

Hospitality Management Strategies and Socio-Economic Development in Cross River State, Nigeria

Unung, Valentine Bishie, Dr. Kemfon A. Essien, Dr. Augustine M. Imikan,
&
Akpakpan Victor Etim

Department of Geography and Natural Resource Management,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Uyo

Abstract

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 examine the influence of community engagement strategy and technology integration 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 Management Strategies on Socio-economic Development Questionnaire (HMSSDQ). 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 community engagement strategy and technology integration strategy positively influences social economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Provision of quality services, profit maximization and socio-economic development of the host community among others by hospitality industry is attainable through the utilization of strategic management approaches such as community engagement strategy and technology integration strategy. Based on the findings of this study it was recommended among others that management of hospitality enterprise should establish formal partnerships between hospitality businesses and local communities to collaborate on development initiatives by creating platforms for dialogue and feedback to address community and hospitality enterprise concerns.

Key Words: Hospitality, Management, Community, Technology, 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. As a result, hospitality managers are beginning to grasp that sustainability and long-term economic growth are dependent on their environmental practices

(Cingoski & Petrevska, 2018). Indeed, the adoption of environmental policies in hospitality depends heavily on managers' attitudes towards change and the environment, as well as their knowledge of the benefits derived from improved environmental practices (Fraj, Matute, and Melero, 2015). However, management is a central component of any successful business including hospitality business.

Management is how businesses organize and direct workflow, operations, and employees to meet company goals. The primary goal of management is to create an environment that lets employees work efficiently and productively. In hospitality management, the concept of management involves planning, organizing, directing, and controlling resources to achieve the goals and objectives of a hospitality organization (Kaehler and Grundei, 2019). Effective management strategies in hospitality management encompass approaches geared towards addressing the diverse challenges in the industry while achieving the set goals of the industry. Management strategies play a crucial role in addressing the unique challenges and demands of the hospitality industry, which includes hotels, restaurants, resorts, and other service-oriented businesses. Community engagement and technology integration are some of the management strategies that could be deployed in hospitality industry.

Local community participation in hospitality activities has also become one of the major principles of sustainable hospitality. Hospitality is a people-oriented industry and its major functions depend on human resources. Iwuchukwu (2024) investigated the socio-economic impacts and community engagement in Cross River State National Park, with a focus on their implications for tourism in Nigeria using a qualitative approach and found that the national park has significant positive socio-economic effects on the surrounding communities, including employment opportunities and income generation through ecotourism activities. However, challenges such as limited community engagement and unequal distribution of benefits were identified. The study highlights the need for improved community participation and empowerment in decision-making processes, as well as the development of sustainable tourism practices that prioritize local communities' well-being. Furthermore, Riyanto *et al.* (2023) investigated the relationship between community involvement in the tourism development community and its perceived environmental, sociocultural, and economic impacts on the welfare of local tourism residents using a quantitative approach. It was found that all direct relationships contribute a negative but not significant effect to the perceived economic impact on resident well-being.

Meanwhile, hospitality industry have been moving towards and linked to technological and digital advancements for decades and are seeking to become even more personalized, connected, responsive and tailored to the individual experience. Technology integration can improve access to social amenities such as healthcare, education, and public services. Similarly, online platforms and mobile applications can streamline access to educational resources, public transportation, and government services, making them more efficient and user-friendly. Technology integration allows for the delivery of remote and virtual social

amenities, reducing the need for physical infrastructure and travel. Numerous related empirical studies have been carried out on technology integration and its impacts on the socio-economic development. One of such studies is that carried out by Mulubwa and Syed (2018) investigated the impact of mobile phone, land phone and internet (ICTs) on sales, market performance, room occupancy, profitability and credit facilities in the hospitality sector of tourism in the tourist city of Livingstone in Zambia using survey design. The study used multiple regression models to find out the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The study found that there was positive impact of ICTs usage on sales, marketing performance, room occupancy, profitability and credit facilities. The study found negative relationship between internet and profitability of the firm due to higher costs of internet access. Similarly, Adama and Michell (2018) examined the effects of adopting technological innovations on the social well-being of facilities management professionals and found that the adoption of innovative technology has significant positive outcomes in the facilities management profession, but negatively affects the social well-being of the facilities management professionals. It is obvious that technological advancement of hospitality sector would trigger socio-economic development.

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. The present study intends to examine the influence of hospitality management strategy (of which technology integration is among) on socio-economic development of Cross River State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Bhartti (2015) descriptive research is aimed at casting light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation more completely than was possible without employing this method. The design is deemed fit for this study since the researcher would utilize questionnaire to obtain data on influence of hospitality management strategies on socio-economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria from a sample of which the result would be inferred on the entire population.

The State is geographically located within latitude 5°45' North and latitude 5°23' South. It is also within longitudes 5°22' West and 8° 30' East. It is a coastal State located in the Niger Delta region, and occupies 20,156 square kilometers that is bounded by Benue State

on the North, Ebonyi on the West, Akwa Ibom on the South and bounded on the east by Cameroun Republic and front the bight of Biafra on the South. The climate of Cross River State is tropical. Geographically, the State is primarily split between the Cross–Sanaga–Bioko coastal forests in the majority of the interior and the Guinean forest–savanna mosaic in the extreme North. 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's structured questionnaire titled: 'Hospitality Management Strategies on Socio-economic Development Questionnaire (HMSSDQ)'. 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: What is the influence of community engagement strategy on employment in Cross River State, Nigeria?

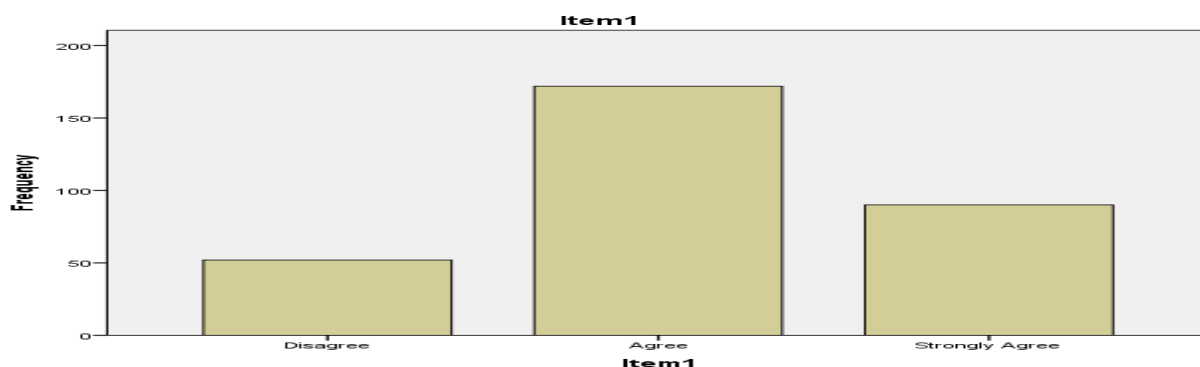


Figure 1: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of hiring of locals for direct jobs on employment

Figure 1 shows responses on influence of hiring of locals for direct jobs on employment. It indicates that 52 respondents disagreed that hiring of locals for direct jobs reduces unemployment, 172 respondents agreed and 90 respondents strongly agreed respectively. On a whole majority of the respondents (262 participants) agreed that hiring of locals for direct jobs reduces unemployment. Thus, involvement of locals through hiring for direct jobs results in socio-economic development of the state.

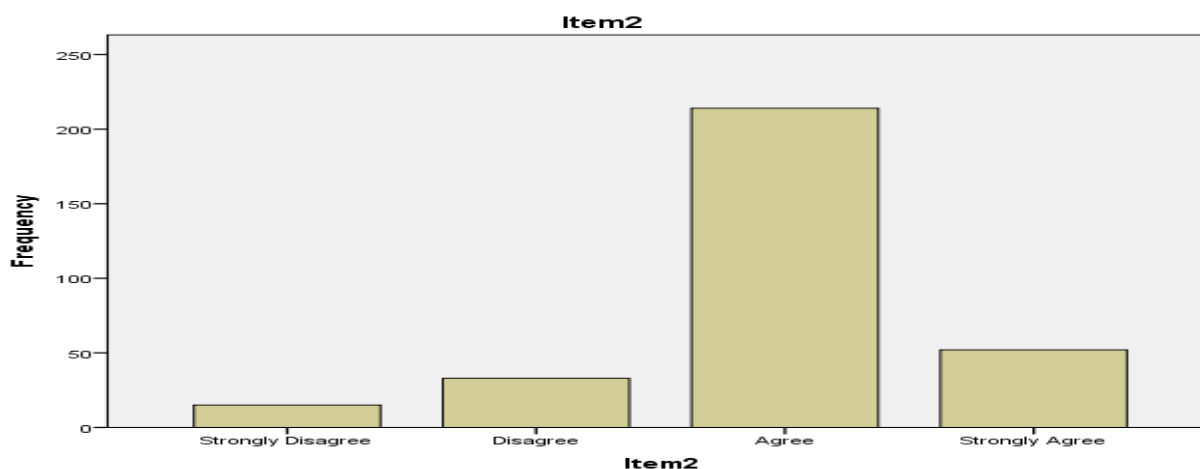


Figure 2: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of organizing skill development for members of the host community on employment

Responses on influence of organizing skill development for members of the host community on employment are shown on Figure 2. It shows that 15 respondents strongly disagreed, 33 disagreed, 214 agreed and 52 strongly agreed that organizing skill development for members of the host community prepares them for employment respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents affirm that organizing skill development for members of the host community prepares them for employment.

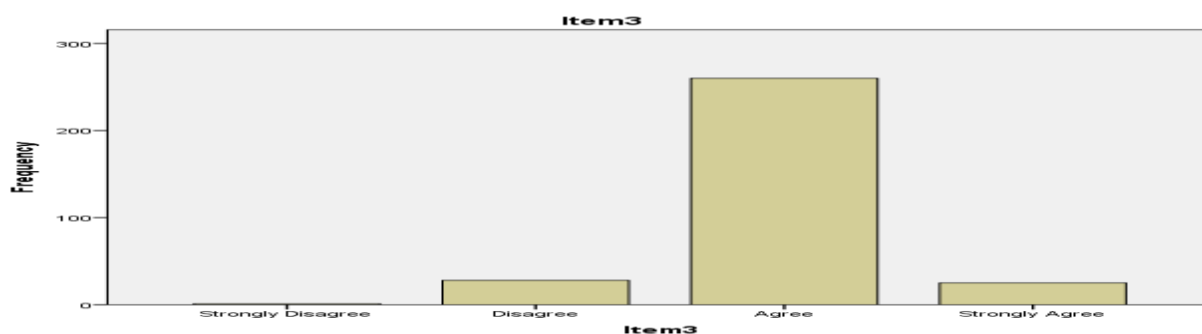


Figure 3: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of inclusion of locals as indirect workforce such as driver, cleaners, security, among others in hospitality enterprise

Figure 3 shows responses on influence of inclusion of locals as indirect workforce such as driver, cleaners, security, among others in hospitality enterprise. The chart indicates that 1 respondent strongly disagreed, 28 respondents disagreed, 260 agree and 25 strongly agreed that inclusion of locals as indirect workforce such as driver, cleaners, security, among others in hospitality enterprise reduces youth restiveness respectively. This implies that most of the respondents affirm that inclusion of locals as indirect workforce such as drivers, cleaners, security, among others in hospitality enterprise reduces youth restiveness.

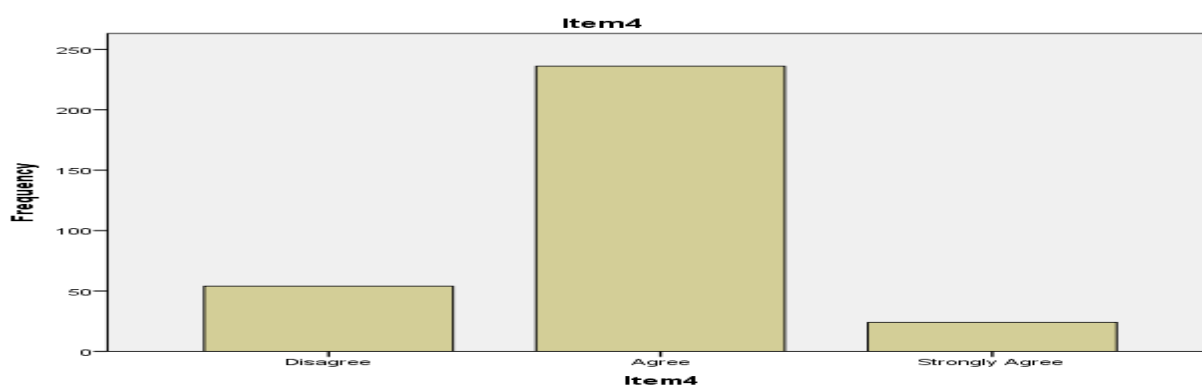


Figure 4: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of providing of career mentoring to members of the community

Figure 4 shows responses on influence providing of career mentoring to members of the community. The chart reveals that 54 respondents disagreed, 236 respondents agreed and 24 respondents strongly agreed that providing of career mentoring to locals improves industry in the community. On the whole, majority of the respondents affirm that providing of career mentoring to members of the community improves industry in the community.

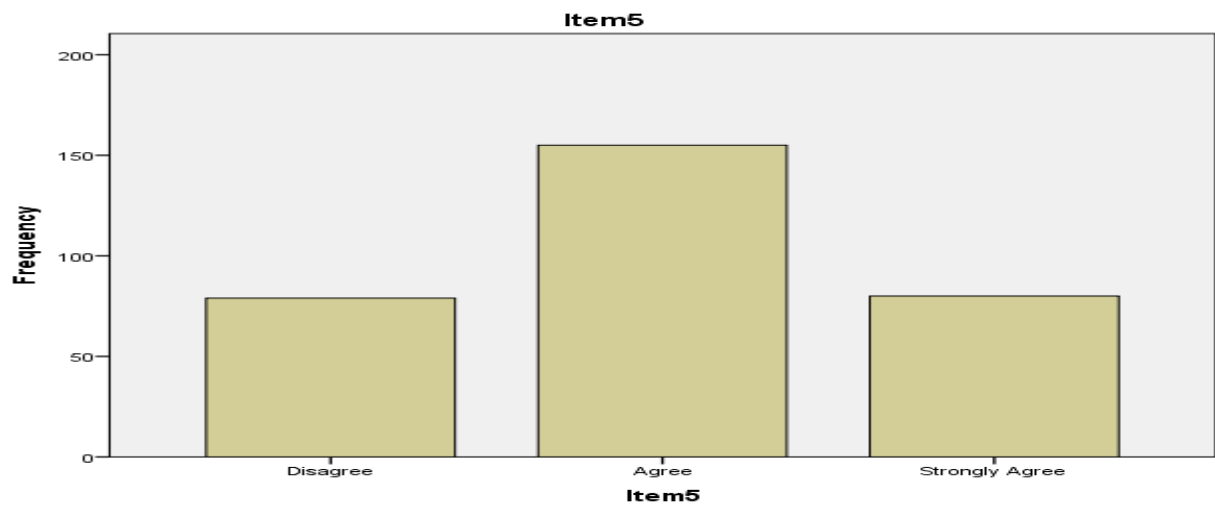


Figure 5: Frequency and Bar Chart showing influence of creating a platform for exhibition of their talents and skills

Figure 5 reveals responses on influence of creating a platform for exhibition of their talents and skills. The chart indicates that 79 respondents disagreed, 155 respondents agreed and 80 respondents strongly agreed that creating a platform for exhibition of their talents and skills in the sales of souvenir/craft work respectively. This reveals that most of the respondents affirm that creating platform for exhibition of their talents and skills foster the sale of local souvenir/craft.

Research Question 2: What is the Influence of technology integration strategy on socio-economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Frequency and Percent showing how the utilization of online booking system in hospitality sector foster the use of gadgets among locals

Item	Response Options	Frequency	Percent
The utilization of online booking system in hospitality sector foster the use of gadgets among locals	Strongly Agree	120	38.2
	Agree	85	27.1
	Disagree	101	32.2
	Strongly Disagree	8	2.5
Total		314	100

Table 1 shows the response on influence of utilization of online booking system in hospitality sector. It reveals that (38.2 %) of the respondents strongly agreed, (27.1 %) agreed, while (32.2 %) disagreed and (2.5 %) strongly disagreed that utilization of online booking system fosters the use of gadgets among locals respectively. This shows that most of the respondents affirm that utilization of online booking system fosters the use of gadgets among locals in the study area.

Table 2: Frequency and Percent showing how Mobile applications usage in the hospitality sector trigger improvement in power supply in the community

Item	Response Options	Frequency	Percent
Mobile applications usage in the hospitality sector trigger improvement in power supply in the community	Strongly Agree	105	33.4
	Agree	100	31.8
	Disagree	101	32.3
	Strongly Disagree	8	2.5
	Total	314	100

Table 2 shows the response of influence of mobile applications usage in the hospitality sector. It indicates that (33.4 %) of the respondents strongly agreed, (31.8 %) agreed, while (32.3 %) disagreed and (2.5 %) strongly disagreed that mobile applications usage trigger improvement in power supply in the community. This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that mobile applications usage triggered improvement in power supply in the community.

Table 3: Frequency and Percent showing how the use of internets by hospitality business operators in providing services to customers causes improvement in network provider services in the area

Item	Response Options	Frequency	Percent
The use of internets by hospitality business operators in providing services to customers causes improvement in network provider services in the area	Strongly Agree	16	5.1
	Agree	231	73.6
	Disagree	59	18.8
	Strongly Disagree	8	2.5
	Total	314	100

The response on influence of use of internets by hospitality business operators in providing services to customers is shown on Table 3. It indicates that (5.1 %) of the respondents strongly agreed, (73.6 %) agreed while (18.8 %) disagreed and (2.5 %) strongly disagreed that use of internets by hospitality business operators causes improvement in network provider services in the area respectively. This implies that majority of the respondents affirms that the use of internets by hospitality business operators causes improvement in network provider services in the area.

Table 4: Frequency and Percent showing how the adoption of sensors system in hospitality outfits triggers the development of strong security system in the community

Item	Response Options	Frequency	Percent
The adoption of sensors system in hospitality outfits triggers the development of strong security system in the community	Strongly Agree	16	5
	Agree	268	85.4
	Disagree	30	9.6
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Total	314	100

Table 4 indicates the response on influence of adoption of sensors system in hospitality outfits. It indicates that (5 %) of the respondents strongly agreed, (85.4 %) agreed while (9.6 %) disagreed that adoption of sensors system in hospitality outfits triggers the development of strong security system in the community respectively. This implies that majority of the respondents affirms that the adoption of sensors system in hospitality outfits triggers the development of strong security system in the community.

Table 5: Frequency and Percent showing how integration of technologies in hospitality sector foster the development of feeder road networks in the community

Item	Response Options	Frequency	Percent
Integration of technologies in hospitality sector foster the development of feeder road networks in the community	Strongly Agree	31	9.9
	Agree	236	75.1
	Disagree	47	15
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Total	314	100

Table 5 shows the influence of integration of technologies in hospitality sector. It indicates that (9.9 %) of the respondents strongly agreed, (75.1 %) agreed while (15 %) disagreed that integration of technologies in hospitality sector foster the development of feeder road networks in the community respectively. This implies that majority of the respondents affirms that the integration of technologies in hospitality sector foster the development of feeder road networks in the community.

Discussion of Findings

Influence of Community Engagement Strategy on Employment in Cross River State, Nigeria

Findings of the study as shown on Figure 1-5 revealed that community engagement strategy positively influences employment in Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that hospitality enterprise like tourism, restaurant and hotels through their operations could generate both direct jobs for locals and this improves the socio-economic status of the locals, organize programme like skill development, provides a platform for development of locals for employment thereby reducing youths restiveness and unemployment. Similarly, exhibition programmes organized by hospitality enterprise provides opportunity for the marketing of locally made products such as souvenir and craft among others. This tends to trigger economic development by supporting local industries for income generation to locals.

The findings on influence of community engagement align with the findings of Alshboul (2016) who examined local communities' perspectives on tourism development and prospects for improvements in community engagement in Jordan and found that tourism development projects were successful in providing meaningful employment to local people. The finding is also in tandem with the finding of Mun et al. (2022) who highlighted the benefits

of educating local populations in terms of sustainability and financial management, helping them to develop sustainability in the long-term for themselves.

Influence of technology integration strategy on social amenities in Cross River State, Nigeria

Findings of the study as shown on Table 1-5 revealed that technology integration strategies influences social amenities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The finding may be due to the fact that locals in attempt to adapt and enjoy the services offered by hospitality industries acquire some gadgets which aids communication thereby fostering the acquisition of hospitality services such as booking. Alos, the intensive usage of mobile applications for hospitality services would implies improvement in power supply to enhance the use of mobile gadgets where the applications are installed. Hence, difference power sources have been appreciated to meet the power needs of both hospitality industry and the host community such as PHCN and solar among others. Respondents agreed that the use of internets by hospitality business operators causes improvement in network provider services. This finding may be due to the fact that hospitality business operators' utilization of internets increases the number of internet users within the locality thereby motivating network providers to improve on their services to meet-up the increase demands to make more profit.

The finding is in agreement with the finding of Mulubwa and Syed (2018) who investigated the impact of mobile phone, land phone and internet (ICTs) on sales, market performance, room occupancy, profitability and credit facilities in the hospitality sector of tourism in the tourist city of Livingstone in Zambia and found that there was positive impact of ICTs usage on sales, marketing performance, room occupancy, profitability and credit facilities. The finding is also in-line with the finding of Adama and Michell (2018) who examined the effects of adopting technological innovations on the social well-being of facilities management professionals and found that the adoption of innovative technology has significant positive outcomes in the facilities management profession.

Conclusion

Hospitality businesses such as restaurant, hotel and tourism centers require effective management for the realization of its goals of provision of quality services, profit maximization and socio-economic development of the host community among others. This is attainable through the utilization of strategic management approaches that harnesses resources to addresses pertinent issues, reduce risk, and improve performance of both the hospitality staff and the business. On the basis of the findings it is glaring that management strategies such as community engagement strategy and technology integration strategy positively influences the socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. Management of hospitality enterprise should establish formal partnerships between hospitality businesses and local communities to collaborate on development initiatives by creating platforms for dialogue and feedback to address community and hospitality enterprise concerns.
2. 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.

References

- Adama, U. J. & Michell, K. (2018). Towards Examining the Social Implications of Technology Adoption on the Well-Being of Facilities Management Professionals. *Journal of African Real Estate Research*, 3(2):130-149. DOI: 10.15641/jarer.v3i2.664
- Alshboul, K. (2016). Assessing Local Community Involvement in Tourism Development around a Proposed World Heritage Site in Jerash, Jordan. A thesis presented to the University of Waterloo in fulfillment of the thesis requirement for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Cingoski, V. & Petrevska, B. (2018). Making hotels more energy efficient: the managerial perception. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 31 (1):87-101.
- Eneji, R. I., Philip, E. A., & Nwagbara, E. (2022). Contribution of tourism to socio-economic transformation in Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental and Tourism Education (JETE)*, 5(2):86-95.
- Fraj, E, Matute, J. & Melero, I. (2015). Environmental strategies and organizational competitiveness in the hotel industry: The role of learning and innovation as determinants of environmental success. *Tourism Management*, 46, 30-42.
- Iwuchukwu, G. N. (2024). Socio-Economic Impacts and Community Engagement in Cross River State National Park: Implications for Tourism in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://gas pu bl ishers.com/socio-economic-impacts-and-community-engagement-in-cross-river-state-national-park-implications-for-tourism-in-nigeria/> on 16th July, 2024

- Kaehler, B. & Grundei, J. (2019). HR Governance: A theoretical introduction. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326209797_The_Concept_of_Management_In_Search_of_a_New_Definition on 10th January, 2024
- Mulubwa, F. C. & Syed A. (2018). The Impact of Icts on Hospitality Sector of Tourism in Zambia. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Research*, 4(12): 362-369.
- Mun, S. G., Park, E. O. & Woo, L. (2022). Strategic Target Customers of Food and Beverage Offerings in Full-Service Hotels: Outside-hotel Customers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 10(2): 103159.
- Riyanto, I., Supriono, M., Fahmi, M. A., & Yuliaji, E. S. (2023). The effect of community involvement and perceived impact on residents' overall well-being: Evidence in Malang marine tourism. *Cogent Business and Management*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2270800>

The Effect of and Sustainable