

HOSPITALITY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study aimed at determining the influence of hospitality environmental management strategies on socio-economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the influence of staff training/development strategy and health and safety management strategy on employment in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design. The population of 1,455 participants comprised 348 management staff of registered hotels, 746 management staff of registered restaurants and 361 tourism workers in Cross River State. The sample size of 314 respondents representing 21.6 % of the population was used for the study. Data for the study was collected using a researcher structured questionnaires titled: 'Hospitality Environmental Management Strategies on Socio-economic Development Questionnaire (HEMSSDQ). The instrument was submitted to three experts from the Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Science, University of Uyo for face validation. Descriptive statistics count, frequency, percent and bar chart were used to present the result of the findings. Findings of the study showed that staff training/development strategy and health and safety management strategy positively influences social economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Improvement in the quality of services, profit maximization and socio-economic development of the host community among others by hospitality industry is attainable through the utilization of strategic environmental management approaches such as staff training and health and safety management strategy. Based on the findings of this study it was recommended among others that State government should through relevant agencies enforce strict health and safety regulations in hospitality establishments to protect both guests and employees.

Keywords: Hospitality, Management, Health, Training, Safety, Socio-economic Development

Introduction

Hospitality development in any nation has environmental, social, economic, cultural and political impacts affecting every other sector of the nation. Therefore, hospitality is an active industry that provides varied facilities and amenities for guests during their sojourn and also has the capacity to drive socio-economic developments especially to hospitality destination of host community. The environmental impact of the hospitality industry in this region has been a subject of significant concern, as it has the potential to either enhance or hinder the socio-economic development of the state. However, management is a central component of any successful business including hospitality business. Environmental

management strategies in the hospitality industry refer to the policies, practices, and initiatives undertaken by hospitality establishments to minimize their environmental footprint and promote sustainable development (Hana & Cemil, 2018). These strategies can include staff training on the use of environmentally-friendly products and services, and health and safety management among others.

Training and development is the most crucial and significant factor for the success of the hospitality industry as a strong service-based philosophy, consistently demonstrated by service providers. It guides hospitality personnel in their efforts to achieve customer satisfaction, and ultimately, business success. Training and development is an essential process which should be cautiously designed and implemented within all firms. Training and development are one of the important functions of the human resource (HR) department. Agarwal and Naidu (2021) investigates training system, importance and benefits of training and development in hotel and tourism industry in Uttarakhand and observed that training and development elicits various attributes of employees viz. improved service quality, Innovative work behaviour, affective commitment, work proficiency, managing conflicts which ultimately leads to employees' improved performance and productivity. The outcomes of effective management strategies are likely to impact the socio-economic status of the host communities and environs.

Similarly, Lin and Yang (2020) examined on the perception of employees on training and development toward employee performance at hotels located in the middle of region of Sarawak. The purpose of this research paper is to determine the relationship between training & development and employee performance among staff in hotels. The quantitative analysis method of a primary source was utilized to collect the data from 150 staff respondents. Five Likert scales were used to measure the degree of training and employee performance. A total of 112 responses were analysed using SPSS version 23.0. The results of this study revealed that training and development has a significant positive influence on employee performance and there is a significant relationship between training and employee performance. Most importantly, on the job training was perceived as a popular job training method used to improve employee performance and it is considered as one of the effective job training methods helped to improve employee performance as proven in many researches and studies.

Apart from staff training, health and safety ought to be prioritized in the management of hospitality environment. The health and safety of employees, the host community, customers and visitors is a very significant issue to consider with relation to the attainment of organizational goals. Croner (2021) opined that there is a legal requirement for all food businesses to implement and maintain food safety management systems. There is now a greater emphasis on the pre-requisites practices and procedures used to control food hazards. These include training, procurement, traceability, cleaning, storage and stock rotation, personal hygiene including fitness to work, allergen control, pest control, among others. Iheanacho and Ebitu (2020) investigated the effects of industrial safety and health on employees' job performance in selected companies which include UNICEM, Dangote Plc. A survey research design was adopted and a sample size of 100 staff was randomly selected for the study. The

Pearson Moment correlation coefficient was used for the hypotheses tests. The result of the tests revealed that there is strategies and employee job performance. It recommended that employers should ensure adequate industrial safety/health strategies management in order to protect the lives of its employees at work place thereby reducing employee turnover and promoting staff performance. Furthermore, Polo-Pena *et al.* (2023) examined whether following a health crisis the use of health and safety protocols and hotel brand awareness influences hotel perceived value and intention to visit. Using an experimental design, the study evaluates the effectiveness of the use of health and safety protocols and the moderating effect of brand awareness on perceived value and intention to visit. The results showed that the hotels using health and safety protocols (compared to those that do not use them) will achieve a higher perceived value and intention to visit.

The effective implementation of these environmental management strategies can lead to cost savings, enhanced brand reputation, and improved environmental performance, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of the host region (Mensah, 2019). Socio-economic development refers to the process by which the economic and social well-being of a community, region, or society as a whole improves over time. It involves a multidimensional approach that encompasses not only economic factors but also social, cultural, and political aspects (Eneji *et al.*, 2022). Economic development often starts with economic growth, which involves an increase in the production and consumption of goods and services within an economy. This growth is measured by indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP). One of the central goals of socio-economic development is the reduction of poverty. This includes efforts to improve income distribution, provide employment opportunities, and enhance the standard of living for all members of society.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of hospitality industry, the researcher observed that there is still a prevalence of high unemployment rate, low income generation, inadequate social amenities, security challenges and low living standard among populace in Cross River State. Meanwhile, the Cross-River State hospitality industry is faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from, poor energy supply and insecurity to misconstrued internal perception, pessimistic global intelligence, flawed hotel classification, poor customer service, little or no standardization in operations and inconsistent regulatory environment. This has resulted in a shortfall in global standard for operation and management of hospitality industry.

Meeting the global trends and standards in hospitality industry for maximum employment, income generation, infrastructural development, development of social amenities, security and improvement of the living standards on the host communities and its environs would require continued skilled manpower for quality service delivery, as well as health and safety management for security of lives. An increase emphasis on sustainability, with eco-friendly practices and responsible tourism initiatives must be taken very crucial. The industry needs to develop strategies for better resilience, growth and productivity through

creating effective plans and processes to have a successful hospitality business, which is critical to its success. It is the researcher's belief that providing insight on the identified strategies above and strengthening institutions for its functionality could further trigger socioeconomic development in the study area.

Research Questions

The following questions were posed to guide this study:

1. How does hospitality staff training/development strategy influence income status in Cross River State, Nigeria?
2. How does health and safety management strategy influence on environmental sustainability in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at determining the influence of hospitality management strategies on socio-economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. access the influence of hospitality staff training/development strategies on income status in Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. access the influence of health and safety management strategy on environmental sustainability in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research, according to Bharti (2015), aims to shed light on existing difficulties or problems by gathering data that allows them to explain the situation more thoroughly than would be feasible without using this method. Since the researcher will use a questionnaire to get information from a sample of people about the impact of hospitality management practices on socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria, the design is deemed appropriate for this study.

Geographically, the state lies between latitudes 5°45' North and 5°23' South. Additionally, it lies within longitudes 8° 30' East and 5° 22' West. Situated in the Niger Delta, this coastal state spans 20,156 square kilometers and is bordered to the north by Benue State, to the west by Ebonyi, to the south by Akwa Ibom, to the east by the Cameroun Republic, and to the south by the Bight of Biafra. Cross River State has a tropical climate. Geographically, the state is mainly divided between the Guinean forest-savanna mosaic in the far north and the Cross-Sanaga-Bioko coastal forests in most of the interior. The Efik, Ejagham, Yakurr, Bahumono, Bette, Yala, Igede, Ukelle, and Bekwarra are a few of the ethnic groups that make up the State. The common language of the State, English, Efik, Bekwarra, and Ejagham are the four main tongues spoken there.

The population of 1,455 participants comprised 348 management staff of registered hotels, 746 management staff of registered restaurants and 361 tourism workers in Cross River State (Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture, Cross River State, 2023). The sample size of 314

respondents representing 21.6 % of the population was used for the study. The sample comprised of 75 management staff of registered hotels, 161 management staff of registered restaurants and 78 tourism workers in Cross River State.

Data for the study was collected using a researcher structured questionnaires titled: ‘Hospitality Environmental Management Strategies on Socio-economic Development Questionnaire (HEMSSDQ)’. The instrument was submitted to three experts from the Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Science, University of Uyo for face validation. The experts scrutinized the items on the instrument to ensure it is useable and it measures what it is designed to measure. The validated instrument was administered to 30 employees of Ministry of Art, Culture and Tourism Cross River State who did not take part in the study. Data collected was analysed using Cronbach Alpha statistics to establish the reliability of the instrument. The analysis yielded reliability coefficient of 0.87 which implies that instrument had high internal consistency thus, adequate for this study.

The questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection. The questionnaires were administered to respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. Emphasis was laid on correct filling of the questionnaire in line with the purpose of the study. The respondents were also guided accordingly.

Descriptive statistics of count, frequency, percent and bar chart was used to answer the research questions. In answering the research questions, the percent of 50 and above was remarked agreed, indicating that majority of the respondents is in support of the item while percent below 50 was remarked disagreed indicating that few respondents supported the item.

Result

Research Question 1: How does hospitality staff training/development strategy influence income status in Cross River State, Nigeria?

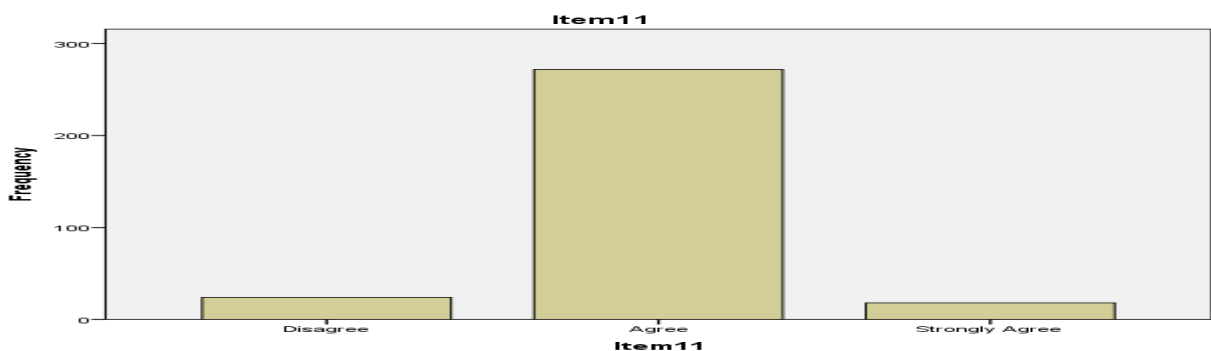


Figure 1: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of regular workshops for staff development

Figure 1 shows responses on influence of regular workshops for staff development. It shows that 24 respondents disagreed while 272 respondents agreed and 18 respondents strongly agreed that regular workshops for staff development improve skills for high income generation

respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents affirm that regular workshops for staff development improve skills for high income generation.

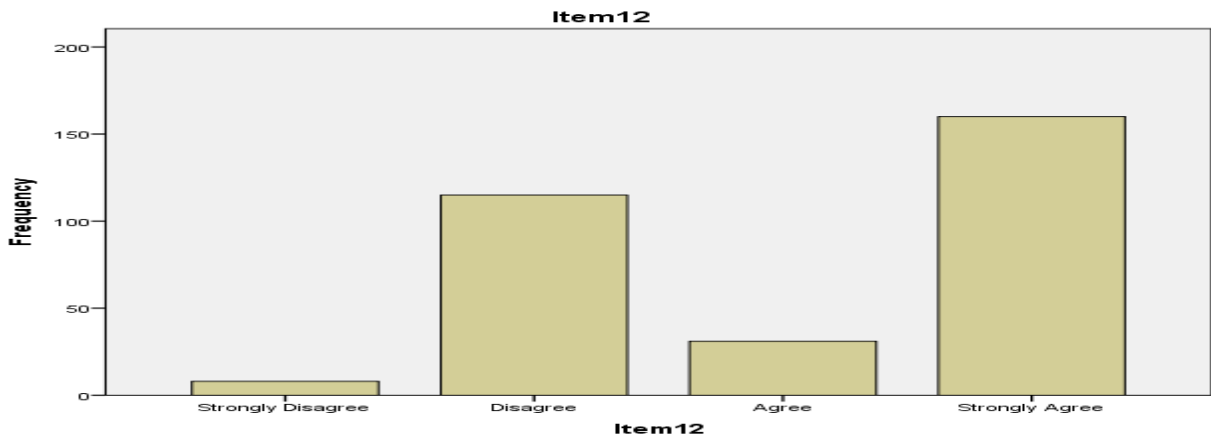


Figure 2: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of attendance of conference on staff development

Responses on influence of attendance of conference on staff development are shown on Figure 2. It shows that 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 115 respondents disagree while 31 respondents agreed and 160 respondents strongly agreed that attendance of conference for staff enhance employees’ performance and income status respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents affirm that attendance of conference for staff enhance employees’ performance and income status.

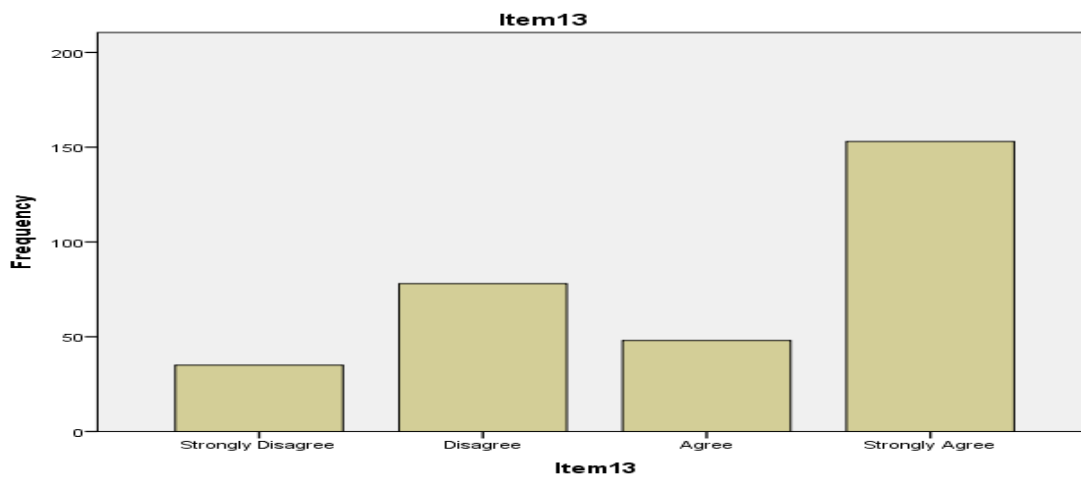


Figure 3: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of career development through seminar

Figure 3 shows responses on influence of career development through seminar. It shows that 35 respondents strongly disagreed, 78 disagree while 48 respondents agreed and 153 strongly agree that career development through seminar equip hospitality staff with knowledge for improve income respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents affirm that career development through seminar equip hospitality staff with knowledge for improve income.

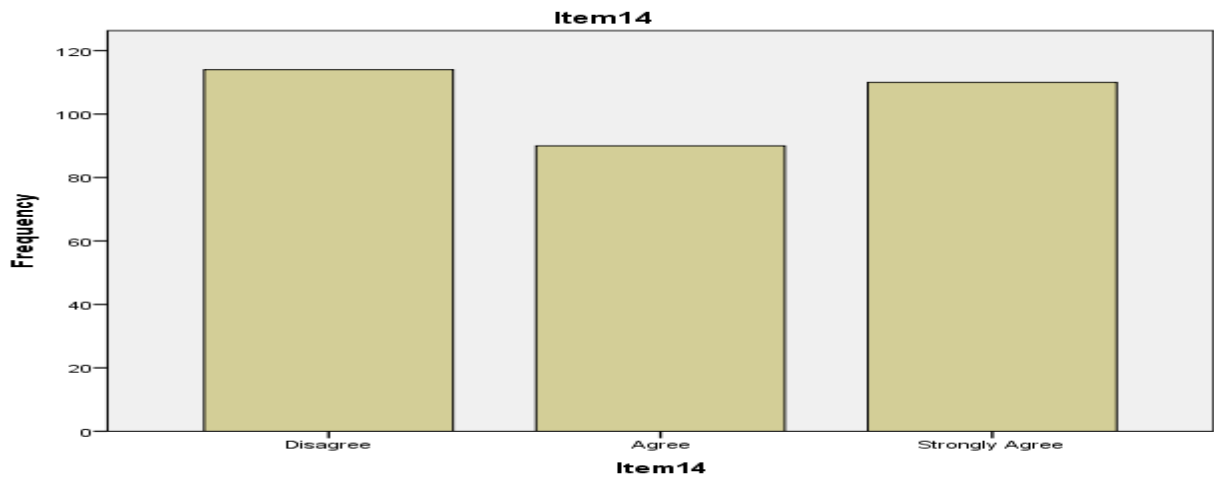


Figure 4: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of strategic organization of symposium

Figure 4 presents responses on influence of strategic organization of symposium. It shows that 114 respondents disagree while 90 respondents agreed and 110 respondents strongly agreed that strategic organization of symposium provide staff with insight into economic opportunities for increase income respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents disagree that strategic organization of symposium provide staff with insight into economic opportunities for increase income.

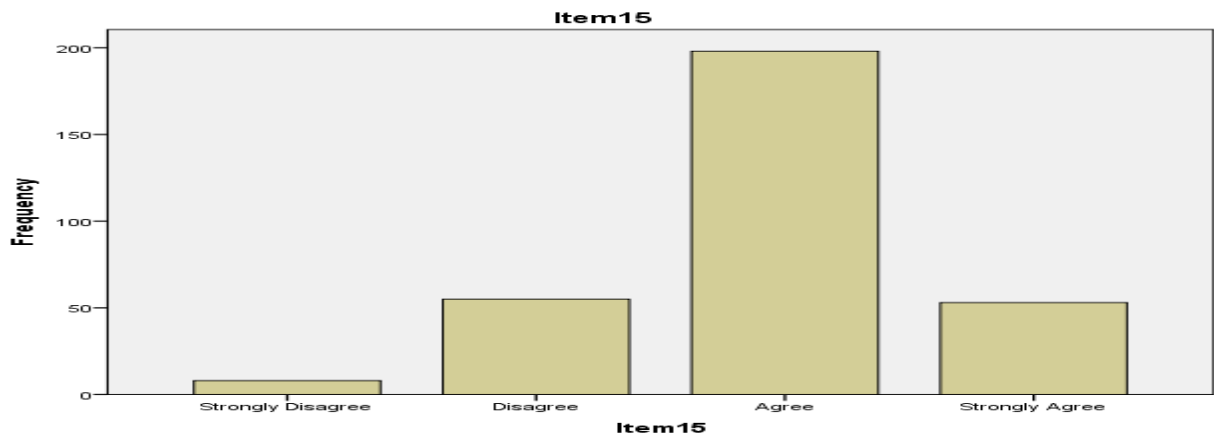


Figure 5: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of effective engagement of hospitality staff

Figure 5 shows responses on influence of effective engagement of hospitality staff. It shows that 8 respondents strongly disagreed, 55 respondents disagree while 198 respondents agreed and 53 respondents strongly agreed that effective engagement of hospitality staff foster improvement in their income status respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that effective engagement of hospitality staff foster improvement in their income status respectively.

Research Question 2: How does health and safety management strategy influence on environmental sustainability in Cross River State, Nigeria?

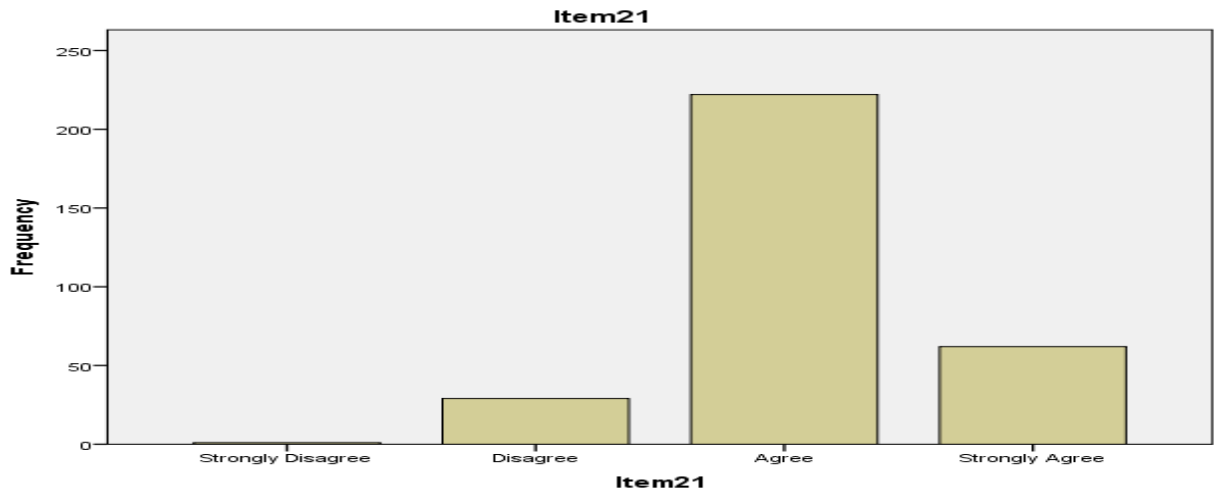


Figure 6: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of organizing regular health check-up programme

Responses on influence of organizing regular health check-up programme are shown on Figure 6. It shows that 1 respondent strongly disagreed, 29 respondents disagree while 222 respondents agreed and 62 respondents strongly agreed that organizing regular health check-up programme arouses environmental consciousness for healthy living respectively. +This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that organizing regular health check-up programme arouses environmental consciousness for healthy living.



Figure 7: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of providing free medication for populace

Figure 7 shows responses on influence of providing free medication for populace. It shows that 36 respondents disagree while 278 respondents agreed that providing free medication for populace help protect the environment against widespread of diseases in the environment. This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that providing free medication for populace help protect the environment against widespread of diseases in the environment.



Figure 8: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of developing emergency preparedness system in hospitality outfits

Figure 8 presents the responses on influence of developing emergency preparedness system in hospitality outfits. It shows that 31 respondents disagree while 283 respondents agreed that developing emergency preparedness system in hospitality outfits helps reduce fire outbreaks. This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that developing emergency preparedness system in hospitality outfits helps reduce fire outbreaks.

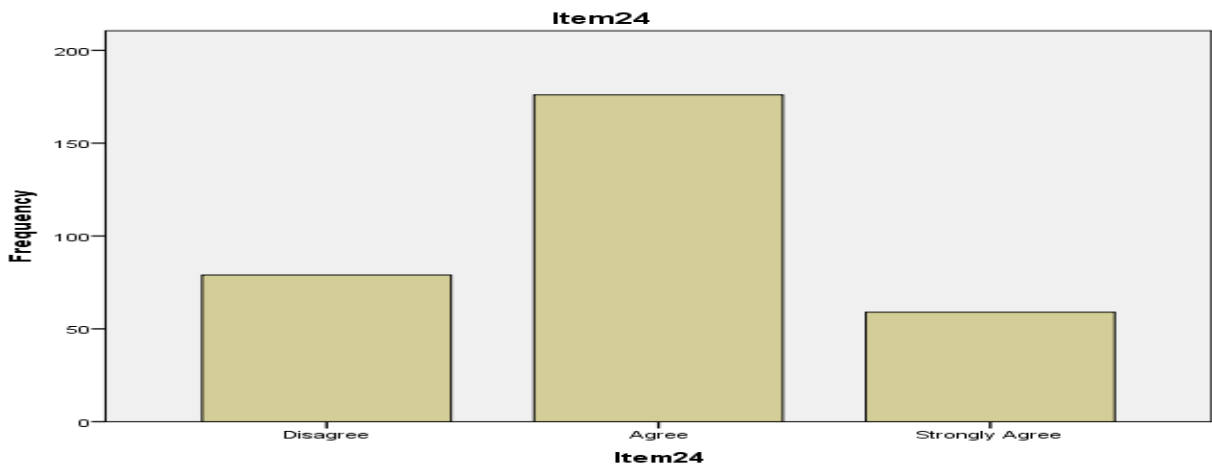


Figure 9: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of hospitality management regulation standard by environmental agency

Figure 9 shows responses on influence of hospitality management regulation standard by environmental agency. It shows that 79 respondents disagree while 176 respondents agreed and 59 respondents strongly disagreed that hospitality management regulation standard by environmental agency reduce pollution of the state. This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that hospitality management regulation standard by environmental agency reduce pollution of the state.

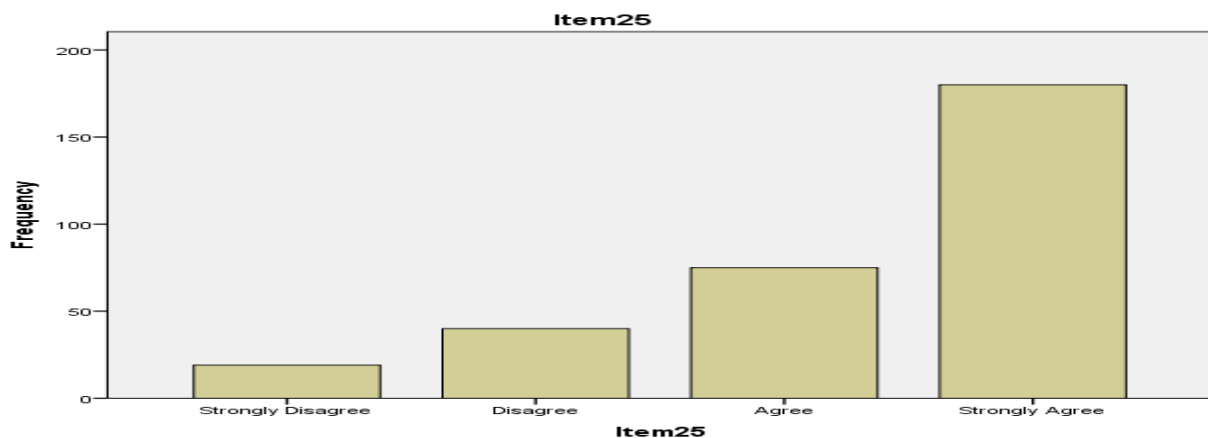


Figure 10: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of implementing regular workplace inspection policies

Responses on influence of implementing regular workplace inspection policies are shown on Figure 10. It shows that 19 respondents strongly disagree, 40 respondents disagreed, while 75 respondents agreed and 180 respondents strongly agreed that implementing regular workplace inspection policies help in timely management of environmental hazards such as flood. This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that implementing regular workplace inspection policies help in timely management of environmental hazards such as flood.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study were discussed according to the objectives that guided the study as follows:

Influence of staff training/development strategies on income status in Cross River State, Nigeria

Finding of the study indicated that organizing regular workshops, seminars, regular attendance of conferences by hospitality staff as well as effective engagement of hospitality staff positively influences income status by improving employees' performance and income status in Cross River State, Nigeria. Finding may be due to the fact that training and development of hospitality staff provides and equips them with knowledge, skills and aptitude which are crucial for quality service delivery. Provision of quality services is likely to culminate to enhanced organizational performance and productivity which are index of increased organizational profit. Similarly, through training and development hospitality staff could increase their net worth thereby standing a better chance to receive improved income.

Finding of the study is in tandem with the findings of Agarwal and Naidu (2021) who reported that training and development elicits various attributes of employees viz. improved service quality, innovative work behavior, affective commitment, work proficiency, managing conflicts which ultimately leads to employees' improved performance and productivity.

Finding also affirms the finding of Lin and Yang (2020) examined on the perception of employees on training and development toward employee performance at hotels located in the middle of region of Sarawak and found that training and development has a significant positive influence on employee performance and there is a significant relationship between training and employee performance.

Influence of health and safety management strategy on environmental sustainability in Cross River State, Nigeria

Finding of the study showed that majority of the respondents agree that organizing regular health check-up programme arouses environmental consciousness for healthy living. This may be due to the fact that participants are likely to gain information about their environment and its implications to their health. Findings also indicated that majority of the respondents agree that providing free medication for populace help protect the environment against widespread of diseases in the environment. This implies that access to appropriate medication helps curb the spread of diseases thereby keeping the environment sustainable for development.

Results indicated that majority of the respondents agree that developing emergency preparedness system in hospitality outfits helps reduce fire outbreaks. This implies that the consciousness to avoid and prevent occurrence of environmental hazards by making ready preventive mechanism is necessary for sustainable development of the local environment. Likewise, result indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that hospitality management regulation standard by environmental agency reduce pollution of the state. This points to the fact that the management regulations address environmental pollution. Result also indicated that majority of the respondents agree that implementing regular workplace inspection policies help in timely management of environmental hazards such as flood.

The finding affirms the submission of Iheanacho and Ebitu (2020) who investigated the effects of industrial safety and health on employees' job performance in selected companies which include UNICEM, Dangote Plc recommended that employers should ensure adequate industrial safety/health strategies management in order to protect the lives of its employees at work place thereby reducing employee turnover and promoting staff performance. The finding is also supported by the findings of Polo-Pena *et al.* (2023) who reported that the hotels using health and safety protocols (compared to those that do not use them) will achieve a higher perceived value and intention to visit.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings it is glaring that management strategies such as hospitality staff training/development strategy and health and safety management strategy positively influences the socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. These environmental management strategies not only help to reduce the environmental footprint of hotel operations but also contribute to cost savings and enhanced brand reputation, ultimately benefiting the long-term viability of the hospitality industry. However, most of the strategies seem not to have

been effectively harnessed to achieve the expected positive influence which places a demand for a functional hospitality environment management system. This would therefore demand stakeholders' engagement and collaborations

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that:

1. Ministry of Youth and Tourism should provide training and support for hospitality businesses to adopt and effectively use technology, such as online booking systems, digital marketing tools, and guest management software as well as invest in infrastructure to improve internet connectivity and digital literacy in rural areas to enable wider participation in the digital economy.
2. State government should through relevant agencies enforce strict health and safety regulations in hospitality establishments to protect both guests and employees.

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