

Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Hotel Businesses in Ekiti State, Nigeria: A Case of Delight Hotel and Suites, Ado-Ekiti

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Abstract

The study investigated the impacts of covid-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State Nigeria: A case of Delight Hotel and Suites, Ado-Ekiti. A total of eighty-five (85) respondents were selected for the study which formed the sample of the study. The sample comprised of 56 respondents who were regular customers at the hotel while the remaining 29 respondents were occasional customers at the same hotel. The sample further comprised of 30 male respondents and 54 female respondents. The study employed a descriptive survey research design due to the fact that it enables information to be obtained from a representative sample of a targeted population in order to describe situations as they exist. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged “COVID-19 and Impact on Hotel Businesses (CIHB)”. Three research questions was raised to guide the study and answered descriptively using mean and standard deviation. Two research hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested using Chi-square analysis of independent sample and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Based on the data analysis, findings revealed that there was significant impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy. Also, it was found that there was significant effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State. The study recommended that Government needs to strengthen hospitality industry in order to provide a robust economy for the country.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic; Hotel Business, Delight Hotel and Suite

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Introduction

COVID-19 is a novel infectious disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus which first case was first identified in Wuhan China and brought the world to a lockdown. The first case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was first recorded on 27th February 2020 in Lagos. As part of the government policies to check the spread of COVID-19 Virus in Nigeria, hotels, schools, airports, recreational centres, market, religion centres, shopping malls, stadiums, banks and other multinational companies were shut down.

The pandemic has not only brought entire socio-economic structures into a halt but has challenged the globalization and global operations of enterprises. Paradoxically, potential impacts and alternative way outs are yet volatile. However, for a speedy recovery and recover of the economy, employment and business functions, a sustainable and fresh beginning is necessary in most of the worsened economic sectors. Conventionally, an infection used to attack the vulnerable groups with food, health care insecurity in their lifestyle and they normally used to be the poor of the society.

Ironically, COVID -19 infections first attacked the international travelers and the pandemic was caused through the travel and thus has confronted mainly the affluent social class globally. The COVID -19 pandemic has resulted in mass production shutdowns and supply chain disruptions causing global ripple effects across all economic sectors in a manner that was never expected. It is projected that the spread of the disease will have serious humanitarian challenges to the countries of the world and especially Africa in particular (UNESCO, 2020). Economically, the effects have already been felt as demand for Africa’s raw materials and commodities in global market has declined and Africa’s access to industrial components and manufactured goods from other regions of the world has been hampered. This is causing further uncertainty in a continent already grappling with widespread geopolitical and economic instability (Mariani & Perez, 2020).

Hotel industry is defined as the establishment responsible for provision of food, drinks and accommodation to guests who are willing to pay for services rendered to them and who are in the state to be received. It occupies a

significant place in industrial sector of Nigeria and the world at large. It provides job opportunities, foreign exchange, as well as helping in all kinds of humanitarian services. It is in the light of all these that every country likes to manage its hotel industry well to enhance socio-economic development. In helping to develop hotel industries in Nigeria, government owned catering schools can encourage individuals to set up catering schools. Meanwhile commerce and tourism commission has set up the standard which every catering school must meet in terms of grading and classification. There are also designed courses for instructions in hotel industries both at local and international levels. All these were made to address the problems of hotel industries in the country. But despite all these, a lot of problems persist (Balaji, Jiang, & Jha, 2019).

The hospitality industry is slowly recovering; the COVID-19 crisis continues to exert profound impacts on how hospitality businesses operate. Hospitality businesses are expected to make substantial changes to their operations in the COVID-19 business environment in order to ensure employees' and customers' health and safety, and enhance customers' willingness to patronize their business (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

As the effects of COVID-19 spread across the entire world, the primary focus for governments and business owners is the safety of their people and customers. The Nigerian Hospitality Industry is faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from poor energy supply and insecurity to misconstrued internal perception, cynical global perceptiveness, flawed hotel classification, poor customer service, little or no standardization in operations, inconsistent regulatory environment and skilled labour shortages caused by a few entrepreneurs with little knowledge of the workings of the industry who hijack the process to perpetuate plans for their own personal aggrandizement (Lockyer, 2005).

The challenge of epidemic called COVID-19 had turned hotel business into something else, due to a compulsory lockdown declared by the government for over four months, its effect had adversely affected economic and social values of the industry. However, this is still not reflected in the quality of services rendered. They seem to have fallen into the abyss of ideological quagmire by forgetting to recognize the fact that the industry thrives on service. Take away the services from the hotel industry then there is nothing to build on.

Although the hotels in Nigeria offer different services to all classes of customers yet they suffer from a culture that is alien to supporting good customer service. Hotel industry account for a large proportion of individual however, corona virus (COVID-19) had hindered the growth and development of hotel industries in Nigeria and Ekiti State in particular, thereby limiting their potential contributions to the development of this nation's economy.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti state, Nigeria: A case of delight hotel and suites, Ado-Ekiti. Specifically, the study examined:

1. the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality industry in Ekiti State;
2. the levels of business patronage before and after COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State;
3. the Government's interventions to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State;

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What are the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality industry in Ekiti State?
2. What are the levels of business patronage before and after COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State?
3. What are the Government's interventions to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy.

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State.

Literature Review

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The Coronavirus disease also called COVID-19 emerged around December 2019 in China in Wuhan city in Hubei province of China (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). This pandemic has spread across 210 countries and

territories around the world and international conveyances (Worldometers, 2020). Amidst, the risk posed by this virus on public health, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it as a global pandemic and calls for health sectors of the world and government to take it seriously (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020).

The spread of the infectious disease is still on the rise despite many efforts from people and government of nations to contain it, such as containment, an individual measure of protection, the authorization of the use of Hydro chloroquine and other drugs that have not been clinically tested (Addi, Benksim, Amine & Cherkaoui, 2020). There are uncertainties as to how the COVID-19 is transmitted, although most medical researcher and centres for disease control have noted that it is transmitted via a fluid contact with an infected person (Kim, 2020, Addi et al, 2020, Bai, Yao, Wei, Tian, Jin, Chen & Wang, 2020, NCDC, 2020). They further noted that symptoms of the disease on an individual includes, sore throat, dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, and in the worse stage acute pneumonia and death. According to NCDC (2020), the incubation period for COVID-19 is between 2-14 days. Bai et al. (2020) asserted that the reason for the high level of the spread of the virus on individuals across the globe as a result of the symptomatic and asymptomatic nature. Failure to identify and properly manage both symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 cases by mass/wide COVID-19 testing or screening of the population puts the race at risk (Gössling et al., 2020), also this would significantly affect the way of life of people, as well as businesses across the globe.

An Overview of Hotel Industry

Many people have given different definitions of hotel industries, each person approaches it the way he/she understands hotel industry and its environment. Lo, Cheung & Law (2006) stated that hotel is a business with its own product and markets, technology and methods, which does not lend itself to easy analysis. It offers several distinct products in varying combination for sale to many markets. It combines production and sales under one roof; it is enclosed and intimate contact with its customers who consume hotel products at the point of sale. It has a high capital to sales ratio, yet it tends to be labour intensive.

Lo et al., (2006) stressed that hotel is the economic activity of undertaking which aims to satisfy the demand for accommodation, food and drink away from home. This means that hotel industries perform a significant role in the economic activity of nation. It provides those away from home functions with their basic needs. Gursoy, Chi & Chi (2020) stressed that hotel is a building for public accommodation that furnishes lodging and usually provides beverages and many personal services. This means that hotel industry grows in knowledge as the needs and wants of man increases. The improvement in the hotel industries has made it possible that hotel does not only provide basic needs but also provide personal services like tennis game, football and other social activities because man is both psychological and social being.

Covid-19 and Hospitality Industry

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the world's economy was shut down almost overnight (WHO, 2020). The pandemic has confronted the hospitality industry with an unprecedented challenge. Strategies to flatten the COVID-19 curve such as community lockdowns, social distancing, stay-at-home orders, travel and mobility restrictions have resulted in temporary closure of many hospitality businesses and significantly decreased the demand for businesses that were allowed to continue to operate (Bartik, Bertrand, Cullen, Glaeser, Luca & Stanton, 2020). Almost all restaurants were asked to limit their operations to only take-outs. Restrictions placed on travel and stay-at-home orders issued by the authorities led to sharp decline in hotel occupancies and revenues. However, the reopening process has slowly begun and authorities have started to ease restrictions, for example, allow dine-in restaurants to reopen at a reduced capacity with strict social distancing guidelines, and gradually reduce restrictions on domestic and international travel. While the hospitality industry is slowly recovering, the COVID-19 crisis continues to exert profound impacts on how hospitality businesses operate. Hospitality businesses are expected to make substantial changes to their operations in the COVID-19 business environment in order to ensure employees' and customers' health and safety, and enhance customers' willingness to patronize their business (Gössling et al., 2020)

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive design which is correlational in nature because it examined the relationship between covid-19 and hotel business. In this study both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to gather information from respondents in the field. The population for the study comprised of the staff and customers of Delight hotel and suites in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. The sample consisted of eighty five (85) respondents that was obtained using simple random sampling technique. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistic. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. The research questions raised to guide the study were answered using frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using Chi-Square analysis of independent sample and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Presentation of Respondents' Demographic Information

Table 1: Respondents' demographic characteristics

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	30	35.3
	Female	54	64.7
	Total	85	100.0
Status	Regular Customer	56	65.9
	Occasional Customer	29	34.1
	Total	85	100.0
Have you taken COVID-19 vaccine	Yes	84	98.8
	No	1	1.2
	Total	85	100.0

Source: *Researcher's field survey (2022)*

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents sampled in this study. In relation to Sex, the result shows that 30 (35.3%) of the respondent are male while 54 (64.7%) of the entire respondent are female. Based on the result, majority of the respondent are female. In relation to age, the result shows that 14 (16.5%) of the respondent are of age 16 to 19, 60 (70.6%) of the entire respondent are of age 20 to 23; while 11 (12.9%) of the entire respondent are of age 24 and above. In relation to customers' status, 56 (65.9%) of the entire respondent are regular customers while 29 (34.1%) of the respondent are occasional customers. It was also revealed that 84 (98.8%) of the entire respondent have taken the COVID – 19 vaccines while 1 (1.2%) of the entire respondent have not taken the vaccine.

Research Question 1

What are the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality industry in Ekiti State?

Table 2: Response to the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality industry in Ekiti State

S/N	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
1.	Hotel business enhances and sustains Nigeria's economy	54 (63.5)	31 (36.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1.36	.484
2.	There is significant relationship between the functions of the hotel business and economic development	17 (20.0)	46 (54.1)	13 (15.3)	9 (10.6)	2.16	.871
3.	Hotel businesses are performing their functions to boost economy	39 (45.9)	14 (16.5)	16 (18.8)	16 (18.8)	2.60	.978
4.	There is proper orientation of workers to enhance business growth	49 (57.6)	23 (27.1)	11 (12.9)	2 (2.4)	1.60	.805
5.	Hotel workers are properly trained before they are enlisted	34 (40.0)	17 (20.0)	19 (22.4)	15 (17.6)	2.18	1.146

Table 2 showed the mean and standard deviation of items 1 to 5 regarding the response to the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality industry in Ekiti State. The table showed the mean scores ranging from 1.36– 2.60 and standard deviation values (.484 – 1.146). Analysis of statement revealed that (100.0%) of the respondents believed that hotel business enhances and sustains Nigeria's economy.

It was further held that (74.1%) of the respondents indicated that there is significant relationship between the functions of the hotel business and economic development, (74.4%) of the respondents agreed with the facts that Hotel businesses are performing their functions to boost economy, (84.7%) of the respondents agreed that there is proper orientation of workers to enhance business growth, while (60.0%) of the entire respondents held that Hotel workers are properly trained before they are enlisted.

Summarily, Table 2 revealed the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality industry in Ekiti State. It was revealed that hotel business enhances and sustains Nigeria’s economy as well as perform their functions to boost economy, and that there was significant relationship between the functions of the hotel business and economic development. It was further revealed that proper orientation of hotel workers was given priority to enhance business growth and that they were properly trained before they are enlisted.

Research Question 2

What are the levels of business patronage before and after COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State?

Table 3: Response to the levels of business patronage before and after COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State

S/N	Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
1.	Hotel business is adequately patronized and funded by the government personnel	48 (56.5)	33 (38.8)	1 (1.2)	3 (3.5)	1.52	.701
2.	State workers are able to patronize hotels with their family	25 (29.4)	36 (42.4)	18 (21.2)	6 (7.1)	2.06	.891
3.	Costumers’ level of patronage reduced after COVID -19 pandemic	20 (23.5)	39 (45.9)	17 (20.0)	9 (10.6)	2.18	.915
4.	Covid-19 pandemic really affected the rate of customers’ booking and lodging in the hotel	21 (24.7)	22 (25.9)	25 (29.4)	17 (20.0)	2.45	1.075
5.	Customers have deserted hotel patronage after COVID -19 pandemic	37 (43.5)	24 (28.2)	18 (21.2)	6 (7.1)	1.92	.966

Table 3 showed the mean and standard deviation of items 1 to 5 regarding the response to the levels of business patronage before and after COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State. The table showed the mean scores ranging from 1.52– 2.45 and standard deviation values (.701 – 1.075). Analysis of statement revealed that (95.3%) of the entire respondents said that hotel business is adequately patronized and funded by the government personnel, while (4.7%) of the respondent held contrary view.

It was further held that (71.8%) of the respondents indicated that state workers are able to patronize hotels with their families, (69.4%) of the respondents indicated that costumers’ level of patronage reduced after COVID -19 pandemic, (50.6%) of the respondents agreed that Covid-19 pandemic really affected the rate of customers’ booking and lodging in the hotel, while (71.7%) of the entire respondents held that Customers have deserted hotel patronage after COVID -19 pandemic.

Summarily, Table 4.3 revealed the levels of business patronage before and after COVID-19 pandemic in Ekiti State. It was revealed that Government personnel as well as state workers were able to patronize the hotel specifically before the pandemic but the tide changes during and after the pandemic as customers’ level of patronage reduced greatly as they neither come for booking nor lodging.

Research Question 3

What are the Government’s interventions to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State?

Table 4: Response to Government’s interventions to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>SA (%)</i>	<i>A (%)</i>	<i>D (%)</i>	<i>SD (%)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	Governments has supported the hospitality industry holistically with respect to the disruption of COVID-19	47 (55.3)	34 (40.0)	3 (3.5)	1 (1.2)	1.51	.629
2.	The government did not provide enough palliatives for hotel owners to curtail the effects of COVID-19	14 (16.5)	25 (29.4)	32 (37.6)	14 (16.5)	2.54	.958
3.	Tax were waived for hospitality businesses to cushion the effects of the pandemic	38 (44.7)	18 (21.2)	10 (11.8)	19 (22.4)	2.75	.925
4.	Special funds were allocated to hospitality industry as a reprieve to the scourging effects of the pandemic	47 (55.3)	25 (29.4)	8 (9.4)	5 (5.9)	3.05	.858
5.	The government had provide support facilities to the hotel owners in order to sustain them in business	21 (24.7)	46 (54.1)	7 (8.2)	11 (12.9)	3.25	.975

Table 4 showed the mean and standard deviation of items 1 to 5 regarding the response to Government’s interventions to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State. The table showed the mean scores ranging from 1.51– 3.25 and standard deviation values (.629 –.975). Analysis of statement revealed that (95.3%) of the entire respondents indicated that Governments had supported the hospitality industry holistically with respect to the disruption of COVID-19, while the remaining (4.7%) of the respondent held contrary perception.

It was further held that (45.9%) of the respondents indicated that Government did not provide enough palliatives for hotel owners to curtail the effects of COVID-19, (61.9%) of the respondents held that tax were subsidized for hospitality businesses to cushion the effects of the pandemic, (84.7%) of the respondents agreed that special funds were allocated to hospitality industry as a reprieve to the scourging effects of the pandemic, while (78.8%) of the entire respondents held that government had provide support facilities to the hotel owners in order to sustain them in business.

Summary, Table 4 revealed the Government’s interventions to cushion the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel businesses in Ekiti State. It was revealed that Government supported hospitality industry with respect to disruption of Covid-19, though the palliatives provided were not enough for the hotel owners to cushion the effects of the pandemic. Government equally granted them tax waiver as well as allocated special funds for the hotel owners as a reprieve to the scourging effects of the pandemic in order to sustain and keep them in business.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy.

Table 5: Chi square analysis of the impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	22.578 ^a	3	.000	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	22.846	3	.000	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test	22.069			.000		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.054 ^b	1	.817	.898	.457	.099
N of Valid Cases	85					

The result of the analyses in table 5 showed the impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy. The chi-square test revealed that calculated χ^2 (0.000) was lesser than the significant level at the 0.05. This implies that there is significant impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy; hence the null hypothesis was not upheld. The alternative hypotheses that stated that there is significant impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy was upheld.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State.

Table 6: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the analysis of the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State.

<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Between Group	241.378	3	120.689	3.937	0.021
Within Group	5425.400	82	30.652		
Total	5666.778	85			

The result in table 6 showed the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State. The analysis revealed that the p value (0.021) was less than the significant level at the 0.05. This implies that there was significant effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State. Hence, the null hypothesis was not upheld. The alternative hypothesis that stated that there is significant effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State was upheld.

Discussion of Findings

In this study, three research questions were raised to guide the study, and two hypotheses were formulated from the research questions. The research questions were answered descriptively using simple frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation while the research hypotheses were analyzed inferentially using Chi-square statistic of independent sample and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The descriptive analysis of the study showed that hotel business enhances and sustains Nigeria's economy as well as perform their functions to boost economy, and that there was significant relationship between the functions of the hotel business and economic development. It was further revealed that proper orientation of hotel workers were given priority to enhance business growth and that they were properly trained before they are enlisted.

It was further revealed that Government personnel as well as state workers were able to patronize the hotel specifically before the pandemic but the tide changes during and after the pandemic as customers' level of patronage reduced greatly as they neither come for booking nor lodging, and that Government supported hospitality industry with respect to disruption of Covid-19, though the palliatives provided were not enough for the hotel owners to cushion the effects of the pandemic. Government equally granted them tax waiver as well as allocated special funds for the hotel owners as a reprieve to the scourging effects of the pandemic in order to sustain and keep them in business.

The inferential analysis of the study revealed that there was significant impact of hospitality industry on Nigeria economy. This corroborated the assertion of Lo et al (2006) who opined that hotel is the economic activity of undertaking which aims to satisfy the demand for accommodation, food and drink away from home. This means that hotel industries perform a significant role in the economic activity of nation.

Lastly, it was shown that there was significant effect of Covid-19 pandemic on hotel business patronage before and after the pandemic in Ekiti State. This finding supported the position of Gössling, Scott and Hall, (2020) who posited that Covid-19 significantly affect the way of life of people, as well as businesses across the globe. Also, the finding is in line with the findings of Bartik, Bertrand, Cullen, Glaeser, Luca and Stanton (2020) who observed that the pandemic has confronted the hospitality industry with an unprecedented challenge. Strategies to flatten the COVID-19 curve such as community lockdowns, social distancing, stay-at-home orders, travel and mobility restrictions have resulted in temporary closure of many hospitality businesses and significantly decreased the demand for businesses that were allowed to continue to operate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the outbreak and spread of COVID -19 disease had negative impact on the country economy, tourism and hotel industry. It is feared that the volume of revenue loss may affect the ability of most of the industries and businesses in the hospitality & tourism sector to return back to normal operations after the COVID-19 pandemic without appreciable financial support from the government. It is recommended that Government needs to strengthen hospitality industry in order to provide a robust economy for the country. Also, there is need for government intervention by way of palliative measures to assist key players in the hotel business and other sectors. Such intervention will include granting loan repayment waiver and moratorium to businesses and soft loans with low interest rate

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