



ASHESI UNIVERSITY

MARKETING PLAN FOR SUU'S RAHMA GUEST HOUSE.

Undergraduate Applied Project Submitted to The Department of Business Administration,
Ashesi University College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of
Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration

B.Sc. Business Administration

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2019

DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that this Applied Project Report is the result of my own work, and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's signature.....

Candidate's name.....

Date.....

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the Applied Project were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of Applied Project laid down by Ashesi University.

Supervisor's Signature:

Supervisor's Name:

Date.....

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ghana's political stability and general hospitality over the years has made it an attractive destination for tourism to tourists and visitors from all over the world. The influx of businessmen and tourists into the country presents a range of opportunities for businesses such as guest houses, hotels and apartments in the hospitality industry.

Despite the opportunities presented by the growing interest in Ghana, Suu's Rahma Guest House, a residential facility which seeks to provide a serene environment for both local and international guests has recorded declining levels in patronage. It is a facility located in the East-Airport area, and seeks to achieve its goals by providing competitive pricing for accommodation and other residential facilities. The vision of the facility is to be one of the leading names in the hospitality industry, especially guest houses, and some strategies for success include, competitive pricing and reducing employee turnover rate.

After conducting an internal and external environment analysis of both the business and the industry, a proposed marketing plan was developed for Suu's Rahma to aid tackle this problem using the SOSTAC model which determines the *situation* of the problem at hand, *objectives* or goal which supports the overall *strategy*, *tactics* and *actions* to take and the final aspect, *control* which checks the success of the strategy implemented.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides some insight into the history and current state of Suu's Rahma Guest House, the overall objectives, vision, mission and strategies for ensuring success of the guest house and finally attempts to analyze the Ghanaian economy and hospitality industry using two frameworks – PESTLE analysis, and the Porter's Five Forces analysis.

1.2 Company Profile of Suu's Rahma Guest House.

Suu's Rahma Guest House is a residential facility located in the heart of Spintex-East Airport area which can boast of an accommodating and home oriented atmosphere which makes residents feel warm and welcomed. Suu's Rahma Guest House has been in the hospitality industry for more than seven years and is committed to providing Ghanaians and people from all walks of life a safe, affordable and secured residence for both short and long stays. The residence has a range of different products and services that will surely make clients feel at home. With a small staff strength of five, I could sense harmony in their day-to-day activities after my data gathering visits. Nevertheless, managers confirm not all is rosy at the residential facility.

Although Suu's Rahma has been in business for a period, managers confirm that they are not satisfied with the level of patronage. Since the business started operating in 2011, it recorded on average a 77.77% occupancy rate for almost three years. This means that on average seven out of the available nine rooms were occupied for most parts of the year. (The Christmas period saw a slightly higher average of 88.889%). After 2014, the average fell to 44.44% for most parts of the year. Management attribute this to reasons including

competition from other residencies around the Spintex-East Airport area, an absent marketing function within the organization, and the general unawareness of the facility's presence.

1.3 Mission.

To create a unique and valuable identity that offers unforgettable lodging experiences for all stakeholders.

1.4 Vision

To be one of the leading names in the hospitality industry, especially guest houses.

1.5 Company Values

Suu's Rahma believes in certain key principles they believe is crucial to their success.

These are: quality, reliability, safety and love.

1.6 Some strategies to achieve success

- Competitive pricing
- Establishing long-term relationships with clients.
- Reduce employee turnover rate.

1.7 Summary of SWOT analysis of Suu's Rahma Guest House.

Figure 1.0

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive pricing. • Flexible negotiating terms. • Serene atmosphere • Location close to shopping malls, eateries and the airport. 	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively bad location (far from junction). • Semi-structured organizational arrangement • Little marketing investment
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved technology • Long-term business partners. • Human resource development. • Take advantage of online hotel services (booking.com) 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New entrants in the market. • Increasing cost of utilities and labor. • International hotel brands.

A SWOT analysis was conducted on Suu's Rahma Guest House to identify both internal and external factors that tend to affect a company's performance. The internal factors are strengths and weakness and its external factors are opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis helps identify a strong competitor, and since these competitors tend to change over time, it would be prudent to change the business' products and services too.

1.8 Rationale for selecting Suu's Rahma Guest House.

Over the past seven years of continuous operations, Suu's Rahma has not had a structured marketing department/function. As such, it is relatively difficult for people outside the Spintex environs to hear about the residence. After having a conversation with the owners of the business, Mr. Suleman Koney and Dr. Rabiātu Ammah, they expressed their concern about the low patronage being recorded, and expressed a desire to build and implement a plan to increase Suu's Rama's presence and increase patronage. In addition, due to my interests in

brand management, and marketing this project presents an opportunity for me to make a difference in the firm, and better the financial position of the business. As part of management's strategic approach to expand Suu's Rahma's business boundaries, this study would test if the proposed solution indeed guarantees a higher patronage rate, and if possible analyze other methods of increasing patronage.

1.9 Brand Stance.

Suu's Rahma's brand is centered on providing its clients with a cost-effective unforgettable experience. This means that in every aspect of its operation, it is committed to this stance, and would do everything within its power to bring this cost-effective unforgettable experience to the client.

1.10 Overview of the hospitality industry in Ghana.

The growing interdependence of world economies and markets makes it crucial for countries to have a good hospitality sector, to accommodate potential investors and travelers. It is no surprise that the global hospitality industry is considered one of the most rapidly growing sectors, which accounts for more than a third of the global services trade. (ILO, 2010). The hotel sector in Ghana has remained resistant despite recent global economic challenges. (JoyBusiness, 2017). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism and travel continued to show its resilience in 2016 despite continuous political instability in some parts of the world. According to the WTTC, the sector generated US\$7.6 trillion, which translates to 10.2% of the world's gross domestic product, and 292 million jobs in 2016, which is equivalent to 1 out of 10 jobs in the global economy. (WTTC, 2017)

The increasing number of tourist arrivals in Ghana has consequently led to an increase in tourism-related investments, which includes the development of local hotels, guest houses and other residences. It is not a surprise at all that Ghana is considered one of West Africa's favorite tourist destinations, as it can boast of consistent political stability, as well as some beneficial economic policies such as the development of the private sector, which H.E Akufo-Addo considered as one of his primary economic policies. Also, the hospitality industry is one of largest and fastest growing industries that provides employment, tax revenue and makes substantial contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of many countries. (Ottenbacher, 2006).

In 2014, Ghana had a total of 2,570 hotels and similar establishments a figure which reflects an increment of 15.35% from the previous year. In addition, the number of bed-places almost doubled within a space of nine years; 2005-2014, an increase of 90.2%, at an average annual rate of 7.1% (GSS, 2017).

1.10.1 Industry analysis – Porter's five forces

A further analysis of Ghana's hospitality industry will be analyzed using Porter's five forces framework. Michael Porter, an American academic known for his theories in economics, business strategy and social causes, lists these forces as; entry of new competitors, bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of customers, threats of substitution, and rivalry among current competitors. (Porter, 2008). This framework allows us to understand the forces that shape competition in the hospitality industry in Ghana.

1.10.2 Established competitors.

As stated in the preceding paragraphs, Ghana had a total of 2,570 hotel and similar establishments in 2014. As such, it creates a ground for competition between these establishments. Competition is also strong when it comes to local owners and international

hotels. Local establishments are likely to adopt strategies that would command more authority and increase their brand image, as such, there has been a great deal of rivalry among firms in the hospitality industry. Near Suu's Rahma Guest House, there are other residential facilities offering similar services. This creates a sense of competition between Suu's Rahma and the other firms, since all these establishments are formed to capture value. Competition in this sector, particularly in the Ledzokuku-Krowor district, Accra, is high because there are numerous firms offering similar services at competitive prices. Competition within the hospitality industry in Ghana is considered high because of the high number of firms within the industry, low switching costs between alternative residences, low customer loyalty and competitors being of equal size and capabilities.

1.10.3 Threat of substitutes.

Every human needs to be accommodated in secure environment to function effectively. As such, business owners have seen the opportunity in the market, and set up apartments, town houses, guest houses and other residencies to cater for incoming tourists, vacationers, and other residents. With the numerous number of residences available, there is an available substitute for any residence one wishes for. With these substitute products, customers can easily switch from one type of residence to another, especially when the substitute product is of better quality, and offers a better price. For example, tourists who come into Ghana have a long list of residences (guest houses, hotels, lodges etc.) to choose from, most of which offer similar services. As such, the threat of substitute in the hospitality industry is low considering the low switching costs and the quality services offered by similar residences.

1.10.4 Threats of new entrants.

New entrants in any industry are new firms that fight with the incumbent firms for market share and profitability. As described by Michael Porter, the threat of new entrants is mainly determined by industry's barriers to entry, product differentiation, switching costs and customer loyalty (Porter, 2008). Globally, the hotel industry is one which is characterized by high fixed costs, which deters some investors from entering the industry. A few years after Suu's Rahma started operations, several residences were built in the same vicinity, which posed as a threat to Suu's Rahma's profitability and market share. The hospitality industry in Ghana exhibits high entry barriers which restricts new entrants, mainly due to high cost of entry and the economies of scale enjoyed by incumbents in the industry.

1.10.5 Power of suppliers.

(Porter, 2008) describes *powerful* suppliers in an industry as those that are more concentrated than their customers and those same customers do not have an impact on their business cycle because these customers do not represent a potential for a major relationship (Cheng, 2013). For example, one-off suppliers within the industry against consistent buyers or suppliers. In the Ghanaian hospitality industry particularly, labor supply and experienced trained workers would have supplier power in the industry because these are in high demand and are prerequisites for success. Nevertheless, as compared to other industries, the hospitality industry is not often concerned about bargaining power of suppliers and receives little pressure in terms of their competitiveness.

1.10.6 Power of Buyers

Buyers(customers) in the hospitality industry can be powerful if they are more concentrated than the industry players and are able to reduce the industry's prices and margins by purchasing in high volumes or through demand for higher quality products. Examples of such powerful customers in the hospitality industry would include event organizers who would need multiple rooms for their respective clients, tour operators and airlines. For example, Suu's Rahma has a client from Liberia who brings five of his business partners along to lodge whenever he comes to Ghana. As such, with the number of guests he brings along, he can negotiate for a discount, due to the volume of his "purchase".

1.11.1 Industry Analysis

1.11.2 Political Factors

Ghana is a country located in West Africa, bordered by Togo, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast. It is a country which has enjoyed consistent political stability over the past decade and is considered as one of the epitomes of democracy and peaceful political transitions in Africa. As such, it is an attractive country for investors due to the tranquility in the country. Tourists are more likely to choose a destination where they can do their business in peace and enjoy their vacations without fear of chaos or police shootings. Political development is the necessary condition to the development of every state and should not be overlooked when analyzing the development of an industry. With the level of security in Ghana, tourists would be attracted into the country increasing revenue for the hospitality sector. On the micro level, individual residences also benefit from these increased tourist visits as they too record corresponding increased hotel bookings.

1.11.3 Economic Factors

Data from the World Bank shows that Ghana enjoyed some economic improvements from 2016 to 2017 as fiscal deficit – when a government’s expenditure exceeds its revenue – dropped from 9.3% to 6%. (TWB, 2018). According to the Ghana Statistical Service report released in April 2018, Ghana’s economy grew by 8.5% in 2017, from the previous 3.6% in 2016. The growth of the economy could cause a boom in the hospitality industry as more tourists would be attracted to do business, causing an increase in hotel bookings.

1.11.4 Social Factors

Ghana is a nation with numerous tribes, languages and cultural sites. Culture can be described as “customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation. (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2006). The friendly cultures in Ghana which is portrayed through festivals, Ghanaian foods served at restaurants in residences, attracts tourists into the country. It is important to consider the culture when analyzing the hospitality sector because, for example, there is a wave towards healthy eating in Ghana. As a manager of a hospitality business, it would important to note this and inform your cafeteria services, so their operations are in sync with what customers generally want. In addition, the Homowo festival in Accra, limits the amount the noise residencies are allowed to make. As such, operators of business in the hospitality industry should make it a point to manage their activities during these festive seasons.

1.11.5 Technological factors

The global adoption of new technologies in the hospitality industry has reshaped hoe business within the industry is done. The main aim of these technological developments would include digitization of services and personalization of experiences. Currently, hotels

and similar residences in Ghana can be found on the internet, and computers are used in almost all hotels to manage accounts, keep guest details and create a network for the residencies and potential clients.

1.11.6 Legal Factors

Players in the hospitality industry should be concerned about the legal issues concerning their operations. For example, the health and safety of workers should be protected, as it would impact workers' performance and well-being. (Ambrardar, 2015). Players in the industry are also required by law to register with the Register General's Department as a company under the Company Act 1963 and be abreast with the labor act.

1.11.7 Environmental Factors

For any form of business to survive it would have to be sustained, and this would include environmental sustainability. In Ghana, the organization responsible for implementing laws to protect environment is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA makes sure players in the hospitality industry are precautionous with their operations.

CHAPTER TWO: PROJECT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2.1 Chapter Overview

A needs assessment is a systematic exploration of the way things are and the way they should be. (Rouda & Kusy, 1996) The needs assessment of Suu's Rahma Guest House included collecting information concerning an identified need in the firm that could be solved with a feasible solution. In Suu's Rahma needs assessment, a target population analysis and a job/task analysis. With a small staff strength, it was relatively easier to ask questions and record the confidential information from these workers and other stakeholders. At the beginning of the needs assessment, Suu's Rahma's staff did not think the needs assessment was necessary. Thus, as a stakeholder in the project, I had to ask questions about the five purposes (why, who, how, what and when). This made the staff more appreciative of the study since they knew it was customized to their target population. The conducted needs assessment identified Suu's Rahma's current situation and compares it to its desired situation. The methodology and processes used in gathering data for the needs assessment will be discussed below.

2.2 Methodology

The information obtained from the needs analysis would be gathered through conducting semi-structured interviews with Suu's Rahma's staff and employees, residents around the vicinity and observing the residence from time to time. In addition to these interviews, a survey would be conducted on potential and current customers asking about how they rated Suu's Rahma's Guest House's service offering.

2.2.1 Semi-structured interviews and observations

Semi structured qualitative studies refer to qualitative approaches, typically involving interviews and observations that have some explicit structure to them, in terms of theory or method, but are not completely structured. Such studies include iterative coding of verbal responses, which is often supplemented by other data. (Blandford, 2013). This method of interview was chosen because, it allows interviewees the freedom to express their views in their own terms, it allows reliable and comparable qualitative data, and the fact that it allows for two-way communication. The following people were interviewed based on their availability; the two managers, the entire staff of the Guest House and some residents living close to the guest house. The interview guide is illustrated in **appendix one**.

2.3 Summary of insights from management.

From the interview with the management of Suu's Rahma it was deduced that the firm was experiencing a decrease in the number of guests who patronized Suu's Rahma's room services. Management expected that since Suu's Rahma had the most competitive prices among all the other residences in the East-Airport area, it would automatically result in attracting clients and make existing customers stay with Suu's Rahma. Unfortunately, the residence recorded a decrease in patronage from 2011-2014 which would ultimately lead to a reduction in the flow of revenue. After interviewing one of the managers at Suu's Rahma, my attention was drawn to the fact that Suu's Rahma's low media publicity could be one of the factors contributing to its declining patronage as the number of residencies continues to grow. When management was asked how they retained employees, it revealed that Suu's Rahma management targeted clients that came for long stays, as they believed those on long stay tend to come back more often than short-stay lodgers. One disadvantage of this method of

retaining customers is that it is solely built on existing relationships and thus, does not factor in other residents who might come in for shorter stay period.

Generally, the management praised the attitude of the workers especially, the chief cook who was praised hailed as the most hardworking staff. On the other hand, no training programs had been structured for Suu's Rahma employees which meant that they were not improving their skills and competencies.

Insights from employees.

I interviewed Suu's Rahma employees to gain further insight into the guest house's current work environment. As at now, the guest house has five permanent workers; two cooks, a room attendant, a two security officers who have varying shift times. I enquired as to why the guest house had such a small staff strength, and one of the managers explained to me that it was to cut costs, and make human resource management more effective. As of the time of the interview, there were only four members of staff available, since the other security man was not on duty to be questioned. Nevertheless, his inputs and suggestions would be discussed also.

Diagram showing statistics from interviews employees.

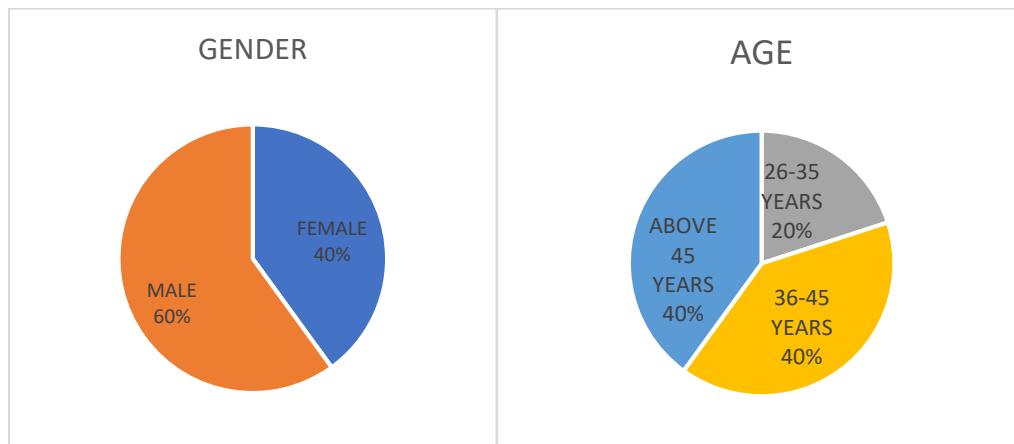


Fig. 2

Fig 2.1

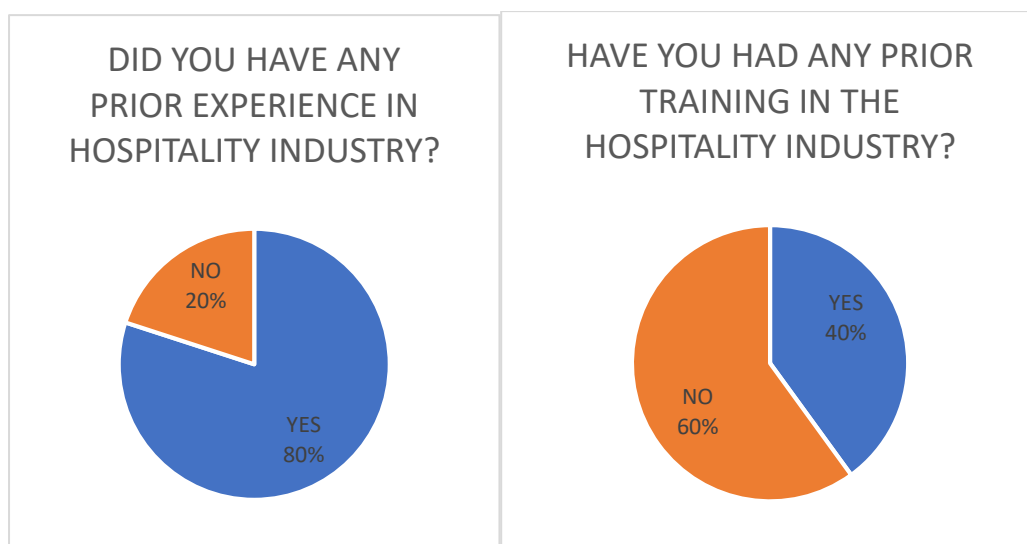


Fig. 2.2

Fig. 2.2

From the employee's responses, it was clear that 80% of the staff force had prior experience in the hospitality industry. Nevertheless, 60% of the staff strength did not have any form of training to work particularly in the hospitality industry. The staff employed learnt to do the tasks (cleaning rooms, taking orders, managing services) required on the job. I asked if the workers would want any form of training to improve their skills, and all five of them said yes. I found this very interesting because, if the workers were more skilled, they would know how to work more efficiently; e.g. reducing customer wait times and improve

productivity. In a working environment where employees are more skilled, they would be more willing to embrace challenges which makes work more rewarding. Employees having more training would also translate into better customer service interaction with customers. Overall, the main complaints from the staff involved long shifts due to the small staff strength, and the unwillingness of some customers to pay for services due to business familiarity.

2.4 Insights from customers.

Fifty-four responses were recorded from customers (current lodgers), potential customers (businessmen, expatriates, and local folk who gave their responses) and a few residents living around. Of the 54 responses, 37 people representing 68.51% of total responses had heard or knew of Suu's Rahma Guest House. More than 80% of the respondents who knew about the residence attributed it to them hearing about it from family and friends and seeing the numerous residences numerous signage's in the East Airport vicinity. Previous studies have shown that word-of-mouth was considered the strongest marketing channel for small hotels and guesthouses. (Mcleay & Filieiri, 2013).

Due to the intangibility of hotel services, they cannot be evaluated before the customer's experience. Therefore, this presents a higher risk for customers who become reliant on the word of mouth. (Lewis & Chambers, 2000). In addition, (Dichter, 1966) argues that positive word-of-mouth is likely to increase the purchase intentions of customers for new products because it reduces the risks involved. Customers hearing of the Suu's Rahma from friends and family suggested to me Suu's Rahma's poor reach which could be attributed to bad advertisement.

In addition, 28 out of the 54 respondents said they had ever patronized a public residence (guest house, hotel, apartments). Of the 28 who had had any prior experiences,

more than 20 said they would choose a residence based on the cost, serenity, customer service and how much value the residence generally offered. Surprisingly, the cost and the residence's distance from the main city's amenities did not matter to 8 out of the 28 respondents.

I interviewed one Ghanaian customer who wanted to remain anonymous about how he would rate the guest house's services. He had been Suu's Rahma business partner for seven years. I asked if he had visited the other apartments that sprang up just after Suu's Rahma's establishment. He confirmed that he had, but even though those other residences had bigger rooms, and much more cable television, he didn't feel at home at those places. He further added that Suu's Rahma presented him the best value offering among hotels and guest houses in the East-Airport area. This rather confused me. I asked myself, "if someone thinks this is the best value offering among many, why then are we experiencing long periods of low patronage?" At the time of the interview, the lodgers interviewed did not seem to have too much of an issue with the restaurant's food. Nevertheless, one Liberian occupant was quick to suggest that some African meals be added to the menu since he was a frequent customer

2.5 Observations.

In addition to all the information gathered from customers and employees, my first-hand experience during my three nonconsecutive days was valuable to the project. Participation observation, the investigative technique "whereby the researcher interacts with people in everyday life while collecting information is a unique method for investigating the enormously rich, complex, conflictual, problematic and diverse experiences, thoughts, feelings and activities of human beings and the meanings of their existence" (Jorgensen, 2015). During my three non-consecutive days, I observed the entire facility to see how employees interacted with clients and how clients interacted with management. From my

observations, the kitchen staff were the most occupied as they had to run both the kitchen and the restaurant simultaneously. In addition, one of the cooks would sometimes help the worker who manages the room service. Unfortunately, Suu's Rahma was not fully occupied when I got there so I could not have a chance to evaluate its operations in full capacity.

My observations further revealed that one security officer had to be at post from 6 AM – 6PM, while another replaced him from 6PM to 6AM. I observed that these security men hardly reported to duty on time, and most often left before their scheduled time. However, the other staff at the residence did their work efficiently and were welcoming to guests. Due to a small staff number, Suu's Rahma has just two chefs managing the entire facility. As such, we observed that there was increased pressure on both cooks especially when the facility was fully occupied. No major maintenance/service work had to be done, and the facility was fully functional. Per both my observations and the interviews conducted, it can be deduced that Suu's Rahma needs a marketing solution that would not only help the residence be known to more customers but also make the company's internal operations to meet potential future demand.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUBJECT MATTER.

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter seeks to present the previous work done in academia concerning the subject matter. For the literature to pertain to the problem at hand, I would narrow in on concepts, theories, frameworks and general academia debates that are important to the subject matter. From Suu's Rahma's needs assessment, it was clearly identified that the company's main problem was the low level of patronage which saw the business record declining revenue streams. Also, the residence faced the challenge of not being able to attract and retain customers, of which is very essential to business growth.

3.2 Marketing.

Marketing is one of the business functions that a business cannot do without. According to Larry J. Rosenberg and Maurice I. Mandell, both marketing educators, marketing is defined as *an exchange process between producers and consumers, in which a producer matches a marketing offering (the product or service plus its promotion, distribution, and price) to the wants and needs of the consumer*. (Mandell & Rosenberg, 1981) The main highlight from this definition lies in the creation and exchange of value to satisfy what the customer ultimately wants and would pay for.

Furthermore, the Committee on Definitions of the American Marketing Association defines marketing as *those activities which direct the flow of goods and services from production to consumption*. This definition highlights the role and scope of marketing and talks very little about the roles others executives have to play in the marketing function. (Staudt & Taylor, 1965) Both definitions identify marketing as existing in the exchange of value space, and factors in the satisfaction of a customer want. Peter Drucker, a renowned management consultant was however clear to state that the needs and wants of both

employees and customers were always evolving and that one responsibility of management was to assess the changing market environment and reconfigure the firm's resources and capabilities to respond accordingly. (Drucker, 1988)

3.3 Marketing Mix (7Ps, 4Ps)

The term “marketing mix” was first coined as the 4Ps (price, place, promotion, product) by Jerome McCarthy, a marketing professor. Product is a physical object or service that consumers need or want. Place is to offer products at a convenient location for guests. Price refers to setting the products or services at a price that can both yield a profit and attract consumers to make a purchase. Finally, promotion is to let the prospective consumers know what is on offer by advertising, direct selling, or other marketing channels. (Ahmad & Saber, 2015).

However, McCarthy insisted that the 4P framework was not a scientific theory, but rather a mere framework that helped managers suit solutions to meet the customer's needs. The marketing mix presents of means of translating marketing planning into practice. (Bennett, 1997). According to (Palmer, 2009) the mix can be used to develop both long-term strategies and short-term tactical programs. Nevertheless, Kristian Möller, identifies the shortcomings of the 4Ps framework, as the pillars of traditional marketing have come under growing criticisms. (Möller, 2010)

Currently with marketing being more integrated into various internal operations, some scholars have tried to expand the scope of the 4Ps, by adding three additional P's (packaging, people and process). (Möller, 2010). (Cowell, 1984) finds two reasons justifying the revision of the original marketing mix. He claims the original mix was developed for manufacturing companies, and goes on to argue that there is empirical evidence suggesting that marketing practitioners in the service sector find the marketing mix not being inclusive enough for their

needs. He proposes that companies in the service industry adopt a more inclusive marketing mix which would include three more P's: participants, physical evidence and processes.

Thus, as a business in the service industry, the 7P's: *physical evidence, product, place, process, promotion, people, and price*) will be applicable in developing a marketing plan for Suu's Rahma Guest House.

With the addition of the other P's, the people element of the marketing mix would include all the staff of the business that interacts with customers, the physical facility refers to the tangible components that contribute to the service offering, while processes are all the administrative and bureaucratic functions of the enterprises. The use of relevant marketing strategies can be important for small firms by securing transactions, while also acquiring and retaining customers which enlarges the client base. (Ahmad & Saber, 2015).

It is important to study the marketing mix and its relationship with gaining competitive advantage/ increasing efficiency. As such, a study conducted by Hameed Abdulnabi Al-Debi and Ashraf Mustafa of Al-Zaytoonah University in Jordan, aimed to investigate the extent of the impact of services, in achieving competitive advantage for five-star hotels. The authors test different hypothesis and come to a conclusion that there is a defining relationship between each element of the marketing mix, and the competitive advantage within the hotel industry. (Al-Debi & Ashraf Mustafa, 2014).

The author's study also came to the conclusion that hotel managers should pay attention to the security and safety of guests and recommended hotel management pay more attention to the service providers, training and development. As such, it is important for every hotel manager to improve on these elements in their daily hotel operations. Inasmuch as the case study presented was based in Jordan, we can identify a number of similarities with Suu's Rahma's operations as it also operates within the same industry.

3.4 The role of organizational culture in the marketing function.

Different scholars have presented varying definitions of organizational culture. Definitions of *organizational culture* from recent studies include; “a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by organization members” (Schwartz & Davis, 1981) and “a system of publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating or a given group at a given time.” (Pettigrew, 1979). Irrespective of the growing interests in organizational culture among scholars, no strong consensus has formed about a definition of the term. (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). The success of any business marketing strategy could depend not only on the extent of its conformity to customer cultural norms, but also on the conformity with the values and beliefs of employees in various countries. (Hofstede, 2011). (Deshpande & Webster, 1989) argue that marketing scholars.

3.4.1 Contingency Marketing Management

This involves examining the impact of an organization’s values and beliefs on market performance. For example, one can compare a business focusing on customer needs with one that is all about maximizing shareholder wealth on terms such as long-term revenue growth, earnings per share or their stock value. It would be prudent to identify the cultural traits, the shared values and beliefs, that are characteristic of a customer-oriented, market-driven enterprise. Also important to contingency marketing management is the study of the study of a particular business form as a cultural phenomenon – product/brand management. (Deshpande & Webster, 1989).

The relevance of understanding organizational culture issues pertaining to the marketing space is irrefutable. The Marketing Science Institute in 1988 called for research on ways to develop and maintain both customer and market focus which translates into knowing

the role of marketing in an organization, and how customers can become more customers-oriented.

3.5. Schein's Model.

Edgar Schein, a former management professor, invented the Schein's organizational culture model to make culture more visible within the organization. Per the model, there are both direct and indirect structures within an organization. With the model, Edgar Schein argues that organizational culture is directly influenced by these direct structures (worker behavior, worker opinions and appointments in the organization), and adds that indirect structures (mission, vision statement, company rituals) do not influence the organization's culture (Schein, 1985). Schein's model is divided into three different levels:

3.5.1 Artefacts and symbols.

Schein identifies artefacts and symbols as the visible elements in the organization such as the company logo, corporate clothing and overall operation processes. He further adds that these symbols are not only visible to employees, but also to external parties. Keeping and maintaining a good image of your company is important because it has an influence on if one would patronize your service or not.

3.5.2 Espoused Values.

This concern the general standards, values and conduct in the organization. Managers should note how the organization expresses strategies, objectives and philosophies and the considerations when these are made to the public. There could be problems when the ideas of managers are not in sync with that of the organization.

3.5.3 Basic Underlying assumptions

This discusses the foundations on which culture is built and answers the “how do things get done around here” question. Most of the time, the underlying assumption are intangible, and often difficult to describe and is only deeply understood by people who know the organization inside out.

While Schein’s model has become generally accepted, the reality is that the model is quite abstract and substitutes complexity reduction for substantive explanatory value. (Gutterman, 2019).

3.6 The SOSTAC marketing model.

The SOSTAC marketing model was developed by Paul Smith, a marketing author and consultant in the 1990s. The model focuses on the six vital elements (situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions, control) of any business that help in creating an inclusive marketing strategy or improving channel tactics like search engine optimization (SEO).

3.6.1 Situation

The initial part of the model asks the question, “where are we now?”. To understand the situation analysis more effectively, the manager could probe further by asking the following the questions:

- How is Suu’s Rahma performing?
- What are Suu’s Rahma’s distinct competitive (marketing) advantages? How were they established?
- How effective are our communication channels? (websites, signposts, advertisements)
- How effective are our insurance policies against unforeseen circumstances?
- How could these circumstances affect our business?

- How effective is Suu's Rahma's marketing mix?
- What is our segmentation strategy?

3.6.2 Objectives

Objectives analysis asks the “where does the business want to go?” question. The objectives of the organization are the second most important element in designing a marketing plan. (Brassington, 2004). The designing of the marketing plan itself is dependent on the objectives set by the organization – this makes it clear that the organization's overall objectives are essential for the effective functioning of the marketing communication. Furthermore, since the objective of the company is the paramount message being communicated to your target market, it is vital that the company's objectives reflect upon the existing marketing demand in addition to the company's notion on quality and value-based services. As identified by Abhlasha Mehta in *Using self-concept to assess advertisement effectiveness*, the message being communicated to the target market is one critical element in the marketing plan, thus making it essential to form the objectives correctly. (Mehda, 1994)

3.6.3 Strategy

This is the actual marketing plan for the organization. *Strategy* helps the manager formulate the actual plan on how to effectively communicate the objectives the identified target market. Research by Kim W. Chan and Reneè Mauborgne show that the marketing communication strategy is the critical element in the design and effectiveness of the communication plan itself. The authors further explain that the business strategy should be formed by embracing the market situation and objectives through critical analysis. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

Furthermore, the argument by scholars such as Gerry Johnson and Kevan Scholes in the book, *Exploring Corporate Strategy* that the marketing communication strategy should include the core strategies of the company, justifies that the strategy formulation for the marketing communication plan is the critical stage to the plan itself. (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008)

Generally, the marketing communication strategy should embrace the following:

- The business objectives should be included in the message being communicated.
- The identified mode of communication should not only provide quality information, but also make sure it is void of any redundancy (with respect to the information being conveyed).
- The designed marketing communication strategy should highlight the quality and value added services to the customers in the target market.

3.6.4 Tactics

Tactics refer to the methods of organizing the strategy in the target market – these include the methods of advertisements or communicating the objectives through a medium. Since most business owners (including that of Suu's Rahma) are willing to devote substantial amounts to promoting their businesses through an effective communication strategy, implementing the right tactics could prove very vital in the operations of the organization. Suu's Rahma tactics could include conducting a special event that engages most stakeholders in the society, through the use of traditional advertisement methods (pamphlet circulation and newspaper advertisements covering the event). To gain a further advantage, the message communicated in these advertisements should not only promote the event but also attract potential customers by providing quality information – services, seasonal promotions, long-stay offers). Once this is done, it can be followed by a promotional offer for membership on

the day of the special event, while attractive offers such as the “introduce your friend” scheme where a guest gets discounted rates when they refer the business to a number of clients.

The aforementioned tactic would not only attract the attention of everyday newspaper readers but also, increase awareness in the target market about the event. The argument of Karen Benezra that the tactics in the marketing communication plan can be effective only through the formulation of the strategies further justifies why the message being conveyed is vital to the success of the marketing plan. (Benezra, 2005).

3.6.5 Actions

At this stage of the marketing plan, the stakeholder’s interests are reviewed and the plan is adjusted as necessary to meet the interest of the stakeholders. As argued by Gerry Johnson and Kevan Scholes, the stakeholder interest is the vital element to the success of any marketing strategy since the marketing strategy should satisfy the people who have invested in promoting the company. (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008).

According to Frances Brassington, the involvement of stakeholders in the action plan is vital to “steer the plan in the right direction to meet the goals of the company and the interests of the stakeholders” (Brassington, 2004). In addition, due to the fact that the business in question benefits from the stakeholder investment, it is necessary to meet their expectations in the communication plan. This asserts that the effectiveness of the marketing plan lies not only in its ability to attract customers, but also the ability of the business to meet the expectations of the stakeholders.

3.6.6 Controls

The final stage of the SOSTAC model is used by stakeholders and operational managers to scrutinize the progress of the plan. Control measures are normally used to assess the overall effectiveness of the strategy communicated and the tactics deployed by the marketing plan. As such control measures would look into the effectiveness of communicating channels and if possible find other efficient alternatives.

- Primary Stakeholder control - The primary stakeholder being the investor has a higher level of control over the design of the plan.
- Secondary Stakeholder control - This is where Suu's Rahma would have control over its marketing plan. Generally secondary control covers three specific elements; operational excellence, strategic deployment, secondary stakeholder control.

CHAPTER IV: SOLUTION & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4.1 Chapter overview

The author in this chapter re-defines the solution of increasing the overall level of patronage at Suu's Rahma Guest House. The author suggests that solution be designed using the SOSTAC framework which was coined by P.R Smith in the 1990s. PR Smith's SOSTAC model comprises six different components – situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions, and control.

4.2 The initial stage – SITUATION analysis

This is a means by which a company can identify its own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to external opportunities and threats as it asks the “where are we now?” question. Situation analysis would involve a thorough analysis of the internal and external factors that could potentially affect a business. (Lorette, 2019)

The external factors comprise many factors which are divided into micro-environmental and macro-environmental factors. The macro-environment consists of legal, economic, political and technological forces. In addition to these factors, green issues and larger societal and environmental issues are included. On the other hand, micro-environmental factors include the trends in the current market, structure of the hospitality market, and competition among existing market participants. Failure to comprehend a company's internal strengths and weaknesses would eventually result in developing an ineffective marketing plan which would not solve the identified problem.

The internal analysis of Suu's Rahma's operations would focus on the facility's current marketing mix. The marketing mix is a set of tools that a firm that would have to become familiar with if they're to produce the offering that adequately satisfies the customer.

4.2 Suu's Rahma's current marketing mix

Any organization's marketing mix is a framework that identifies the principal decision making areas managers must consider in configuring their offerings to suit consumers' needs. (Goi, 2009)

4.2.1 Product

Even though Suu's Rahma is identified as a public residential facility(service-oriented), it is also involved in the selling of certain products. These products are typically convenience products, and fast moving consumer goods. Convenience products are goods that require a minimum amount of effort on the part of the consumer. At Suu's Rahma Guest House, these include juice, water, scratch cards. The restaurant which is run next to the kitchen also served many foods to both guests lodging at the facility, and people from outside. Although many of the inputs(products) used in operations – foodstuff, furniture, cable TV – are imported from the United States of America and other parts of the world, it also sells made in Ghana juices, and management ensures that more made-in-Ghana products (foodstuff, bed coverings) are used in daily operations.

4.2.2 Place/Physical Evidence

Currently, Suu's Rahma has one branch which is located at East-Airport. The choice of location is strategic per management because, according to them guests want a location “close to the airport, but not too close too.” It is a two-storey residence with rooms on both floors, two open eating areas, a fully-functioning laundry and a security post at the entrance of the facility. The facility is also neatly decorated with natural flowers over the walls, and also has neatly pruned hedges across the terrace.

4.2.3 People

Suu's Rahma currently has five permanent workers, two of which have been with the company since its inception. These workers are being paid to act as chefs, room attendants/laundry worker, and security personnel. Of the five workers, none had graduated from any tertiary institution. Management provides each staff, excluding the security personnel, with a Suu's Rahma branded t-shirt which is to be worn during daily activities. Staff are to be neatly dressed even when they're at the blind side of the customer. Management of Suu's Rahma takes into account the concerns of staff and periodically inquires about how to make the job better. Their day-to-day activities include but would not be limited to welcoming guests, checking in and out guests, and providing food and other necessities.

4.2.4 Promotion.

Initially when the guest house started its operations, it started a subtle marketing campaign by handing out T-shirts in and around the East Airport area in an attempt to create some awareness about the business. However currently, neither is Suu's Rahma involved in media advertising or any promotion campaigns.

4.2.5 Price.

A good pricing strategy helps you determine the price point at which you can maximize profits on sales of your products or services (Maguire, 2018). Currently, Suu's Rahma has adopted a market penetration pricing strategy which aims to attract customers by offering lower prices on goods and service offerings. As per management, the main objective of adopting this strategy is to keep Suu's Rahma's offering in line with similar products being

offered by competition while avoiding a price struggle. By doing this, management believes Suu's Rahma would be able to maintain the level of revenue generated.

4.3 Competitor analysis.

Competition analysis involves identifying a company's competitors, and analyzing their individual strengths and weaknesses. Suu's Rahma current competitors as observed and gathered from research include Elizabeth Guest House, Oak Plaza Hotel, East Airport Guest House, Hotel Green which are all found in the East-Airport, Spintex area. The main competitor is identified as Elizabeth Guest House due to the similarity in services with that of Suu's Rahma.

4.4 Trends in the hospitality market.

With multiple international brands such as Holiday Inn and Marriott coming to invest in Ghana's hospitality industry, there has been high competition between local brands such as Suu's Rahma and these international names. Hotel owners now recognize the importance of technology in the operations, as it helps managers reach a larger audience and attract potential customers. From the analysis of Porter's five forces in Chapter Two, it is clear that competition among hotels in Ghana is high. But after careful assessment, it comes clear that once a business is able to penetrate the market, there is a low threat of substitute from new entrants which gives Suu's Rahma an opportunity to attract and maintain a customer base.

4.5 Objectives.

This stage in building the marketing plan involves answering the "where does the business want to go?" question. It also involves identifying objectives to support the long-term running of the business. Since the problem identified is low patronage, and the inability

of Suu's Rahma to attract and retain customers, the objectives of the marketing plan would be based on Suu's Rahma's existing marketing mix (product, promotion, place, people, physical evidence and process) and is likely to develop an updated marketing mix afterwards.

4.5.1 Marketing Objectives.

- Increase Suu's Rahma's revenue from its restaurant and room patronage by 15% by the end of July 2020.
- To retain current customers and attract new customers through marketing campaigns e.g. targeted advertisement.

4.6 Suu's Rahma's New Marketing Mix

4.6.1 Product.

Suu's Rahma's current product offering includes food from the restaurant, hotel rooms spaces, laundry and scratch cards sold at the front desk. To increase revenue from hotel patronage (room services, restaurant & laundry), management has planned to increase the residence's product offering, by introducing a new line of both local and continental dishes. Management believes this would help increase revenue because many non-Ghanaian guests request for foods which are not readily available on the menu. This presents an opportunity for Suu's Rahma to identify the foods that are requested for often, and serve those foods in the restaurant. This would help increase revenue by approximately 5%.

4.6.2 Price.

Respondents to my questionnaire made it clear to me that they were satisfied with Suu's Rahma's current pricing. They compared it to other residences, and commended Suu's

Rahma for effectively controlling its price. However, in comparison with Oak Plaza, (a market leader in the East-Airport area) it is noted that for Suu's Rahma to increase the price of its services and products, it would have to be accompanied with the necessary improvements/upgrades in the services provided. From January to February inflation increased from 9.0% to 9.2%. Thus, management has planned to increase prices of certain particular goods (food and drinks) should this trend continue.

4.6.3 Promotion

Promotion efforts involve activities that would help push Suu's Rahma's brand image. To help boost Suu's Rahma's brand image, the current website will be revamped. Management also plans to set-up social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook & Instagram) and subscribe to other booking sites to enable the business reach a wider reach. Currently, the facility has very little online presence, and by doing using social media and other digital platforms management hopes to increase brand reach.

4.6.4 Place

Suu's Rahma's location provides a serene atmosphere for its clients. From my observations, the residence needs a paintjob. Some parts of the main building had paint peeling off, thus some refurbishments would need to be made. In addition, management plans to mount additional sign posts in the East Airport area.

4.6.5 People

Considering Suu's Rahma's staff low level of education and training, management plan on training new staff in the future. With the current staff, management plans on teaching them about customer care and better ways of interacting with clients. Management must also

ensure that there is a conducive work environment for staff to work in. Management understands that there isn't a defined culture within the organization. This would mean that staff did chores as they pleased without following any particular order.

4.6.5 Process

To add more value to a company's offering, its internal processes would have to be evaluated and improved. Currently, the process of booking Suu's Rahma is a simple one as the website provides a section to check-in and check-out of the guest house upon arrival. However, upon recent checks, it was found that the website was not fully functioning, and bookings did not always appear in management's books.

4.7 Strategies

In order for Suu's Rahma to reach its target of increasing revenue by 15% by the end of July 2020, management would have to adopt a strategy that would help the business grow. After considering Suu's Rahma and its competitor's offerings, the author suggests that the market penetration strategy be employed. Market penetration is both a measure and a strategy. A business would employ a market penetration strategy to attempt to penetrate into an already existing market. The goal of Suu's Rahma employing this strategy is to get in quickly with Suu's Rahma products. This strategy involves the increased sale of already existing goods to a market that is already in existence (Waininana & Oloko, 2015). The market penetration strategy could be considered as the least risky strategy among all four of **Ansoff's Matrix**. The target market for Suu's Rahma includes travelers, locals, business people as well as clients who wish to have a relaxed stay elsewhere.

4.8 Tactics

Tactics refer to the methods of organizing the strategy in the target market – these include the methods of advertisements or communicating the objectives through a medium. Tactics to improve each aspect of the marketing mix would be explained into detail in the subsequent paragraphs.

4.8.1 Product

To increase product variety and value, there could be additional meals served in the restaurants. In addition, a pool table could be introduced into the facility to entertain guests. Per my observations, each room was not connected to the full cable TV package. As such, management could add extra channels to their TV's which would then allow management to increase prices. For loyal customers, a Suu's Rahma branded souvenir could be handed out, if guests stay for more than a week. This management believes can be a marketing strategy also. The restaurant also plans to introduce music whenever there is a guest to add value to the overall dining experience. The author suggested to management of the facility that they could introduce a functioning bar to serve alcoholic beverages. Upon further investigation, management refused the idea, citing religious references.

4.8.2 Place

Suu's Rahma can boast of a serene environment which guests capitalize on. Guests who have been with Suu's Rahma for a long time tend to acknowledge its atmosphere as one of the reasons they choose the residence. However, as stated in previous paragraphs some maintenance work needs to be done on the main building, and a few furniture would have to be re-sprayed into better condition. From my observation, the eating area on the first floor

had decolorized tiles, and some of the wooden furniture were being infested with bugs. As such, management should make sure those are checked and corrected. Additional hedges would have to be planted to ensure consistency on the walls. As per management, a budget of approximately GHS 45,000 has been drawn to cater for the upgrades. To ensure the business runs and maintenance is done simultaneously, management would have to plan and work with workers from outside to make sure maintenance work does not interfere with the operations of the business.

4.8.3 People

To add value to a worker would mean improving their skillset. As per observations and interaction with staff and management, it is clear that more than 60% of Suu's Rahma's current employees had not received any form of training in the hospitality sector. Suu's Rahma's staff can be introduced to online human resource training programs which are cheap and effective. These courses would help employees understand the basics of productivity and customer service. Currently, management plans on introducing staff to the Brentwood Open Learning College, and if possible bring in a qualified hotel manager to teach staff about the basics of service delivery.

4.8.4 Process

Management recognized that they hardly evaluate the different processes staff go through in executing a task. To make sure employees report to duty on time, management could employ a flow chart to identify the key steps staff take in performing a task. Flow charts could be used in the kitchen, at the security point, or even at the front-desk from when the guest first checks in to the time they are to leave. In the kitchen, the chefs could draw a flow chart from the time foodstuff arrive, the time an inventory check is done, to the time the

food is processed and served to the clients. Examining a service flow-chart would help management understand which parts of the chart is non-value adding so they can be pruned.

4.8.5 Price

Management recognized the increasing inflation rate and general cost of goods on the market and have decided to increase the rates by 10% by the end of the year. As per management, should inflation and general cost of goods balloon out of proportion, the necessary changes would have to be made concerning the prices.

Table 2.

Room type	Old Price(GHS)	Suggested Price(GHS)
Standard (single)	150	165
Standard (double)	180	200
Executive (double)	200	220
Suite	300	330

In addition, the pack of rice with chicken that was GHS 30, would also be sold for GHS 35 cedis considering the increase in operational costs.

4.8.6 Promotion

With Suu's Rahma having no social media presence, it would be necessary to build its presence since social media would be one of the paramount ways that information about the business would be disseminated. The author suggests both Twitter and Facebook pages be built to share information. As often used by most social media influencers, a competition can be run where people are asked to tag their friends on a post. With this type of social media marketing, the post is shared across social media to thousands of people, and the post with the most shares, "likes" or "retweets" gets a prize. With Facebook, the business can invest in their ad services where Suu's Rahma brand would be pushed to millions of people all over the world.

4.8.7 Physical Evidence

Suu's Rahma has a serene atmosphere. However, after my observations, I noticed there was a drinking bar just across the street that played loud music especially on Sundays. As such management could plead with the operators of the bar to reduce the volume to create a more serene atmosphere every day. Below are some pictures of the residence. Below are some pictures of the guest house –



Figure 4.1

The frontage and reception of the facility.



Figure 4.2

A picture of a double-room.



Figure 4.3

View from the side.



Figure 4.4

Eating area, (source – www.booking.com)

Management could plan to intensify promotional activities during Christmas and other holiday seasons to attract a larger pool of customers. Considering its closeness to the Accra's main airport, Suu's Rahma could strategically position stands at various vantage points at the airport. By doing this, guests arriving at the Airport already have a sense of Suu's Rahma and are more likely to patronize its services.

4.9 Action Plan.

A detailed action plan encompasses how the different tactics would be done. With Suu's Rahma not having identified heads of departments and also considering the small staff strength, it would be ideal to structure a cost-effective plan which would not address the needs in question.

4.10. A draft of the proposed action plan to be implemented.

Table 4.1

Who is in charge?	Activities involved.	Duration of activity.	Cost(GHS)
General managers	Refurbishment of hotel eating area, and painting of exterior and interior walls.	4 months	Approximately 45,000
General Managers and permanent staff.	Online Hotel Management Training and in-person employee training	Online training – 100 hours In-person training - perpetuity	Online training – N/A In-person training – 2100 for 3 months.
General Managers	Weekly internal checks	Every week.	N/A
General Managers and possible marketer	Social Media marketing, and promotions (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)	Throughout the year, but focusing on more adverts during holiday periods.	2500

The author suggests that refurbishments be done first because guests would not be pleased to see rough walls and fading floor tiles. Painters and tilers would be employed to improve the overall look of the buildings. As per management, approximately GHS 45,000 would be budgeted for renovation work. In addition, setting up and running promotional campaigns on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram would cost an estimated GHS 2500. These promotional activities such as the “most likes, shares and retweets win” competition would help spread the brand’s name. To improve the staff’s skillset, an online course would be paid for to help staff learn more about service delivery.

4.11. Control

These are processes that management would go through to make sure the business is achieving its targets. For the weekly internal checks, management would have to make sure that all room services are being run effectively. Other peripherals such as the laundry should also be checked to ensure it runs smoothly. To monitor how staff are doing in their training programs, their assessments would be analyzed to make sure they grasp concepts learned. The author suggests management adopt a balanced score card framework to measure performance. The balanced scorecard approach helps management measure performance and make sure Suu’s Rahma’s objectives are met.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

With the influx of international hotel brands such as Marriot and Holiday Inn into the hospitality industry, competition is growing on the daily. Hotels, guest houses and other residential facilities continually find it difficult to attract and retain customers. The story is no different at Suu's Rahma is not much different as per this project's needs analysis, a gap has been identified in attracting and retaining customers. As such, the author develops a solution in the form of a marketing plan adopted using the SOSTAC – **situation, objectives, strategies, tactics, actions** and **control**- model.

With Suu's Rahma being encouraged to adopt a market penetration strategy, this would help them attract and retain new customers which may include those of current competitors. Market penetration would help Suu's Rahma offer more variety of goods and services for a relatively lower price as compared to other competitors. Elements of the solution would include social media marketing, employee training, ensuring internal checks to make sure all processes are efficient, and the facility's refurbishment. Management can sit down twice a year, to check that half's performance with annual plans to make sure goals are being met and take curative actions when necessary.

5.2 Project Limitations

- At the time of the interviews, the facility was not fully occupied which caused may cause a bias in the responses.
- Due to the distance from Ashesi to the facility, it did not allow the author to visit frequently to gather more data.
- The staff may not have revealed sensitive information because they thought it might affect their employment status.

5.3 Recommendations

The education and training of a company's staff would affect the overall productivity of business. As Suu's Rahma staff are not formally educated to work in the hospitality, the author recommends that management structures both formal and informal training programs that would help improve the overall productivity of the business. This is therefore aforementioned and described in the solution plan. In effect, if management implements the proposed plan, Suu's Rahma would be able to apply its market penetration strategy to beat existing competition and hopefully become market leaders in the hospitality industry.

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APPENDIX

Informed Consent Form

I, Jawad Koney, a Business Administration student of Ashesi, write to seek your permission to conduct my Applied Research Project with Suu's Rahma Guest House. The purpose of this Applied Project is to understand the current state of Suu's Rahma Guest House in terms of its investments in marketing, training of employees and overall strategies for success. Your inputs will be highly valuable to this project as it would give a better understanding of the problem matter, and how identified problems can be solved. You should consider this study not risky as your inputs would be used to improve the company's operations and achieve the desired level of patronage management wishes for.

You could send an e-mail to Jawad Mubeen Koney(jawad.koney@ashesi.edu.gh) if you have any concerns or contact the project supervisor, Dr. Gordon Adomdza (Gordon.adomdza@ashesi.edu.gh) for further information.

Participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

Name of researcher:

Date:

A Portion of the Interview Guide.**For employees:**

- How long have you been working with Suu's Rahma Guest House?
- Have you noticed a significant drop in patronage since you started working here?
- How did you hear about Suu's Rahma Guest House? Radio, TV Adverts, Newspaper, or from a reference.
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the overall operations of the guest house?
- How would you rate Suu's Rahma's service offerings?

For management:

- For how long have you been working with Suu's Rahma Guest House?
- Have you noticed a change in management style from your first year of working at Suu's Rahma?
- How do you attract customers to Suu's Rahma Guest House?
- What are some challenges you face in running the residence?
- What are some identified strengths that the guest house can boast of?
- What about the guest house allows customers to keep coming back?
- What strategies have you put in place to tackle competition between Suu's Rahma and other emerging public residencies.

For current customers:

- How long have you patronized Suu's Rahma's services?
- How did you hear about Suu's Rahma Guest House?
- Which services do you patronize at the guest house? Hotel room? Kitchen? Restaurant?
- Do you think there is a service Suu's Rahma could add to their current offerings?
- How would you rate Suu's Rahma's pricing strategy? Very low? Low? Moderate? High?
- What would you change about how Ramada runs its current operations?

For potential customers and residents.

- Have you ever heard of Suu's Rahma Guest House? If yes, how and when?
- Which residencies do you often visit? Why these places?
- On what basis do you choose your preferred lodging location?
- What in Suu's Rahma would make you patronize their services?
- How many clients ask you (the area residents) about the rate for other nearby residences?

DASHBOARD

Problem Space

Low patronage level at Suu's Rahma Guest House

- Management expressed concern about the decreasing level of the customer base over a period of time.
- A number of similar residences have come up in and around Suu's Rahma environs.
- Many factors that could lead to low patronage: little investment in marketing, bad brand image, location, etc.

Needs Assessment & Stakeholders

Needs assessment to identify the needs of the various departments of the organisation.

- Needs assessment included interviews, research and open-ended questions that enabled staff, management, customers and other stakeholders express their opinions on various matters.
- Needs assessment is key to identifying what particular problem the organisation is facing, and helps in choosing a solution for the company.
- Thoughts, opinions and suggestions from these interviews are used in implementing a solution to better the services of the business.
- Stakeholders in the project include: the researcher (Jawad Koney), project supervisor (Gordon Adomdza), Suu's Rahma Guest House and Ashei University

Solution, Recommendations and Conclusion.

SOSTAC MODEL

- The **Situation, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, Action, Control** model helps the company know it is now and where it wants to go.
- Suu's Rahma's marketing mix is reviewed: changes are made to pricing, staff training, and over process strategy.
- Conclusion: The influx of international hotel brands has made the local hotel industry more competitive. As such, companies should look for tactics to help them beat this current phenomenon.
- Recommendation: The tactics that Suu's Rahma would employ should be long-term, and encompass all aspects of operations.