee A stated that:

the response is not too favourable, hmmm..., when they render us services they are ok, the services they render to us is ok but the management of the contract, they are not enthusiastic, they are look warm about the contract.

Interviewee D stated that:

the customer care unit is ok i will want to believe we are satisfied with the customer care unit whenever we call on them i don't think we have had issues concerning the customer care unit.

Interviewee F stated that:

hmmm..., let me see, i think the response is ok from my personal point of view, so far so good we have not had issues where we need to call the customer care unit and we didn't get prompt services so from that i think it is ok.

Interviewee G stated that:

the customer care unit has been very responsive anytime we call on them, so i will say they are doing very well with the unit.

Interviewee E stated that:

hmm..., whenever we call their customer care unit we get response, but the issue of getting response is one thing, getting the requested service at appropriate time is another thing so what is the point, if they respond and you still don't get the required service, so I think they still have to improve a bit more.

Interviewee J stated that:

the customer care unit do respond to our call if there is need for us to call them anytime so i will complement them on that aspect of service.

Theme eight was about service recommendation. The reason for this question was to know, if Avis customers were willing to make use of, word of mouth to advertise Avis to others, be it a friend or associate. These are the respondents views based on their individual opinions.

Interviewee J stated that:

if they say i should recommend i will recommend the 50% to them, i wont recommend totally because, they are given us service failure, why should i recommend them to another company, not really satisfied with the company as an internationally claimed to be, they need to improve on a lot of things, that i will like to talk to somebody so that when they go back, they will need to improve on their services they provide but not really efficient.

Interviewee B stated that:

hmmm..., this is really funny who is going to pay me for the recommendation, and marketing i am making for them, well based on the

type of service we get from them i think i can recommend them, which is returning a big favour to them.

Interviewee D stated that:

yes i think i can recommend them to people, and i will just do it on my own i don't think there is any reason for me to recommend them i just want to that is all.

Interviewee H stated that:

recommending Avis to a friend shouldn't be a problem but i will give the friend some clues, also about the services we get from them, i don't think there is any reason for not recommending them they are services providers, so i will when asked by friends.

Interviewee E stated that:

yes i will definitely recommend them to a friend i don't think there is anything bad in recommending them, i will just do it with no reason i don't think there has to be a reason before i make recommendation about a company which we get services from, it's just my individual opinion.

Interviewee I stated that:

yes i will recommend them to a friend and it is just my personal wish to recommend them, i do not think i really have a reason why i should.

Interviewee G stated that:

yes based on the services we received from them i think i can recommend them to a friend, i want to recommend them to a friend because we get prompt service from them and i want to say it is ok with us, so that is why i want to make recommendation of them to friends or anyone who ask me about them.

Interviewee B stated that:

yes i will recommend them because the services received from them is ok.

Theme nine was about the service improvement. This question was asked to know if there were any suggestions on any area they wished Avis should improve on so that the customers could get quality services from them. These are the different views and opinions of the individual respondents when they were posed with the question.

Interviewee A stated that:

the administrative part of the company should be improved on, the cars are ok, i will advise that the admin should be more up and doing, they should

take the job more seriously, the response should be quick, when somebody asked for a car you don't have the car you request for alternative and not call the person later to inform you don't have any car for the client.

Interviewee I stated that:

maybe they should probably improve on the services generally, though we get good services from them but you know been a services industry lot is demanded from them so they knows best of what is lacking in their services.

Interviewee D stated that:

well they can always improve on the services they provide and maybe improvement on their cars though their cars are ok but you know still they can improve on them.

Interviewee H stated that:

i wish they can improve on their mailing and invoicing system they should also improve on service quality.

Interviewee B stated that:

they can improve on a general level of services they provide to their respective customers, been a company in service industry much is expected of them so they can do more and do better to improve themselves.

Interviewee F stated that:

generally i will say service quality can be improved on.

Interviewee G stated that:

improvement on service quality can be ok, been a service industry they can do more and try harder like they said.

4.3.2 Presenting the customer care personnel interview

In theme one the customer care personnel was asked about her background information. This question was asked in order to know the name, gender, nationality, and the position held by the respondent which is the customer care personnel of Avis Nigeria. The purpose of this was to get acquainted with the respondent. Based on the views of the personnel, she was a female, of Nigerian origin and she was the customer care personnel manager of Avis.

Theme two was about the significance of customer satisfaction. The customer care personnel was asked this question in order to ascertain the level of importance their respective customers hold according to the company. This was her view on the subject matter.

Well you know that Avis is a global brand worldwide and em... what we do at Avis is basically, in as much as we are trying to portray good customer service, em... a smile is the most important thing for us, so that when any customers comes in here they recognise our smile and we are willing to, you know attend to the customer and at every point in time we make sure that em...we listen to customer request because that is key, em.... am a bit finding it difficult, when you are trying to get across an information and if you are not listening to get to the root of the issues, what we do basically, our values, and our missions, em... our values empathy and honesty and em and humanity, and our vision to exceed customers' expectations at every interface, and so our promises we try harder that is our slogan.

Theme three was about the customer satisfaction rating at Avis. This question was asked in order to find out if the company is taking note and also taking care of the customers complaints. This was her response.

Hmmm.... Well in the past year we have not done too bad, business has been great, and eeeee... I believe with a good customer service personnel, the team that we have, we have been able to attract more patronage with regards to emmm... business, whereas, it's been great although we still do come across some irate customers, and we still do come across one or two issues because, no matter what in a service industry they are bound to failures, service failures, but at emmm.. at one, eeemm at every point in time what we do is we try to fix those failures and we attract more customers but in the last years, things have been great and tedious.

Theme four was about customer satisfaction. She was asked this question in order to know if the customers are satisfied with the service the company is rendering to them. Her response was.

that the customers are indeed very satisfied.

Theme five was about staff loyalty towards customers. This question was asked in order to know how important internal marketing is, to the organisation. Her response was

yes we do, in fact everybody has, you know we have different department right but em... in as much as it is customer service department everybody is part of customer service, whether you like it or not down to the chauffeurs, we have to portray good customer service out there, so we do have that yes.

Theme six was about customer satisfaction survey. The reason for asking about this was to know if the company is conducting customer satisfaction surveys, in order to allow room for Avis to improve on the services offered to its clients, and this was the response of the respondent.

Ok em... i won't say we do conduct surveys, but what we do have is a feedback form, now we have a feedback form put in all our fleet of cars so that at every point in time when our clients, chauffeurs, sorry clients, uses our vehicle right, at the end of the rental, they get to fill the feedback form out, and give a copy to the chauffeurs, so that if there is service failure the customer was not too impressed of our services then we can improve on it, yes and we have it online also" she was also asked if there has been a situation where clients are not satisfied and they had to call to her and report, her response was "oh yes" and was she able to take control and sort the situation out ? "in a far instances whereby a client uses our car probably there was battery failure or the air-condition was not working properly, although we do have a maintenance department that checks all those you know little, little, faults in the car before it goes out for rental, so an instance whereby we have those said failures, ah.... we apologise, well because, we have full responsibility of whatever happen and then, in the cause of that what we try as much as possible to do is probably give a discount on the next rental, so that we will still have you know our clients coming back, we have this em... what we call the Avis voucher form, more or less like a voucher, so discount voucher, so if you want to use it abroad, just to appease the client, we give one or two of that, so that they can use it abroad.

Theme seven concerned customer satisfaction programs. The reason for asking this question was to know the extent of how important their clients are to them and how best they are working harder to improve on their promises to their respective clients. The respondent thinks that.

To be honest we have not done that, we just did our customer service forum, which took place last week, and the event turned out well, em... i guess what I will do is write out the, what is it called the website where you can go to and see, write up on that, it was in the newspapers, that was our first, you know, in as much as we just started in 2007, we didn't, we try as much as possible to you know, enter into the market fully, and then we decided to come up with this to see, so we will be three and half years already this year.

Theme eight was about customer relationship management. The customer care personnel was asked this question in other to ascertain their level of customer relation management. Her view was the following.

Well i haven't, am still on the training for that, but i have been able to do some little, little, customers service training but that is not as strong as the customer relationship management.

Theme nine was about irate customers. This question was posed to her in order to know if they are really and working towards their slogan “we try harder” when communicating with irate customers, and her response was.

A smile..... well, em..... Sometimes it can be difficult but you know someone has to be very patient when handling a customer, and then especially the irate once, they will say all sort of things to you especially when they are not satisfied, and in the end we will try as much as possible to listen to the complaint, address the issue, apologise, and then at the end of the day that is when we come with the discount, vouchers right, we do give those discount vouchers, if the person is going to use it abroad, or we give a free rental service here, yeah if you need to use our services again, so that em... this em..., we make sure that there won't be any more service failure, as much as sending out an apology letter.

4.4 Analysis of the research interview

The research interview that was carried out will be analysed theme by theme and will also follow the pattern of the themes the interview presented above.

4.4.1 Analysis of the corporate client interview

Theme one was about the background information of each company. It included the name of the company, the area of operation, and what sector does the company belonged to and this question was to ascertain which company belongs to federal, state and local government, which belongs to private parastatal, also what area of operation is the individual company based on be it into oil and gas, law firm, an information technology company, mobile telecommunication company, governments, financial company. Also the main reason for asking this question was to know which group of tourist the company Avis is providing services to and it can be concluded mainly that they provide services mainly to the business class tourists. The respondents gave their individual ideas and opinions about their various companies.

It can be concluded that almost all the companies that Avis provides its services for, are in every aspect of the economy. After going through the response, it has been observed that

the major customers of Avis Nigeria was from all sector of the economy, both Federal government, state government, and private companies.

Theme two was about how most companies get to know about Avis Nigeria, this is to get to know their general opinion about Avis, and also the reason for this question was to have an idea of how popular the company is to the general public, also if the marketing team has been making an impact on the growth of the company. After going through all that was said by the respondents it is obvious that most of the companies get to know Avis through its marketing, which is a very positive thing for the company. The vast majority of Avis customers get to know the company through marketing,

Theme three was about the frequency of using the services of Avis. The reason for this was to ascertain the level of patronage each company is given by Avis, also to be able to have a broad view of how satisfied each company is with the service they get from Avis.

Going by what the respondents have said, it is very easy to conclude that most customers of Avis make use of their services whenever they so wish to. After going through the interviewees answers, most of the companies were of the opinion that they are always making use of their services.

Theme four was about the possibility of using Avis again. This question was asked in order to know if they would still use their services again, even if there were issues or service failure during the service delivery.

The vast majority of the customers suggested that they would make use of their services again, while some were not sure if they would make use of the service rendered again.

Theme five was about the price range of Avis compare to other car rental companies. This was asked to ascertain the level of price control and how their prices might have affected their services rendered to the public.

Virtually, almost all the clients were satisfied with the pricing of the company, which makes room for them to be more competitive in the market. Almost all of the customers thought that the prices of Avis are okay compared to other companies.

Theme six was about prompt service response in times of problem with Avis. The reason for this question was to know, if Avis is really keen at responding to the customers wants all the time.

After going through all that was said by the respondents, it can be deduced that some of the customers were not satisfied with the service response, while some of the others were satisfied. A majority of the customers thought that Avis services are okay for instance, if there is problem, Avis respond to them on time.

Theme seven was about the level of satisfaction with the customer care unit and responses when called upon. The reason for this particular question was to know if the customer care unit is functioning very well when called upon.

Going through all that was said by the respondents, the vast majority thought that the customer care unit is doing a better job and most of the customers of Avis have never had a problem when contacting the customer care unit. The most important aspect of service industry is the customer care unit and they seem to be doing their job promptly but will be nice to see more improvement regarding service delivery.

Theme eight was about service recommendation. The reason for this question was to know, if Avis customers are willing to make use of, word of mouth to advertise Avis to others, be it a friend or associate.

Some of the customers seem to be willing to make recommendations, while some might not, the reason for this kind of opinion by some of the customers not willing to make recommendations was probably, they might be thinking they will be held responsible for any unforeseen situation that might arise as a result of service failure at any point in time.

Theme nine was about service improvement. This question was asked to know if there were any suggestions on any area they wished Avis should improve on so that the customers could get quality services from them.

Based on the views of the customers, some of the customers will be looking up to see some drastic changes made to the services offered by Avis, reason been that the customers want to always get a quality service at all time.

4.4.2 Analysis of the customer care personnel interview

Theme one comprised of the name, gender, nationality, age and the position held by the respondent, which is the customer care personnel of Avis Nigeria, The purpose of this was to get acquainted with the respondent. Based on the views of the personnel, she was a female, of Nigerian origin and was the customer care personnel manager of Avis. It is obvious that the company is working with different kinds of people no matter the gender; there is no issue of gender inequality in the company.

Theme two was about the significance of customer satisfaction. The customer care personnel was asked this question in order to ascertain the level of importance their respective customers is to the company.

After going through her comment it can be concluded that the issue of customer satisfaction is very important to the company, and will always be.

Theme three was about the customer satisfaction rating at Avis. This question was asked in order to find out if the company is taking note and also taking care of the customers' complaints.

It is very important to know the level of customer satisfaction rating, meanwhile, the company is also trying to put to order, the failures they might have encountered while carrying out their business.

Theme four was about customer satisfaction. She was asked this question in order to know if the customers are satisfied with the service the company is rendering to them.

Her response on this suggests that they are working hard to make sure their customers are satisfied.

Theme five was about staff loyalty towards customers. This question was asked in order to know how important internal marketing is, to the organisation.

Based on her view, loyalty is most important in service industry; the whole team is doing their part to make it work, by working hard to make sure that the number one goal of the company which is "trying harder" is achieved.

Theme six was about the customer satisfaction survey. The reason for asking about this was to know if the company is conducting customer satisfaction surveys, in order to allow room for Avis to improve on its services offered to its clients.

In service industry you have to be ready to make your customers satisfied, how do you do this, is by conducting survey, which the company is not relenting in every aspect.

Theme seven was about customer satisfaction programs. The reason for asking this question was to know the extent of how important their clients are to them and how best they are working harder to improve on their promises to respective clients.

Based on what her views was, customer satisfaction programme is most important and the company is claiming to be new and has future plans in that aspect.

Theme eight was about customer relationship management. The customer care manager was asked this question in order to ascertain their level of customer relation management.

This is an important aspect of any organisation, but to my surprise she is yet to get training on that which i think she should work on it as she has said.

Theme nine was about irate customers. This question was posed to her in order to know if they are really and working towards their slogan “we try harder.”

In every customer related organisation there must be unsatisfied customers; it is nice to know that they have packages for such irate customers, whenever the company come across one of them.

4.5 Findings

This study shows the role that the car rental company Avis has played in the tourism development in Nigeria. The research which is mainly based on customer satisfaction, the role the company Avis is playing in satisfying its potential customers’ needs and providing them with adequate, affordable, quality, and effective services. The following paragraphs show the various findings based on the analysis of the interviews.

The research carried out shows that from the response of the corporate customers, the majority of the companies that Avis provides its services to are mainly private-owned companies, however they also provide services to government-owned companies but to a smaller extent. The vast majority of the group of tourists Avis serves, are the business tourists; also most of its operation is mainly based in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri, Benin, Asaba, Calabar, Owerri, Enugu, Abuja with some other services provided to customers, in the rest part of the country.

The research also revealed that the majority of the customers of Avis got to know the company through marketing, one of the companies also said they got to work with them through bid, while some got to know them through recommendation. A majority of the companies make use of the services of Avis and they are happy with the service rendered by Avis, some of the companies use their service often, while some make use of it once in a while. This means that almost all the companies make use of their services at all the time.

There is no service company that is never put to test with its service delivery or through the price control, Avis is one of the said companies and the vast majority of their customers are really happy with their prices and they think the prices are moderate and okay compared to some other car rental companies which they use. The service quality is also fine with large numbers of their customers except for a few who think they need to do more, also try to change some things about their services provided, like using electronic invoicing, and also trying to communicate more with emails, rather than sending hard copies of invoices. Meanwhile the customer care unit is also believed to be doing well in their services, almost all the companies are satisfied whenever they call to the customer care unit, but only a few that are not satisfied also wish they would make amendment in that area.

When considering customer satisfaction a lot of things need to be considered among which one aspect is the service quality, if the services provided is not okay most of the customers will not be willing to recommend the company to others who are willing to engage in their services, one of the most important thing that was discovered during this research was that even with a few complaints on the service delivered, which is bound to be in service industry, the vast majority of the customers of Avis are really willing to recommend the company to prospective customers, if asked upon.

Finally in the service industry there is always a need for improvement on the quality of service rendered to the public, which is why the research has asked for the recommendations on areas of improvement regarding services rendered. A majority of the customers gave suggestions that they could improve generally on service quality, some also where of the opinion that Avis should work towards living up to an international standard which they are, and also improve on their administrative department.

4.6 Reliability and validity

When conducting a research of this magnitude it is believed that the reliability and validity is also taken into account, regardless of the method of research that was used, be it qualitative or quantitative research method. Acknowledging if the research is reliable and valid is of substantial meaning not only to the researcher but to all involved.

Reliability is said to be the level of which the findings or outcome would be interchangeable if the research was to be carried out later by another researcher, at another time with almost the same kind of case, which would then lead to almost the same result as the first research. This is another concept that is mostly used in qualitative research methods; recently it has been adopted to fit into all forms of research work. The main idea of the reliability of any research is to depend on the information provided, which brings us to the conclusion that the main importance of any qualitative research is its quality (Veal 2011, 125.)

During the conduct of this research the interviewees were given a voice of their own to express their opinions without been asked to be biased on the subject matter, they were all given their views and opinions based on what they thought about the subject matter, also a customer care personnel was also interviewed during the course of the research to guarantee that all the people that where really involved in the research where involved during the interview, in other for the researcher to get a broad view of the subject matter. Though the company has a huge number of customers but at a point in time the researcher was provided with some names of its customers, within the Lagos region so that the research can easily get in contact with them. A total number of eleven companies were involved in the research including the customer care personnel.

When considering the validity of a research, it is best valued regardless of the type of research method adopted by the researcher during the research, when the outcome of the subject matter is reflected. This is the degree at which a particular test measures what it had better measure during the research. The validity of this research can be trusted upon as the conduct of this research has made the whole research valid. The interviews that was conducted was properly presented, amply analysed, which brings us to the findings that was arrived at, also the recommendation was made, and conclusion drawn at. Though during the conduct of the research very few customers of Avis were involved in the interviewed, their responses to the themes were very important for the outcome of the research.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

After having carried out an elaborate interview, presenting the interview, analysing the interview, and presenting the outcome of the findings on the basis of the analysis, it is possible to suggest and recommend ways in which Avis Nigeria can ameliorate the positive impact of their services to the development of tourism in Nigeria.

5.1 Recommendations

Avis Nigeria should look into a couple of issues/factors in the company operations in order for the company to move and live up to its original goal and aim at serving its customers best. First, the company should try to make provision for a quick and responsive email, either by employing someone to act fast in that area, so that the customers can be served properly without generating complains. The second issue/factor to be considered is the form of invoicing used. The electronic invoicing would be preferred by the customers. They feel that the electronic invoicing is faster, easier to access, and more convenient than the paper form.

Considering the number of customers Avis seems to have the issue of shortage of vehicles sometimes which is the third issue/factor that could help Avis with achieving their business goal. This should not be a major problem since the company is an international brand operating in Nigeria. The company should live up to its expectations to their various clients by acquiring more new cars so that the issue of cancellation of booking will not arise. They should also try to compel their various chauffeurs that they are working for the company so they should always try to satisfy their customers, even though the company is providing internal marketing to it chauffeurs.

Finally, looking at the area of operation of the company, i think it would better if the company would focus more on serving the leisure tourist. That is one big part of tourism that needs to be taken care of. Avis has been a pioneer in the field of car rental, can also devote huge time in making sure that they also contribute to serve the other tourists, and not only the business tourists. The brand is an international one and some other travellers

who are leisure tourist could want to make use of the services while they are on their leisure trip to Nigeria.

5.2 Conclusion

This research has shown that Avis Nigeria is a pioneer in the car rental business, with provision of adequate services to its respective business customers. The company has taking the cradle of car rental services in the country and is “trying harder” to make always sure that their respective clients is the number one and trying to satisfy their needs always with the service rendered to them, even though it is not an easy task. Avis Nigeria belongs to a service industry, and the service industry requires more services and much is expected when providing the services.

Customer satisfaction, which is the main goal of this research, can be said to be achieved in the company, even though there are some lapses, within the discharge of duties to their customers. On a general level it can be concluded that an average of the customers are satisfied with the services they receive from Avis.

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Interview theme for Business customers

Theme 1

- Name of Organisation
- Area of operation
- Government/state/local/ private

Theme 2

- How did you know about the company
- How often do you use Avis
- Are you likely to use Avis again
- In your humble opinion what do you think about the price of Avis car compare to some other rental companies
- Do you get prompt service response in times of problem with Avis car
- Are you satisfied with the customer care unit and responses when called upon

Theme 3

- With the service provided would you recommend Avis to a friend and why do you want to

Theme 4

- Based on the services provide would you give any recommendation to improve on the services rendered if asked, and what will that be?

Interview theme for Customer care service Personnel**Theme 1**

- Name
- Gender
- Nationality
- Age
- Position held

Theme 2

- In your opinion, how have customer satisfaction ratings changed at your organization in the past year?
- In your opinion, how important is customer satisfaction within your organization
- Does your organization have managers/staff dedicated to customer-satisfaction matters?
- How often does your organization conduct surveys to evaluate Customer satisfaction?
- Has your organization initiated programs to improve customer-satisfaction within the past years?
- How familiar are you with the concept of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)?
- How would you deal with an extremely irate customer?