



MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR HOTEL PERFORMANCE IN POST COVID-19 ERA IN CROSS RIVER STATE

EDEM, C.E¹, OBINWANNE, C.O², ONYEONORO, C. O³, OTU, J.D.⁴

^{1 & 4} Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism,

University of Cross River State (UNICROSS)

^{2 & 3} Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism,

Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Umuahia, Abia State.

Corresponding Author: ¹edematata.fedus@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River State. It was guided by three research questions and, literature review to develop the conceptual and theoretical framework. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 18,486 hotel employees. The sample for the study was 312 hotel employees. A structured questionnaire was used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using a t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. The results indicated that technology and collaboration-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state are: mobile apps (for check-in and check-out and to replace room keys), chatbots (for communication with customers), digital payment systems, robots (for reception and room services) among others. Organizational and human resources-related mitigation strategies for handling the crisis to ensure hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state include an inter-functional health safety team and a protocols-related inter-functional team. Marketing-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state are the use of new digital platforms such as social media to communicate with customers, develop and promote new products and services, and advertising through different media channels among others. Based on the findings, a summary and conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made. Therefore, the study recommends that hotel industries should adopt mobile apps (for check-in and check-out and to replace room keys) and digital payment systems, reduce non-essential costs, use a new digital platform such as social media to communicate with customers, and continue with the hygiene and preventive measures until life recommence to its business as usual. Recast to reflect the findings. State the empirical findings by providing values found in the analyses. Include in figures a measure of activity. Note that Empirical analyses will show figures of agreement to the hypothesis proposed.

Keywords: Mitigation, Strategies, Hotel Performance, Post Covid-19

1.0 Introduction

The hotel business is among the world's fastest-growing units in the hospitality industry which generates substantial economic benefits, and employment and encourages investments and innovation in the host countries, especially in Nigeria. Raghulaban & Raghulaban (2015) defined a hotel as a place that offers accommodation, food, and beverages at a cost that enables it to make a profit. A hotel, according to Tarmoezi and Manurung (2007), is a building that provides rooms with supporting facilities such as accommodation, food and beverage, laundry services, a swimming pool, and event planning among others. Okpala (2015) stated that the hotel business aims to satisfy its customers and provide specific experiences to them. Hotel business in Nigeria is very lucrative and its revenue base and customer loyalty are not only influenced by the standards of services rendered but also by some geographical factors which include proximity to local and international airports, and other service centers. This implies that the hotel industry is a business organization that provides products and services to customers.

1.1 The whole process of how a hotel runs on a daily basis is referred to as hotel performance. Improvement of hotel performance is considered the main purpose of hotel business success, which is driven by internal resource management factors and manager ability factors to encourage the emergence of a strategic entrepreneurial atmosphere in the company. **Good hotel performance** is one of the most important elements of a successful hotel and a seamless guest experience. Improved performance efficiency is fundamental to guest

satisfaction. Parkan (2023) stated that the key to providing exceptional customer service, and thereby, creating a successful hotel performance, starts with hotel operations at the foundation. Losing focus or neglecting operations is likely to cause major performance issues. Parkan (2023) also stated that hotel operations are considered on a monthly basis. Blayne (2019) also stated that the manner in which a hotel's activities are performed in a given month determines the competitiveness of its operations in that month. The performance of the hotel organization shows how much the hotel is able to utilize its various strategic capabilities to achieve a steadily growing organizational performance.

It is worth noting that hotel performance in Nigeria's hospitality industry in pre Covid-19 era was good. For instance, Hotels as one of the critical industries in the Nigerian hospitality industry attracted significant investment of over US\$3 billion in the last three years (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018). In terms of contribution to the GDP, the hotel industry contributed N1.7 billion (\$US 5.5 million) put at 4.8% to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016 (Ekwujuru, 2016). The industry generated 651,000 jobs directly in 2015 putting at 1.6% of total employment in the country and another 1.6% in 2016 worth N661,000 (Jumia Travel, 2017). The Fast-food industry is another key component of the hospitality industry in Nigeria hence, generated annual revenue of N230 billion and taxes in excess of a billion naira to the Nigerian industry (Bukola, 2017). Bukola (2017) further opines that the fast-food industry collectively provided employment for over 500,000 people at the processing and retailing level in Nigeria in

2017. To cap it all, the value of the hospitality industry in Nigeria was estimated at N1.4 trillion as of the year ending 2019 (Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), 2020). Nonetheless, despite the attractive and stabilized outlook of the Nigerian hospitality industry in the pre-COVID-19 era, the emergence and resurgence of this pandemic were observed to have drastically affected the hotel business in Nigeria.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a great impact on the whole world, not excluding industries and businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic has severe health effects and serious implications for economic growth and social development. Humans had developed fear because of the virus and stopped associating with people so as to avoid contracting it. The hotel industry in Cross River State has been heavily ravaged by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Hotel owners in the state have found themselves with empty hotels, and depleted cash reserves, as a result of restrictions in gathering, maintaining social distancing, and additional cost of enhanced sanitization and safety protocols. The cancellation of flights, conferences, events, and hotel reservations had left the industry services in sharp decline. With these myriads of challenges, the hotel industry still strives to give their customers outstanding services so as to maintain their loyalty and confidence.

Maintaining and serving customers during that era of the global pandemic was challenging and exhausting for hotel businesses in Cross River state, getting the needed technologies, and skilled personnel, and developing an effective and efficient

customer relation system seem elusive and problematic. Even in the post-COVID-19 era, some people are still afraid of the virus so much that they avoid handshakes, which is a way of greeting, while some are still afraid of places with a little more sociality, like hotels and restaurants. The COVID-19 pandemic had both financial and social implications in the hotel industry, some of which have still not recovered from the effects. The hotel industry is greatly affected because of the fear the pandemic instills in individuals, making the hotel industry lose both patronage and its ability to socialize with other people.

There are a lot of researchers who have done some scholarly work on the impact of covid-19 pandemic on the hotel industry. Umanah & Clement (2022) conducted a study on the COVID-19 pandemic and the hospitality industry in Nigeria: issues, challenges, and prospects for sustainability. The study examined the negative impacts of covid-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry in Nigeria and by extension assesses the issues and challenges faced by the hospitality industry as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The study revealed that issues and challenges faced by the hospitality industry in Nigeria arising from the COVID-19 pandemic include economic losses, job losses and salary cuts for workers in the industry, declining patronage, sharp drop in sales, social distancing, and lockdown. Anunobi, Emeafor & Okpoko (2021) conducted a study on COVID-19 and hotel service delivery in Nigeria: changes and challenges. The study attempts to examine hotel managers' views on the effects of COVID-19 and the need to recover quickly by adopting efficient service delivery. The findings revealed that hotels

were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the loss of revenue, downsizing, job loss, and numerous changes in hotel operations and services.

Kole (2021) carried out a study on the impact of COVID-19 on Job Security in The Nigeria Hotel Sector. The research was a post-COVID-19 pandemic study that centers on job security in Nigerian hotel organizations. It was found that the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a heightened level of perceived job insecurity as well as induced a significant stress level in the majority of employees surveyed. Bello & Bello (2021) carried out a study on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry: The Nigeria experience. The study explored the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Nigerian hospitality industry. The findings of the study revealed that the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigeria's hospitality industry include strain on the operations and revenue generation of the industry, a steep decline in hotel occupancy rates and low customer turnover in other hospitality facilities, uncontrollable job losses, and mass sales of hospitality business facilities. However, not much work has been done on mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. Against this backdrop, this study has identified the above gap which it intends to fill.

2.0 Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. Specifically, the study sought:

(i) Ascertain the technology and collaboration-related mitigation strategies for

hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state.

- (ii) Ascertain the organizational and human resources-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state.
- (iii) Determine the marketing-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state.

3.0 Literature review

3.1 Conceptual framework

3.1.1 Concept of Covid-19

COVID-19 also known as coronavirus disease was discovered first in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, on a patient Wei Guixan, and by March 2020, the virus had reached more than 60 countries of which the United States of America is inclusive (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2020). Covid-19 as an epidemic started as an epidemic in Wuhan, China, because of its worldwide spread, the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, declared the new coronavirus a pandemic. Covid-19 was referred to as an epidemic because of the speed at which many people in different communities were affected almost at the same time. It advanced to the stage of the pandemic, meaning that the virus has officially spread across the world at alarming rates. COVID-19 is said to have extended to over 100 countries across six continents with 27,416,747 confirmed cases, and 894,228 deaths as of September 9, 2020 (WHO, 2020).

COVID-19 has always been present in animals like cattle, camels, bats, etc. however, its transmission to humans is rare. Although studies traced the virus source to

seafood and animal markets in Wuhan, we are yet to understand the linking of its first spread from animals to humans. According to Beaumont (2020), the origin and spread of COVID-19 are "increasingly contentious", with the United States of America and its associates in China and how they have not shown much interest in the outbreak of the virus, and how it can be quickly addressed to avoid escalation. Consequently, several theories have emerged, the weird and very popular one has it that scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) (a bio-security level 4 facility) and Wuhan Centre for Disease Control (a bio-security level 2 facility) were involved in experiments with bat affected with coronavirus, from where the Diagnosis of a Novel Coronavirus (nCov) escaped and infected humans. Although Andersen (2020) carried out their own studies and criticized this theory, by stating clearly that the genetic composition of Covid-19 irrefutably revealed that the virus "is not derived from any previously used virus backbone".

3.1.2 Historical foundation of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Nigeria

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was first discovered in the Wuhan City of Hubei province in China and was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 30th January 2020. The 2019 Coronavirus disease (2019-nCoV or COVID-19) recently reported from Wuhan (China), equally spread to countries like Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and the United States, Africa, including Nigeria with a reasonable number of confirmed Covid-19 cases (WHO, 2020).

The case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was confirmed in Lagos State, Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Health. This was on the 27th of February 2020 and is the first case of COVID-19 in Nigeria after its emergence in China in January 2020. The victim is not based in Nigeria, even as he is an Italian citizen, though just returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on the 25th of February 2020. His testing positive for Covid-19 was discovered by the Laboratory Network of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, through the Virology Laboratory of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital. The patient was admitted and placed on close examination, with fewer symptoms, and was being monitored at the Infectious Disease Hospital in Yaba, Lagos. (WHO, 2020).

3.1.3 Damages that COVID-19 has caused in the hotel industry

Covid-19 has caused damage to the global hotel industry. First, the covid-19 has been linked to infections and deaths of people (Worldometers, 2021). The hotel industry has not been spared. The illness has moreover infected and/ or killed some guests, customers, employees, suppliers, distributors, and other hotel stakeholders. As a result of the risks, some hotel employees fear reporting to work (Stergiou and Fermaki, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed hotels to reputation risks and damages. Reputation risk which is defined as "the threat of economic damage from angry, frightened, and/ or disappointed stakeholders" is common during crises (Kossovsky, 2018). Reputation damage during the COVID-19 pandemic can occur when a hotel does not adhere to health and safety protocols and is linked with COVID-

19 infections of employees in the line of duty and guests during their stay.

Reputation damage can also occur when a hotel fails to meet its financial obligations. For instance, Dayour, Adongo, Amuquandoh & Adam (2020) found that hospitality and tourism businesses in Ghana had defaulted in the payment of pension contributions and taxes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reputation damage can moreover lead to loss of revenue, customers, guests, employees, lenders, shareholders, suppliers, and other hotel stakeholders. Covid-19 has interfered with service delivery in hotels. For example, wearing of face masks hides the service provider's smile meant to accompany the service. The smile is a hotelier's greatest asset (Baker, 2021) and is known to win guests. Abolishment of buffets in the hotels has on the other hand caused dissatisfaction among most customers who appreciate variety and self-service. In addition, COVID-19 curfews have affected the businesses of hotels, bars, and restaurants by reducing operating hours. Covid-19 lockdowns have also paralyzed service delivery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the loss of business among hotels. Soehardi and Untari (2020) stated that customer demand has dropped due to the poor economy and recession that has reduced disposable incomes among the traveling public, loss of consumer confidence, general fear of travel, and travel restrictions to countries greatly affected by the pandemic. Covid-19 has reduced hotel occupancy as visitor numbers declined. Biwota (2020) further established that hotels in Ethiopia were receiving fewer hotel room bookings and more room booking cancellations due to COVID-19. A similar scenario of low hotel room bookings and high

cancellations of room reservations was also witnessed in Kenya especially in major tourist destinations like Mombasa and Maasai Mara during the Easter period of March to April 2021 when partial lockdowns were imposed on several counties in the country. Most guests who had booked hotel rooms in Mombasa and Maasai Mara and were traveling from Nairobi, Nakuru, Thika, Machakos, and Kajiado had to cancel their reservations due to the partial lockdowns within these regions. Standard Newspaper, Kenya (2021) in a feature titled "Tourism dip in Kwale" later reported that the restrictions in the zoned areas led to a lack of travelers, suspension of services by local airlines, empty hotels in most Coastal regions, and thousands of job losses with no bailout for the hotels in place. Affected hotel investors however encouraged customers to postpone their stays instead of cancelling the reservations.

COVID-19 has led to the loss of traditional hotel markets such as the older segments, group tours, events, and sports tourists. Covid-19 has moreover affected the older population the most (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). (2020) meaning that travel from this market segment has gone down. Smart, Ma, Qu, and Ding (2021) further observed that COVID-19 had led to a total loss of the tour group market indicating that group tours had reduced. COVID-19 has also affected events including sports that normally involve large numbers of people coming together. Covid-19 has led to high unemployment rates in the hotel industry. Some hotel employees have lost their jobs, been made redundant, retired early, been forced to take unpaid leave, and/or been made to look for alternative sources of

income. Soehardi and Untari (2020) also found that COVID-19 reduced hotel revenue and tax income thus leading to job loss among employees. Ocheni, Agba, Agba, and Eteng (2020) similarly observed that the hospitality industry had experienced major unemployment and job losses and that some facilities had to shut down operations. Thus, the negative financial effects on hospitality facilities are global. For example, in Kenya, the operation of bars and sale of alcohol in restaurants and eateries in Nairobi, Nakuru, Kajiado, Machakos, and Kiambu counties were suspended on 26th March 2021 when the five counties were placed on partial lockdown (President Republic of Kenya, 2021).

Hospitality facilities like restaurants and hotels in the lockdown areas were again directed to only make deliveries and offer takeaway services to their customers (President Republic of Kenya, 2021). This means that the employees in these facilities had to stop working thus resulting in unemployment. Covid-19 has interfered with the operations of hotels by creating a disconnect from the standard operating procedures. This disconnect arises because the slow re-opening calls for a reduced number of staff who perform duties meant for other staff. This means that the hotels have to cross-train their employees and make them multi-skilled and flexible enough to work in different areas of the hotels (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the operating costs of hotels. Hotels in Kenya have to acquire special business licenses, screen employees and guests, insure employees, train employees, test employees, renovate facilities to comply

with COVID-19 health and safety protocols, reduce capacity, increase demand, maintain social distance, manage reduced operating hours and buy new equipment such as partitions, screening machines, hand washing machines, sanitizers and thermo guns meant to curb the spread of disease (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife Kenya, 2020). For example, social distancing in hotels reduces the capacity of restaurants, lounges, and conference halls.

Covid-19 has distressed stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers, local communities, and owners), especially through business closures. Hotels have experienced loss of customers' goodwill since customers have become uncertain of the sustainability and abilities of the hotels to satisfactorily meet their needs. Employees have been laid off, forced on unpaid leaves, and had benefits and incentives withdrawn (Gössling, Scott& Hall, 2021). Suppliers have lacked markets for their produce and had to cope with delayed payments. Local communities have missed the opportunities to visit hotels. Hotel owners have also experienced business and financial losses. Business closures due to COVID-19 have contributed to physical damage to hotel properties. Hotels have witnessed the deterioration of buildings, hotel vehicles, and fixtures due to closure, the attraction of mold on linen (bed sheets, bed covers, curtains, and sheets) due to lack of airing of guests' rooms during the closure period, growth of algae in the swimming pool due to stagnant water and destruction of the hotels' ambiance and comfort. These damages have increased maintenance costs and led to financial and property losses. Because of the low business

volumes in hotels, some establishments have defaulted on loans that they had taken to sustain operations. According to KEPSA (2020), as a result of the drop in the number of customers in hospitality facilities in 2020, there was “business uncertainty, several hospitality facilities were unable to repay loans due to reduced business and expenses had to be incurred due to precautionary response plans thus affecting business activities and resulting to financial loss”.

Covid-19 has been linked to financial losses among hotels. For example, Soehardi and Untari (2020) found that hotel revenue had reduced due to COVID-19. Hotels have also been forced to revise the prices of their products and services in a bid to attract customers thus further reducing profit margins. For instance, most hotels have had to slash guest room rates. Lastly, Covid-19 has led to business closures among hotels. Fu (2020) observed that due to COVID-19, hospitality facilities including hotels in China had to shut down operations. A similar scenario was observed in Kenya where some hotel chains suspended operations by temporarily closing some of their lodges and hotels (Standard Newspaper Kenya, 2020). Other hotels permanently closed their businesses. Thus, the business closures due to COVID-19 could be temporary or permanent (Smart et al., 2021).

3.2 Concept of Mitigation

Mitigation is the noun form of the verb *mitigate*, which means "to lessen in severity". Dhar (2002) mitigation refers to long-term risk reduction measures, which are intended to minimize the effects of a hazard; for example, dam construction is considered an activity that mitigates the effects of droughts. Hence, mitigation involves not only saving

lives and injury and reducing property losses but also reducing the adverse consequences of natural hazards to economic activities and social institutions. Sinha (2002) mitigation is, therefore, a process justified and necessary for the protection it offers to a society's development as a result of avoidance of damage and losses. It requires systematic and logical planning processes to ensure that resources allocated adequately reduce risk, and protect development. To do so, an understanding has to be reached with regard to what the effects of a disaster are likely to be and what level of protection is required. From an economic standpoint, it appears logical that the amount of mitigation, which is warranted, is that amount that can be bought for less than the expected costs of the losses.

3.3 Categories of Mitigation Strategies

The main categories of the strategic measures are discussed as follows:

3.3.1 Technology and collaboration-related strategic measures

One of the hotel's substantial response strategies to the COVID-19 crisis has been to intensify digitalization and various other technological solutions (Rodríguez-Antón and Alonso-Almeida, 2020). To ensure customer and employee safety, hotels are re-engineering their operations, incorporating specific technologies for contact-free service ([Sigala, 2020](#)). The following are among the main tools implemented: mobile apps (for check-in and check-out and to replace room keys), chatbots (for communication with customers), self-service kiosks, in-room technologies (for entertainment), digital payment systems, and even robots (for reception and room services) ([Hao, Xiao](#)

[\(Chon, 2020, Sigala, 2020\)](#). In this vein, [Hao, Xiao & Chon\(2020\)](#) report that Chinese hotels minimized human contact and avoided COVID-19 propagation by increasing the implementation of digital contactless services, self-check-in, and check-out via machines, face-scanning robots, and voice control for room service. Jiang and Wen (2020) highlight the growing adoption of robotics and artificial intelligence applications in hospitality response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Technological applications are also fundamental to developing inter-organizational collaboration strategies that are essential for business recovery. Among the main recovery strategies for the hospitality industry, [Fu \(2020\)](#) includes the development of strategic alliances and partnerships to enhance a hotel's existing capabilities. In past healthcare crises, collaboration with other agents from the sector (such as tour operators, airlines, or local agencies) to develop joint marketing initiatives and share information proved to be effective in recovering activity ([Novelli, 2018](#)). As technology is a significant factor in reinventing hotel service by digitalizing processes and designing smart customer experiences.

3.3.2 Organizational and human resources-related strategic measures

To address a highly disruptive event such as the COVID-19 pandemic properly, businesses are to establish and implement specific contingency plans with protocols for the whole organization. Such measures have proven useful to hotels in past public health

crises ([Chien and Law, 2003](#)). They involve the creation of an inter-functional team to develop measures to ensure health safety and propose specific action protocols. Employees also play a fundamental role, not only in handling the crisis properly but also in business recovery. At the organizational level, hotels must apply self-rescue strategies to face the uncertain environment and sharp contraction in sales. These strategies include reducing non-essential costs and carefully monitoring cash-flow predictions ([Hao, Xiao & Chon, 2020](#)). Effective control measures based on lower operational costs, closure of facilities, flexible staff allocation, and delay of investments were keys to handling crises and enabling business recovery in past healthcare crises, such as SARS and Ebola-induced tourism crises ([Novelli, 2018](#)).

3.3.3 Marketing-related strategic measures

Marketing measures are essential in facing disruption and aiding future business recovery. In the current context of uncertainty, hotels must restore customer confidence by establishing communication strategies to keep customers informed of the protective measures the hotel implements to ensure a safe environment ([Lo, 2006](#)). COVID-19 is also causing long-term changes in customer preferences, information demand, and consumption behavior ([Hao, Xiao & Chon, 2020](#)). Hotels are to identify new customer preferences and develop new products, while also reinventing communication campaigns and prioritizing the use of new digital platforms such as social media to communicate with customers ([Herédia-Colaço and Rodrigues, 2021](#)). The utility of the following strategic marketing

measures in combating the current crisis are: developing specific campaigns and offers to address the local market; developing and promoting new products and services (to generate alternative revenue); extend loyalty program benefits; prepare promotional plans to increase future stays; update and improve channels to contact, attract, and sell to customers; digitalize marketing strategies and advertise through different media channels ([Herédia-Colaço and Rodrigues, 2021](#)).

4.0 Theoretical framework

This section of the project outlines the various theories as they relate to mitigation strategies and the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is mainly anchored on the protection motivation theory which aligns with the various risk mitigation strategies examined in the project to curb or protect individuals against the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1 The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT)

Protection motivation theory (PMT) was propounded by R.W. Rogers in 1975. Protection motivation theory states that stakeholders' inspiration or intentions to protect themselves from damage are improved by four crucial cognition or perceptions, about the severity of the risks, the personal susceptibility or weakness to the risks, self-efficacy or self-effectiveness performing the risk-reducing behavior, and the response effectiveness of the risk-reduction behavior. Protection motivation theory (PMT) is said to be considered one of the most cited theories in the risk perception and avoidance aspect or field. According to PMT theory, individuals or firms are more probably or likely to protect or guard

themselves when they are looking forward to or expecting negative consequences, have the yearning to avoid or keep away from risks, and feel they could take preventive measures against such threats or risks. In general, protection motivation theory proposes that there is a relationship between risk perception and the actual threatening situation and that individuals take defensive action when they are aggravated and have the agency to do so. For instance, enhancing the elements of risk appraisal for instance risk perception and perceived severity has a joint effect on changing intentions and behavior toward volatile situations. Protection motivation theory emphasizes on stakeholder's inspiration or intentions to protect them from damage. In the same vein, it buttresses the protection of major stakeholders in the hotel industry from the coronavirus pandemic. Hence, the relevance of this theory to the present study.

4.2 Expected Utility Theory

Expected Utility Theory (EUT) was propounded by Daniel Bernoulli in 1738. Expected Utility Theory (EUT) states that the decision maker (DM) chooses between risky or uncertain prospects by adding the utility values of outcomes multiplied by their respective probabilities. The expected utility theory is said to deal with the examination or analysis of a situation where individuals or persons must make a choice without having any idea which outcomes may result from that decision. This is decision-making under uncertainty. It is however stated that these individuals or people will select the act that will lead or result in the highest expected utility, as a result of the sum of the products of profitability and utility over all possible

outcomes. The choice made is said to depend on the agent's risk aversion and the utility of other agents. The theory posits that the utility of money is necessarily the same as the total value of money. This statement explains why people may take out insurance. The expected value from paying for insurance would be to lose out or be defeated monetarily or financially. However, the probability of large-scale losses could result in a grave decline or decrease in utility as a result of the diminishing or retreating marginal utility of wealth. The expected utility theory focuses on the examination or analysis of a situation where individuals or persons must make a choice without having any idea which outcomes may result from that decision. In the same vein, the government and other relevant bodies put in place some mitigation strategies to check the spread of the coronavirus pandemic without having any idea which outcomes may result from such mitigation strategies. Hence, the relevance of this theory to the present study.

4.3 Social Distance theory

Social Distance Theory was propounded by Georg Simmel in 1908. Social Distance Theory states that the measure of social separation between groups is caused by perceived or real differences between groups of people as defined by well-known social categories. It manifests across a variety of social categories, including class, race and ethnicity, culture, nationality, religion, gender and sexuality, and age, among others. Social distancing practices are changes in behavior that prevent disease transmission by reducing contact rates between susceptible individuals and infected individuals who may transmit the disease. This theory can be

applied to reducing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. However, the major drawback of the theory arises from the fact that the benefits of social distancing depend on the extent to which it is used by individuals. This is because, individuals are sometimes reluctant to pay the costs inherent in social distancing, and this can limit their effectiveness as a control measure, although, the importance of social distancing stemming from moderate transmittable diseases cannot be overemphasized. This is because of its strategic usefulness in delaying the spread of an epidemic until a vaccine becomes widely available. But in highly transmittable epidemics with no available vaccine, the social distancing rather becomes meaningless. Taking into consideration the mode of transmission of COVID-19(handshake, body contact, cough, *et cetera*), social distancing could be an effective measure to reduce its spread. Hence, the utilitarian value of this theory to this study.

4.4 Theory of business longevity

The theory of Business Longevity was propounded by Hannan and Freeman in 1989. The theory of Business Longevity states that to sustain a business, some abstract factors drive long-term success. These include a company's culture, values, ability to change, and ability to listen to customers. Several contributions to business longevity have emerged in strategy research and organizational theory widely also used in business history. The challenge of globalization, competitive markets, technological developments, and environmental disasters including pandemics such as COVID-19 threaten the survival of

businesses. Statistically most firms do not survive in the long term and most family firms perish before the second generation; in fact, only 30% of family firms survive into the second generation and only 3% survive beyond the third generation. Business survival is the biggest challenge facing most firms globally, particularly within the current context of COVID-19.

Business longevity is also a topical subject in the global hospitality industry which is notoriously dynamic, volatile, and competitive. It has been estimated that 60% of all new hospitality businesses fail in their first 18 months of operation. The current COVID-19 pandemic clearly has the potential to exacerbate the pressures on what is already a challenging business environment for hospitality businesses. The concept of business longevity has been researched from many perspectives, including business history, business management, sociology, and economics. More specifically, in business research, it has also been explored within the context of marketing, entrepreneurship, family business, and corporate strategy. The theoretical context of business longevity provides a framework for the analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry, particularly from the internal context of the leaders of hospitality businesses and including their perspectives of the external environment including government policy. Hence, the relevance of this theory to the present study.

5.0 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the Protection motivation theory (PMT). Protection motivation theory (PMT) was originally created to help

understand individual human responses to [fear appeals](#). Protection motivation theory proposes that people protect themselves based on two factors: threat appraisal and coping appraisal. Threat appraisal assesses the severity of the situation and examines how serious the situation is while coping appraisal is how one responds to the situation. Threat appraisal consists of the perceived severity of a threatening event and the perceived probability of the occurrence, or vulnerability. Coping appraisal consists of perceived response efficacy, or an individual's expectation that carrying out the recommended action will remove the threat, and perceived [self-efficacy](#), or the belief in one's ability to execute the recommended courses of action successfully.

The second theoretical framework adopted for this study is Social Distance Theory. Social distancing is the act of keeping distance from others so as to prevent contracting the virus from them or giving them the virus. A distance of at least three feet between two people is sufficient precaution. Effective distance between and amongst groups is paramount in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. It is a strategy to reduce physical contact between people with the aim of slowing down and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in a community. The practice of social distancing means staying home and away from others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The practice of social distancing encourages the use of things such as online video and phone communication instead of in-person contact. Through social distancing, one can protect himself, loved ones and society at large. This is an effective way to limit the chances of catching the virus,

slowing down the transmission and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria. If the populace can adhere to this, they will be able to quickly and effectively halt the spread of the disease, resume their routine daily activities, and be with their loved ones. Social distance theory is more important than other theories because social distance is one of the crucial mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

REVIEW OF RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDY

Anorue & Moghalu (2022) conducted a study on the evaluation of customer relationship management on the performance of the hotel industry in the era of covid-19 pandemic in Enugu State. The study evaluates customer relationship management on the performance of the hotel industry in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A total of 320 respondents (managers and front desk officers) drawn from 160 registered hotels in Enugu metropolis represent the sample for the study due to its manageability. Enugu metropolis was used because it is the capital and most of the major hotels are located in the State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Customer Relationship Management on Performance of Hotel Industry in COVID-19 Questionnaire” (CRMPHICQ) and was validated by three experts from the Department of Business Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained through the Cronbach Alpha technique which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers through the help of six research assistants.

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and the hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics. The study provided valuable information for hotel managers on how to manage their customers during this period of COVID-19. The study also revealed how hoteliers should always gear up to counter any crisis and handle future distress.

Emenyi & Udo (2021) conducted a study on the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Organizational Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria. The study examined the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organizational performance of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study and data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Descriptive and inferential statistics were deployed in analyzing the data collected. The population of the study was made up of six thousand and thirty-three (6,033) small and medium-scale enterprises drawn from the South-South geo-political zone of the country cutting across all operational areas of SMEs in Nigeria including computer and internet services, poultry businesses, barber shops, car wash, sport viewing centers, fast- food businesses, photography, haulage, courier services, and laundry businesses. The sample size of the study was three hundred and seventy-five (375) SMEs and the sampling technique adopted in achieving this was the Taro Yamane Formular at a 5% confidence interval level. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant effect of the COVID-19 pandemic period on the

Return on Assets (ROA) of SMEs in Nigeria. From the results of the findings, it was concluded that all the variables maintained an inverse relationship with the Return on Asset (ROA) of SMEs during the period and that there was a significant combined effect of the COVID-19 pandemic period on sales volume and operating expenses during COVID19 pandemic period on Return on asset (ROA) of SMEs in Nigeria.

Piate, Inyang, and Akpan (2022) Assessment of post-COVID-19 pandemic experience in the hospitality industry in Nigeria: an empirical study of the control and remedies to social implications. The study was conducted in order to assess the post-COVID-19 pandemic experience in the hospitality industry in Nigeria with an empirical assessment of the control and remedies to social implications. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was undertaken in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of workers in the hospitality industry in Nigeria. A stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 50 workers in hospitality industries, which was drawn from each of the 6 geographical zones in Nigeria, and this gave a total of 300 sample sizes used for the study. The main instrument, titled "Post COVID-19 Pandemic Experience in Hospitality Industry Questionnaire (PCPEHIQ)", was used for data collection. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert to ensure that the instrument was recorded accurately while the Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. Interestingly, the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.86, which was high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

Danso, Osei-Tutu, Whyte & Ocquaye (2020) conducted a study on Ghana Hotel Industry (Three-Five Star Rated) And Covid-19: Present Scenario and The Way Forward. The paper tries to assess the current and likely after-effects of COVID-19 on hotel operations in Ghana, using the 3 to 5-star rated hotels as a case. The sample size was 50 out of the 55 hotels in this category in the country. The mixed approach was used to collect data by the use of a questionnaire with both open and closed-ended questions. Microsoft Excel was used in the data analysis. The study found that the occupancy rate, operation capacity, and employment were affected drastically by the pandemic.

Enyia & Maclayton (2022) conducted a study on Risk Mitigation Strategies and Performance of SMEs in Rivers State: A Case of COVID-19 Pandemic. The paper examines the relationship between risk mitigation strategies and the performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Rivers state with the case of the COVID-19 pandemic which has hit the world really hard. Flexibility and responsiveness were adopted as the dimensions of risk mitigation strategies against performance. 150 copies of the research instrument were distributed randomly online and offline to respondents across SMEs in three Local Government Areas in Rivers state (Obio/Akpor LGA, Port Harcourt City LGA, and Opobo/Nkoro LGA). Both discriminant and convergent validity were used to ascertain the validity of our research instrument while composite reliability was used in ascertaining the reliability of our research instrument because our statement items were structured in ordinal form, a non-parametric statistical tool was used. Spearman Rank order correlation was

used in testing our stated null hypotheses. From our findings, we realized that responsiveness had a stronger relationship with performance and the study recommended technology adoption and effective utilization of information gathered by SMEs to improve performance.

6.0 SAMPLE SIZE

Hotel managers of 78 randomly selected hotels formed the study sample. Sample sizes of four (4) hotel management staff were selected from each of the 78 selected hotels, making it a total of 312 management staff.

7.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCEDURE

Sampling represents the process of selecting a subset of observations from among many possible observations. It involves different ways of estimation (Nzelibe and Ilogu, 1996). To this end, therefore, this research work adopted simple random sampling and purposive techniques. Descriptive and

inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data gathered for the study. Specifically, mean and standard deviation were adopted to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using a t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. The level of rejection or acceptance of the null hypotheses was t-calculated. When the t-calculated is greater than the t-critical table value which is 1.96, the item will be considered rejected. But when the t-calculated is less than the t-critical table value of 1.96, the item will not be considered rejected rather it will be accepted.

8.0 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

8.1 Research question one

What are the technological and collaboration-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state?

Table 1: mean responses on the technology and collaboration related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

S/N	ITEMS	Hotel Management Staff (n = 248)		
		\bar{X}	SD	REM
1	mobile-apps (for check-in and check-out and to replace room keys)	2.95	0.97	A
2	chatbots (for communication with customers)	2.99	0.96	A
3	self-service kiosks	3.25	0.82	A
4	in-room technologies (for entertainment)	3.20	0.90	A
5	digital payment systems	3.25	0.83	A
6	robots (for reception and room services)	3.25	0.82	A
7	face-scanning	3.25	1.05	A
8	digital contactless services	3.24	0.85	A
9	self-check-in and check-out via machines	3.28	0.76	A

10 voice control for room service 3.33 0.76 A

KEY: X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, REM = Remark

Table 1 shows the mean responses and standard deviations of the responses on the technology and collaboration related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. Table 1 above shows that items 1- 10 have the mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. These are therefore accepted as the technology and collaboration related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. The technology and collaboration related

mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. The standard deviations of the items range from 0.76 to 1.09 indicating that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from one another in their responses.

8.2 Research Question Two

What are the organizational and human resources related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state?

Table 2: Mean responses on the organizational and human resources related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

S/N	ITEMS	Hotel Management Staff (n = 248)		
		X	SD	REM
1	creation of an inter-functional team to develop measures to ensure health safety	2.95	0.97	A
2	creation of an inter-functional team to propose specific action protocols	2.99	0.96	A
3	employees play a fundamental role in handling the crisis properly	3.25	0.82	A
4	employees also play a fundamental role in business recovery.	3.20	0.90	A
5	reducing non-essential costs	2.28	0.81	DA
6	carefully monitoring cash-flow predictions	2.30	0.68	DA
7	effective control measures based on lower operational costs	3.21	0.98	A
8	effective control measures based on closure of facilities	3.23	0.85	A
9	effective control measures based on flexible staff allocation and delay of investments	3.21	0.78	A
10	setup plans for business recovery	3.31	0.80	A

KEY: X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, REM = Remark

Table 2 shows the mean responses and standard deviation of the respondents on the organizational and human resources-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. The analysis in Table 2 shows that since the mean responses of items 5 and 6 are below the criterion mean of 2.50, the responses indicate that respondents disagree with the items as the organizational and human resources-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state, while others with mean responses above 2.50 (criterion mean) indicate that the

respondents agree with them as the organizational and human resources related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River State. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.68 to 0.98 indicating that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from one another in their response.

8.3 Research question three

What is the marketing-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state?

Table 3: mean response on the marketing related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

S/N	ITEMS	Hotel Management Staff (n = 248)		
		X	SD	REM
1	use of new digital platforms such as social media to communicate with customers	2.91	0.95	A
2	develop specific campaigns and offers to address the local market	2.98	0.96	A
3	develop and promote new products and services	3.21	0.81	A
4	extend loyalty program benefits	3.16	0.89	A
5	prepare promotional plans to increase future stays	2.91	0.95	A
6	update and improve channels to contact customers	2.98	0.96	A
7	update and improve channels to attract customers	3.20	1.10	A
8	update and improve channels to sell to customers	3.21	0.84	A
9	digitalize marketing strategies	3.19	0.77	A
10	advertise through different media channels	3.28	0.79	A
9.0				
10.0	KEY: X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, REM = Remark			

Table 3 shows the mean responses and standard deviations of the responses on the marketing related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. The analysis on Table 3 shows that all the items have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that the responses indicate that all the items are the marketing related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. The standard deviation of the items ranges from 0.77 – 1.10, which

Table 7: Z-test of the hotel management staff on the technology and collaboration related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

z-Test: Two Sample for Means

		<i>Female Staff</i>	<i>Male Staff</i>
Mean		3.164	3.23
Known Variance		0.022827	0.028267
Observations		10	10
Hypothesized	Mean		
Difference		0	
Z		-0.92333	
P(Z<=z) one-tail		0.177917	
z Critical one-tail		1.644854	
P(Z<=z) two-tail		0.355833	
z Critical two-tail		1.959964	

The table above shows the calculated z-value of -0.92333 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of -0.92333 is less than the z tabular value of 1.959964, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, technology and collaboration related mitigation strategies have no significant

indicates that the respondents were not too far from each other and from the mean in their responses.

9.4 Test of hypotheses

9.4.1 Hypothesis One: Technology and Collaboration related mitigation strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in the post Covid-19 era in Cross River State

effect on hotel performance in the post covid-19 era in Cross River State.

9.4.2 Hypothesis Two: Organizational and Human resources related mitigation strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in the post covid-19 era in Cross River State

Table 8: Z-test of the hotel management staff on the organizational and human resources related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

z-Test: Two Sample for Means

	<i>Female Staff</i>	<i>Male Staff</i>
Mean	2.987	2.995
Known Variance	0.155023	0.174139
Observations	10	10
Hypothesized Difference	Mean	
	0	
Z	-0.04409	
P(Z<=z) one-tail	0.482415	
z Critical one-tail	1.644854	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.964829	
z Critical two-tail	1.959964	

The table above shows the calculated z-value of -0.04409 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of -0.04409 is less than the z tabular value of 1.959964, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, organizational and human resources related

mitigation strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in the post covid-19 era in Cross River State.

9.4.3 Hypothesis Three: Marketing related mitigation strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in the post covid-19 era in Cross River State

Table 9: Z-test of the hotel management staff on the marketing related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

z-Test: Two Sample for Means

	<i>Female Staff</i>	<i>Male Staff</i>
Mean	3.085	3.115
Known Variance	0.040717	0.030694
Observations	10	10
Hypothesized Difference	Mean	
	0	

Z	-0.35501
P(Z<=z) one-tail	0.361292
z Critical one-tail	1.644854
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.722583
z Critical two-tail	1.959964

The table above shows the calculated z-value of -0.35501 at a 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of -0.35501 is less than the z-tabular value of 1.959964, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, marketing-related mitigation strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in the post-COVID-19 era in Cross River State.

10.0 Discussion of findings.

10.1 Technology and collaboration-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

From the findings of this study, the respondents agree that technology and collaboration-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River State are: mobile apps (for check-in and check-out and to replace room keys), chatbots (for communication with customers), self-service kiosks, in-room technologies (for entertainment), digital payment systems, robots (for reception and room services)robots (for reception and room services), face-scanning, digital contactless services, self-check-in and check-out via machines and voice control for room service. These findings were in consonance with the statement credited to Sigala, (2020) that robotics, smart devices, and artificial technology such as robotic waiters, remote and mobile check-ins and check-outs have helped manage challenges associated with

social and physical distancing and enhance guest and employee health and safety during the pandemic.

10.2 Organizational and human resources related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

The findings of this study revealed that the respondents agree that organizational and human resources-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state include: the creation of an inter-functional team to develop measures to ensure health safety, the creation of an inter-functional team to propose specific action protocols, employees play a fundamental role in handling the crisis properly, employees also play a fundamental role in business recovery, effective control measures based on lower operational costs, effective control measures based on closure of facilities, effective control measures based on flexible staff allocation and delay of investments and setup plans for business recovery. These findings were in line with the statement credited to [Chien and Law \(2003\)](#) that COVID-19 pandemic mitigation strategies involve the creation of an inter-functional team to develop measures to ensure health safety and propose specific action protocols. Employees also play a fundamental role, not only in handling the crisis properly but also in business recovery. The respondents also

disagree that reducing non-essential costs and carefully monitoring cash-flow predictions were not part of organizational and human resources-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post COVID-19 era in Cross River state. This finding contradicts the statement credited to Hao, Xiao & Chon (2020) that, at the organizational level, hotels must apply self-rescue strategies to face the uncertain environment and sharp contraction in sales. These strategies include reducing non-essential costs and carefully monitoring cash-flow predictions.

10.3 Marketing-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state

The findings of the study revealed the marketing-related mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. They include the use of new digital platforms such as social media to communicate with customers, develop specific campaigns and offers to address the local market, develop and promote new products and services, extend loyalty program benefits, prepare promotional plans to increase future stays, update and improve channels to contact customers, update and improve channels to attract customers, update and improve channels to sell to customers, digitalize marketing strategies and advertise through different media channels. These findings were in concord with the statement credited to [Herédia-Colaço and Rodrigues \(2021\)](#) that strategic marketing measures in combating Covid-19 pandemic are: develop specific campaigns and offers to address the local market; develop and promote new products and services (to generate alternative revenue); extend loyalty program benefits;

prepare promotional plans to increase future stays; update and improve channels to contact, attract, and sell to customers; digitalize marketing strategies and advertise through different media channels.

11.0 Summary

This study examined the mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, six research questions were developed and six hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The literature review for this study focused on three main headings: Conceptual review, theoretical review, and empirical review. Under the conceptual review, the concepts of the major variables on the research topic were reviewed. The conceptual review was on the Concept of Mitigation, the Concept of Hotel, the Concept of COVID-19, the Damages that COVID-19 has caused in the hotel industry, and Strategies to overcome the damages caused by COVID-19 in the hotel industry. The theoretical review discussed The Protection Motivation Theory, Expected Utility Theory, and Social Distance Theory. Empirical studies relevant to the present study were reviewed taking cognizance of the research design, purpose of the study, population of the study, sample of the study, instrument of data collection, method of data analysis, and findings of the study among others.

The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Cross River State. The population of this study consisted of all the hotel management staff in Cross River State. The State has a total of Three Hundred and forty-eight registered

hotels (348) of which 78 hotels were randomly selected from the 10 local government areas purposively selected for this study. Four (4) management staff each from the 78 hotels were selected, making a total of 312 hotel management staff. Thus, the sample size of the study was 312. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Mitigation Strategies for Hotel Performance Questionnaire (MSHPQ). The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher and three research assistants who were properly briefed to acquaint them with the purpose of the study, and the modalities for administering them in an appropriate and effective way. The instrument was validated by three experts, one of the experts was a hotel manager and two were lecturers in the Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested on 30 hotel management staff in five different hotels in Akwa-Ibom State. This state was chosen because it has similar characteristics to the area of the study though it is outside the area. Cronbach Alpha method was used to calculate the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of .86 for cluster A, .84 for cluster B, .73 for cluster C, .75 for cluster D, .63 for cluster E, and .85 for cluster F. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was .78. This shows that the instrument was reliable for this study. Mean and standard deviations were adopted to answer the research questions that guided the study. The hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistics at a 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of the study revealed that the mitigation strategies adopted for hotel performance in post covid-19 era in Cross River state were: Technology and collaboration-related strategic measures, Organizational and human resources-related strategic measures, Marketing strategic measures, Service provision strategic measures, Healthcare strategic measures, and Cancellation management and flexibility related strategic measures. The methods used for this research work were explained. This study was concluded, followed by recommendations, contributions to knowledge, and suggestions for further studies.

12.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that mitigation strategies for hotel performance are important in the hotel industry in the post-COVID-19 era. Hotels were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and require recovering their customers, and employees and improving their performance. The findings from this study revealed that COVID-19 has brought about new development and changes in terms of strategies hotels adopt in performance as well as the challenges that come with them for the hotel industry. The managers as well as documentary sources have revealed that there are now new mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era adopted for hotel operations, serving customers, and new customer expectations and experiences that need to be explored further. Health and safety practices are now more compulsory and must be given top priority attention in hotels. Digital checking, reservations, transactions, and operations have resulted in new ways of thinking about the challenges of operating

costs for the industry in the post-COVID-19 era.

Digitalization of the industry helps to facilitate service delivery as the industry now requires contactless services. Even staff training has become very crucial as customers become more skeptical, sophisticated, and educated. Therefore, it has become imperative for the hotel industry to be more proactive in handling these extra service changes and challenges to remain viable in the long run, especially in the post-COVID-19 era. Hotel operators should realize that adopting mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era may lead to increased customer patronage, satisfaction, recovery, retention, and growth in the nation's economy. As rightly pointed out in this study, researchers are expected to shift their research focus to develop solutions for the hospitality and tourism industry in terms of the changes and challenges brought by COVID-19. The study, therefore, opined that mitigation strategies for hotel performance in post covid-19 era will revamp the business and lead to industry recovery and profitability soon.

13.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) The hotel industry should adopt mobile apps (for check-in and check-out and to replace room keys) and digital payment systems.
- (ii) Hoteliers should reduce non-essential costs, create an inter-functional team to develop measures to ensure health safety, and propose specific action protocols.

(iii) The hotel industry should use a new digital platform such as social media to communicate with customers and develop and promote new products and services.

References

Agarwal, P. (2021). Shattered but smiling: Human resource management and the wellbeing of hotel employees during COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93, 102765.

Akintola Abayomi I, Angioha, Pius U., Thelma Abang, & Etta Eugene O. (2021). Covid 19 Pandemic and entrepreneurship enterprise in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa* , 6(1), 23-29.

Anorue, H.C.&Moghalu,F.A. (2022).Evaluation of customer relationship management on performance of hotel industry in era of covid-19 pandemic in Enugu State.*Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 3(11),181-201.

Anunobi, H.N., Emeafor, O. F., & Okpoko, P.U (2021). Covid-19 and hotel service delivery in Nigeria: changes and challenges. *International Journal of Innovation Scientific Research and Review*, 3(4),1061-1065.

Baker, T. (2021). More than 700 000 hotel rooms remain temporarily closed globally. Costar: Hotel News Now, 12 March. <https://www.costar.com/article/1182433098/>

Beaumont, P. (2020). Where did Covid-19 come from? What we know about its origins. *The Guardian*, Retrieved from
<https://theguardian.com/world/2020/may/01/could-covid-19-be-manmade-what-we-know-about-itsorigins-trump-chinese-lab-coronavirus>. Retrieved 24/6/2021

Bello, M.B. & Bello, Y.O (2021). Consequences of Covid-19 Pandemic on Hospitality Industry: The Nigeria Experience. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 5(1), 422-425.

Bernoulli, D. (1738) Expected Utility Theory (EUT).
https://link.springer.com/reference-workentry/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_962#:

Biwota, S.M. (2020). The impact of COVID -19 pandemic on hospitality (Tourism&HotelSector) and mitigation mechanism in Ethiopia review. *Agricultural Research & Technology: Open Access Journal*, 25(1), 21-27.

Blayney, C. (2019). Management competencies: are they related to hotel performance? *International Journal of Management & Marketing Research*, 2(1),59-71.

Boesch D. (2021). *Quick facts on paid family and medical leave*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/quick-facts-paid-family-medical-leave/> [Google Scholar]

British Broadcasting Corporation (2020). Coronavirus around the world. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51235105>

Brittany, C. (2021). ["A New York startup is creating \\$150,000 modular portable hotel rooms - see what it's like inside". Business Insider.](https://web.archive.org/web/) <https://web.archive.org/web/>

Bukola, A. (2017). Trouble times for the eatery business. *The Nation*, p. 12.

Bullock, J.A., Haddow, G.D. & Coppola, D.P. (2012). Mitigation, prevention, and preparedness. national library of medicine.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/>

Chien G.C.L., & Law R. (2003). The impact of the severe acute respiratory syndrome on hotels: A case study of Hong Kong. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22(3), 327–332.

Cristina, B. (2011). [Boutique hotels segment](https://www.hvs.com/Content/3171.pdf). (PDF). <https://www.hvs.com/Content/3171.pdf>

Cross River State Tourism Bureau (2013). *List of registered hotels and guest houses in Cross River State, Nigeria*. Calabar: CRTB Press.,

Danso, B.A., Osei-Tutu, N.A., Whyte, T.N.A. and Ocquaye, E.N.N. (2020). Ghana Hotel Industry (Three-Five Star Rated) and Covid-19: Present scenario and the way forward. *East African Scholars Multidisciplinary Bulletin*, 3(9), 279-292.

Darren, B. (2012). [Long Layover? Many Airport Hotels Offer Day-Room Rates.](#) CNBC. <http://www.cnbc.com/id/>

Dhar, T.N., 2002, “Disaster Management: Policies and Imperatives”, Paper Presented in the Training Programme on Disaster Management, Department of Public Administration, University of Lucknow.

Dictionary.com (2023). Mitigation. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/mitigation>

Doug, M. (2009). [Switzerland's null stern hotel: The nuclear option.](#) Guardian. London: [Guardian News and Media Limited.](#)

Ekwujuru, P. (2016). Tourism contributes N1.7bn to GDP in Q3 2016. Lagos: Vangard Newspaper, Sunday 19 November.

Emenyi, E.O.&Udo,O.K. (2021). Effects of coronavirus pandemic on organizational performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria. *AKSUJACOG*, 1(3), 123-148.

Enyia, C.D&Maclayton, T. I. (2022). Risk mitigation strategies and performance of SMES in Rivers State: A case of COVID-19 pandemic. A conference on Technological, Pandemic Disruptions, and Management Sciences' Theory and Practice: Challenges, Responses, and Strategic Choices, held at Rivers State University Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt.

Esomba, S. (2012). *Global tourism & the environment: the necessities for clean energy and clean transportation usages.* [Lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com). p. 41

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). (2020). COVID-19 Situation update (4th April, 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution2019-ncov-cases>.

Fu, Y. (2020). The impact and recovering strategies of the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons from Taiwan's hospitality industry. *Cogent Soc. Sci.*, 6 (1), 182-195

Garrido-Moreno, Aurora & García-Morales, Víctor & Martín-Rojas, Rodrigo. (2021). Going beyond the curve: Strategic measures to recover hotel activity in times of COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 96. <https://pdf.sciencedirectassets.com/>

Gilacountyaz.gov (2023). Mitigation https://www.gilacountyaz.gov/government/health_

Global Solutions Initiatives (2020). Fundamental lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.global-solutions-initiative.org/press-news/>

Gössling, S., Scott, D. & Hall, C. M. (2021). Pandemics, Tourism, and Global Change: A Rapid Assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1). Available online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>

Hannan, M. T. & Freeman, J. (1989). Organizations and social structure in organizational ecology. Cambridge: Harvard, U. Press, p. 3-27.

Hao, F. Xiao Q. & Chon, K. (2020). COVID-19 and China's hotel industry: impacts, a disaster management framework, and post-pandemic agenda. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90 (102636), 1-11.

Henderson, J. & Ng. A, (2004). Responding to crisis: severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and hotels in Singapore. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6 (2), 411-419.

Herédia-Colaço, V. & Rodrigues, H. (2021). Hosting in turbulent times: hoteliers' perceptions and strategies to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94 (102835), 1-12.

Hervie, D.M, Amoako-Atta E, Hossain MB, Illés CB, Dunay A. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel employees in the greater Accra Region of Ghana. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 2509.

Itu, P.O. Ambe, B.A. Cassidy, E.A.& Enyiekere, S. (2021). Covid-19 pandemic: A spatio-temporal assessment of employment and salary status of hotel staff in Cross River State. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 61(1), 27-41.

Jiang, Y., & Wen, J. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on hotel marketing and management: A perspective article. *International Journal of*

Contemporary of Hospitality Management, 32(2), 2563 – 2573.

Jumia Travel. (2017). *The hospitality and tourism outlook in Nigeria*. Lagos: Jumia Travel Nigeria.

Kassem MA, Radzi AR, Pradeep A, Algahtany M, Rahman, R.A. (2023). Impacts and response strategies of the COVID-19 pandemic on the construction industry using structural equation modeling. *Sustainability*, 15(3), 2672.

Kaushal, V. & Srivastava, S. (2021). Hospitality and tourism industry amid COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on challenges and learnings from India. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, 102707.

KEPSA. (2020). Business Perspectives on the Impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on Kenya's Economy. Retrieved on April 1, 2021 from <https://www.kepsa.or.ke>.

Kobani, D. & Hailsham, L.S.F. (2022). Impact of covid-19 pandemic lockdown on social-economic development in Rivers state. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)*, 10(7), 2022-2443

Kole, O.A. (2021). The Impact of Covid-19 On Job Security in The Nigeria Hotel Sector. An M.A Thesis, National College of Ireland.

Kossovsky, N. (2018). Managing reputation risk: what the hospitality industry can learn from the banking industry. *Hotel Business Review*. Retrieved on April 1,

2021 from <https://www.hotelexecutive.com/>.

Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). (2020). COVID-19: LCCI seeks support for hospitality sector to prevent job loss (31st December, 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.pulse.ng/business/covid-19-lcci-seeks-support-for-hospitality-sector-to-prevent-job-loss>

Lai, I. K. W., & Wong, J. W. C. (2020). Comparing crisis management practices in the hotel industry between initial and pandemic stages of COVID-19. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(10), 3135-3156.

Lo, A. Cheung, C. & Law, R. (2006). The survival of hotels during disaster: a case study of Hong Kong in 2003. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 11 (1), 65-79.

Merriam-Webster (2020)
"Mitigation". www.merriam-webster.com. Retrieved April 5, 2020.

Mitigationguide (2020). [Beyond the Basics: Best Practices in Local Mitigation Planning: Introduction](https://mitigationguide.org/beyond-the-basics-best-practices-in-local-mitigation-planning-introduction). mitigationguide.org.

Mohamed N.A.N. Alharthi, G, S.A. Khalifa, A.E. Abuelhassan, M.N. & Osama. I, (2019). Investigating the Impact of Leadership and Business Continuity Management on Organizational Crisis Performance. *International Business Management*, 13, 266-278.

Monday.com (2023) What is risk mitigation? <https://monday.com/blog/project-management/risk-mitigation>

Ncube, F. N., Chikuta, O., Basera, V., Baipai, R., Mazhande, P., & Tapfuma, M. (2021). Economic impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on the hotel business in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Tourism, Culinary and Entrepreneurship (JTCE)*, 1(2), 105-121.

Nigeria Center for Disease Control. (2002a). An update of COVID19 outbreak in Nigeria Retrieved from <https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/update-on-covid-19-in-nigeria.html>.

Nigeria Center for Disease Control. (2020b). Coronavirus Nigeria: Covid 19 Case Update (28th December, 2020). Retrieved from africanew.comcoronavirus/Nigeria/covid19/caseupdate.

Novelli, M., Burgess, L.G., Jones, A. & Ritchie, B.N. (2018). No Ebola, still doomed: the Ebola-induced tourism crisis. *Annual Tourism Research*, 70 (2), 76-87.

Nzelibe, G. C., & Illogu, C. G. (1996). *Fundamentals of Research methods in Business Management*. Abuja: Chartered Graphic Press.

Ocheni, S. I. Agba, A. M. O. & Agba, M. S. (2020). COVID-19 and the World of Work Dynamics: A Critical Review. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 10(5), 119.

Ojeniyi A., Enegesele D. &Obafunmiso C. K., (2020). Factors militating against e-learningplatformeffective utilization during COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Computing and Techonology*, 7(6), 102-121.

Okpala, K.E. (2015). Management accounting reports and hospitality industry development in Nigeria. *European Journal of Applied Business Management*, 1(2),83-99

Olapegba, P.O. (2020). A preliminary assessment of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) knowledge and Perception in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1101>.

Omeluzor, S.U, Okonoko, V.N, &Anene,O.E.(2023). Technologies for recovery and growth in post COVID-19 era in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9951025/pdf/main.pdf>

Parkan, C. (2023). Measuring the performance of hotel operations<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/>

Piate, R.C.,Inyang, I.I.,&Akpan,U.J. (2022).Assessment of post covid 19 pandemic experience in hospitality industry in Nigeria: an empirical study of the control and remedies to social implications.*Academic Journal of Global Who is Who in Academia*, 4(1), 1-19.

PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2018). As good as it gets? UK Hotels Forecast 2018. Retrieved August 11, 2018, from www.pwc.co.uk/hospitality-leisure

The Presidency, Republic of Kenya. (2021). The fifteenth [15th] presidential address on the coronavirus pandemic. Retrieved on April 1, 2021 from <https://www.president.go.ke>

Radwan, H., and Radwan, I. (2017). Managing hotels during economic challenges: a case study on hotels in Sharm El-sheikh and HurghadaEqypt. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 2 (5), 84-100.

Raghulanan S, & Raghulanan G. (2015). *Hotel housekeeping operations and management: Third Edition*. London: Oxford University Press.