

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND ORGNISATIONAL SUCCESS OF HOTELS IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between succession planning and organizational success of hotels in Rivers State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of the accessible fifty-five (55) of hotels operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The sample size of the study consisted of the entire population since the population is small. Thus, the study adopted the census method of sampling. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection after ascertaining its reliability through the employment of Cronbach Alpha. Mean and Standard Deviation were used for univariate analysis of the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Partial Correlation were used for the bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis of the study, respectively. Findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between succession planning and organizational success of hotels in Rivers State; The study concluded succession planning is a strategic process that ensures an organization's leadership and key roles are filled seamlessly over time, reducing disruptions and securing long-term sustainability of organizational success of hotels in Rivers State. The study recommended thus: hotels and their managers should ensure leadership continuity in succession planning to support the consistent achievement of strategic objectives in hotels in Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Organisational success within the hotel industry is a multifaceted concept that typically refers to a hotel's ability to achieve its strategic goals, ensure operational efficiency, and remain competitive in a dynamic market. Success can be measured in various ways, including financial performance, market share, guest satisfaction, employee retention, and reputation. In the context of hotels in Rivers State, organisational success also involves navigating the challenges posed by the local business environment, which includes economic fluctuations, regulatory frameworks, and customer preferences (Bowie & Buttle, 2011). The hotel sector is critical to the state's economy, which depends on tourism, business travel, and hospitality services, all of which are dependent on operational effectiveness and leadership quality (Okafor, 2013). As such, for hotels to thrive in Rivers State, they must possess strategic capabilities and organisational practices that drive long-term sustainability and growth.

One common way to assess organisational success

in hotels is through survival—especially in the context of competitive and often volatile markets like Rivers State. The survival of a hotel depends on its ability to adapt to external challenges, including economic downturns, fluctuating tourist numbers, and evolving customer preferences. A hotel that successfully navigates these challenges and continues to operate over time is often seen as successful in terms of survival (Fayol, 2019). This concept of survival is not only a reflection of economic stability but also an indication of a hotel's capacity for risk management and strategic foresight. Additionally, the objective attainment of a hotel—whether in terms of financial goals, market expansion, or service quality—plays a central role in defining its success. In Rivers State, hotels must meet or exceed established targets such as profitability, occupancy rates, customer loyalty, and overall service excellence (Gittel & Alexander, 2020). These objectives represent tangible evidence of a hotel's success, and they provide benchmarks for assessing organisational performance.

Employee focus is another crucial measure of organisational success in the hotel industry. Employees are the backbone of any hotel, as they directly impact service delivery, guest experience, and operational efficiency (Pereira & Lopes, 2016). The retention of skilled workers, the development of a high-performance culture, and the provision of training and career growth opportunities are integral to a hotel's long-term success. In Rivers State, where hospitality professionals may face competition from other local hotels or migrate to larger metropolitan areas, hotels that emphasize employee satisfaction and well-being are better positioned to retain top talent and maintain consistency in service delivery. A focus on employee welfare also promotes higher morale and greater engagement, which in turn contributes to the hotel's overall performance and customer satisfaction (Cooper, 2021).

Another important measure of organisational success in the hotel sector is customer satisfaction, which is closely tied to service quality and guest experience. In Rivers State, hotels must continuously adapt to the diverse needs of their clientele, whether domestic or international tourists, corporate travelers, or locals seeking event services. The ability to create and sustain positive guest experiences through high-quality services, comfort, and responsiveness is essential for retaining business and gaining a competitive edge in the market (Bowie & Buttle, 2011). The measurement of guest satisfaction through surveys, reviews, and repeat bookings is often used as an indicator of success. Hotels that consistently meet or exceed guest expectations are likely to achieve higher levels of profitability and positive word-of-mouth recommendations, which are vital in an industry driven by reputation.

Succession planning refers to the strategic process of identifying and preparing potential leaders within an organisation to fill key roles in the future. This process is critical for ensuring leadership continuity, reducing disruptions, and maintaining stability during leadership transitions. In the hotel industry, succession planning is particularly important due to the complex nature of operations, where leadership decisions directly impact guest experience, employee satisfaction, and financial performance (Chowdhury & Scott, 2018). Effective succession planning ensures that hotels are equipped with capable leaders who can steer the business through periods of change, such as ownership transitions, leadership turnover, or organisational restructuring. In Rivers State, where the hospitality sector faces a competitive and often unpredictable environment, the importance of robust succession planning cannot be overstated.

Dimensions of succession planning include strong leadership continuity, the retention of top talent, and adaptability. Strong leadership continuity is the cornerstone of succession planning, as it helps ensure that the vision and strategic direction of the hotel are maintained even during periods of leadership change (Jackson & Schuler, 2019). Leadership continuity fosters trust among employees and guests, ensures that operational standards are upheld, and reduces the risks associated with leadership turnover. Another crucial aspect of succession planning is the retention of top talent, which involves identifying and nurturing high-potential employees who can eventually take on leadership roles (Harrison & Polson, 2017). The retention of key talent is essential for sustaining operational excellence and competitive advantage. Finally, adaptability in succession planning refers to the ability to adjust plans based on the changing dynamics of the hospitality industry. Hotels in Rivers State need to adapt succession strategies to meet the evolving demands of the market, technological advancements, and shifts in customer preferences (Zhao & Huo, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The hotel industry in Rivers State, like many other sectors within Nigeria's hospitality landscape, faces several challenges that hinder organisational success and contribute to poor performance in some establishments. Despite the growing demand for tourism and hospitality services in the region, many hotels in Rivers State struggle to achieve business objectives such as profitability, market share expansion, and customer satisfaction. Several hotels report persistent issues such as fear of operational failure, inability to meet financial goals, inconsistent service quality, and declining guest satisfaction. These challenges often result in poor employee morale, leading to high turnover rates,

which further affects service quality and operational efficiency (Bowie & Buttle, 2021). A lack of skilled and motivated employees, coupled with ineffective management practices, contributes to the failure of hotels to meet their objectives and sustain long-term success. Additionally, the inability to maintain consistent service standards and deliver exceptional guest experiences further exacerbates the crisis, making it difficult for hotels to compete with better-managed establishments both locally and internationally (Ogunyomi & Akinlabi, 2019).

A significant factor contributing to the underperformance of many hotels in Rivers State is the neglect or poor execution of succession planning initiatives, which is essential for ensuring leadership continuity, talent retention, and organisational adaptability. The absence of structured succession planning mechanisms has left many hotels vulnerable to leadership gaps, especially during key transitions or periods of crisis (Akpan & Akinyemi, 2020). Hotels without strong leadership continuity often suffer from inconsistent decision-making, unclear strategic direction, and low employee engagement, all of which hinder their ability to achieve success. Furthermore, the failure to identify and nurture top talent internally leads to high turnover rates, as skilled employees leave in search of better career advancement opportunities (Fayol, 2019). The lack of adaptability in the succession planning process also prevents hotels from responding to changes in market dynamics, customer preferences, and technological advancements, further limiting their capacity to thrive in a competitive environment. In sum, the neglect of effective succession planning practices undermines the long-term success of hotels in Rivers State, preventing them from overcoming operational challenges and adapting to a rapidly evolving hospitality landscape.

The existing body of research has extensively explored succession planning and related factors such as talent retention, organizational sustainability, and leadership strategies in various sectors, including family-owned businesses, fast-food services, commercial banking, and the broader hospitality industry. Owhorkirie and Onuoha (2023) and Promise-Elechi and Onuoha (2023) have examined the role of succession planning in sustaining family businesses in the Niger Delta and fast-food service firms, respectively, underscoring the critical role of planned leadership transitions in ensuring organizational continuity. Similarly, Ordua et al. (2024) investigated succession strategies in commercial banks, while Patrick and Nenage (2019) addressed leadership succession in the hospitality sector, focusing on sustainability across multiple service-oriented firms. However, there is a discernible knowledge gap concerning the specific succession planning needs and challenges in hotels, particularly in Rivers State, where operational demands, high employee turnover, and service-focused leadership make succession uniquely complex. Although Ikalama and Eketu (2017) and Promise-Elechi and Onuoha (2023) addressed talent retention and development in hotels, they did not focus specifically on the succession planning processes within hotel management. Likewise, studies by Ojeyemi and Egbuta (2024) and Obire (2024) focused on retention strategies and talent management in the hospitality industry but lacked an in-depth examination of succession planning's role in organizational success within hotels. This research will bridge the identified gap by investigating how succession planning directly interacts with the organizational success of hotels in Rivers State, a focus not fully explored in the reviewed studies.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at addressing succession planning and organisational success of hotels in Rivers State. The objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the relationship between strong leadership continuity and survival of hotels in Rivers State.
2. examine the relationship between retention of top talent and objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State.
3. determine the relationship between adaptability and survival of hotels in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between strong leadership continuity and survival of hotels in Rivers State.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between retention of top talent and objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between adaptability and survival of hotels in Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter x-rays the theoretical positions of scholars on the subject matter of the study.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Succession Planning

Succession planning is an essential process within organizations aimed at ensuring continuity and stability by preparing for the transition of key roles. Defined as a systematic approach to identifying and developing future leaders, succession planning encompasses the assessment, development, and promotion of individuals capable of filling critical positions when current occupants retire, resign, or transition to new roles. The primary goal of succession planning is to ensure that organizations have the right people in place to maintain productivity, mitigate disruptions, and secure their long-term strategic goals (Rothwell, 2020). A well-structured succession plan goes beyond the immediate replacement of leaders and focuses on cultivating a pipeline of talent that aligns with the organization's strategic objectives. This involves the identification of high-potential employees, usually through performance reviews, skills assessments, and evaluations of cultural fit within the organization. Through this process, organizations create a "talent pool" of individuals who possess the leadership skills and qualities needed to step into critical roles in the future (Dessler, 2020). A comprehensive succession plan also includes developmental programs, such as leadership training, mentoring, and cross-functional experiences, to prepare these individuals for their future roles.

One of the key benefits of succession planning is organizational stability. By developing future leaders internally, organizations reduce the risks associated with unexpected vacancies and ensure a smoother transition when key roles become vacant. According to Cascio (2019), companies that implement succession planning are better equipped to adapt to changes, whether they are due to retirements, promotions, or other factors. This continuity is especially crucial in sectors that require specialized knowledge and experience, such as finance, healthcare, and technology. In such fields, a sudden leadership gap can result in operational delays, increased costs, and even reputational damage. Succession planning provides a proactive approach to avoid such disruptions, as prepared successors are ready to step into key roles without compromising organizational performance.

Succession planning also plays a critical role in talent retention. Employees are more likely to remain engaged and committed when they see opportunities for growth and career advancement within their organization. When employees know that leadership is invested in their development and future potential, they are more motivated to contribute to the organization's goals and less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere (Noe et al., 2020). Retaining talent in this manner is particularly beneficial in competitive labor markets, where losing skilled workers can be costly and disruptive. Through succession planning, organizations demonstrate their commitment to supporting employees' career progression, which fosters loyalty and reduces turnover.

Dimensions of Succession Planning

Strong Leadership Continuity

Succession planning is a structured process that organizations use to identify and develop potential leaders to ensure they are prepared to assume critical roles when vacancies arise. A fundamental component of succession planning is fostering strong leadership continuity. Leadership continuity

focuses on maintaining a stable, ongoing leadership presence and competence within an organization even through periods of transition. This continuity is essential not only for sustaining strategic direction but also for cultivating resilience and trust across teams and stakeholders. Through different lenses, scholars and organizational theorists have elaborated on this principle, providing unique perspectives on the mechanisms, goals, and impacts of strong leadership continuity in the context of succession planning.

One prominent view defines strong leadership continuity as the organization's ability to ensure a "seamless transition" between leaders while maintaining strategic and operational momentum (Rothwell, 2020). In this context, succession planning is not merely about having a replacement leader but is instead about developing a comprehensive plan to ensure that leadership competencies, organizational knowledge, and values are preserved and transferred effectively. Rothwell (2020) argues that a successful transition requires not just identifying potential successors but grooming them well in advance to understand the nuances of their future roles. This requires nurturing candidates' skillsets, exposure to key challenges, and providing mentoring opportunities. By preparing future leaders in this way, organizations can safeguard the continuity of their strategic goals, ensuring that no leader's departure causes a substantial disruption to performance or morale. Another explanation of leadership continuity within succession planning emphasizes the stability and resilience of organizational culture. According to Caldwell et al. (2021), leadership continuity is a core pillar of succession planning that underscores the preservation of cultural integrity through leadership transitions. They suggest that successful organizations consciously shape and maintain their culture as part of their succession efforts by aligning potential leaders with the core values and vision of the organization from early on. By embedding these elements into succession planning, organizations can minimize cultural disruptions and maintain coherence in values, norms, and expectations even as leadership changes. This continuity is particularly vital in sectors where trust and cultural stability are critical for operations, such as healthcare and finance, where high turnover could lead to instability and diminished public confidence (Caldwell et al., 2021). Another scholarly perspective on strong leadership continuity highlights the importance of "institutional memory," or the retention of organizational knowledge and expertise, as a key dimension of succession planning (Kim & Li, 2019). Institutional memory refers to the collective knowledge that leaders accumulate over time about the organization's history, challenges, successes, and failures. Strong leadership continuity ensures that this wealth of experience is not lost when a leader departs. Kim and Li (2019) propose that organizations should prioritize preserving this memory through mentorship programs, job shadowing, and involving potential successors in strategic decision-making processes.

Retention of Top Talent

Retention of top talent is a pivotal element of succession planning, vital for ensuring the continuity of leadership, stability, and the preservation of organizational knowledge. Succession planning refers to the proactive steps an organization takes to identify and prepare future leaders within its workforce to assume critical roles when necessary. In the Nigerian business landscape, where competition for skilled professionals is high and external hiring can be costly and disruptive, retaining top talent as part of succession planning has gained significant importance. Scholars have offered diverse views on the role of retention, emphasizing its benefits in creating a stable leadership pipeline, preserving cultural integrity, and fostering organizational resilience. One perspective defines retention within succession planning as a strategy to reduce turnover and secure institutional knowledge (Okoye, 2022). According to Okoye (2022), talent retention is crucial in sectors with scarce skills, where high-performing employees are often sought after by competing organizations. When top talent leaves, they take valuable knowledge and relationships with them, leaving gaps that are challenging to fill. Thus, retention becomes an essential component of succession planning, ensuring that knowledge is retained and that the organization is equipped with skilled individuals ready for future leadership roles. Okoye (2022) recommends strategies such as competitive

compensation and clear career progression as vital in retaining top talent, which in turn strengthens the organization's readiness to navigate leadership transitions without significant disruption. Another view emphasizes that talent retention helps in building and sustaining a cohesive organizational culture, which is critical for stable succession (Adebayo & Fashola, 2021). Adebayo and Fashola (2021) argue that when an organization retains high-performing employees, it also retains a shared understanding of its core values, mission, and practices. This cohesion becomes especially significant during leadership transitions, as leaders promoted from within are more likely to uphold the organization's culture and objectives. For Nigerian organizations, where collective identity and loyalty are often valued, a stable culture can reinforce employee commitment, creating an environment where top talent feels connected to the organization's goals and purpose. In succession planning, retaining culturally aligned employees ensures that leadership transitions are smoother and less disruptive, as internal successors are better equipped to lead in a way that aligns with the organization's established ethos. Talent retention is also defined as a method of building a strong internal leadership pipeline, which reduces reliance on external recruitment and enhances leadership continuity (Obi, 2023). According to Obi (2023), focusing on retention as part of succession planning means developing a structured pathway for high-potential employees to progress into leadership roles. When top talent is retained and nurtured, the organization benefits from a leadership pipeline filled with individuals who understand its operations, goals, and unique challenges.

Adaptability

Adaptability, as a dimension of succession planning, is the organization's capacity to anticipate and respond to changes, ensuring leadership transitions are seamless and strategic, even in uncertain times. This approach to succession planning moves beyond traditional role assignments to foster a responsive, resilient leadership pipeline capable of meeting unforeseen challenges. As Smith and Huber (2018) argue, adaptability within succession planning involves cultivating leaders who are agile and versatile, prepared to transition smoothly into new roles or adapt their approach based on changing organizational needs. By embedding adaptability in succession planning, organizations strengthen their ability to respond quickly to market fluctuations or sudden leadership changes, ensuring stability and continuity.

One key aspect of adaptability is the emphasis on developing a diverse skill set among future leaders, enabling them to respond effectively to a variety of situations. Rather than training leaders strictly for specific roles, adaptable succession planning focuses on building competencies such as problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and decision-making under pressure. According to Davis and Lang (2021), fostering adaptability involves creating a leadership pipeline where individuals are equipped to handle ambiguity, shift priorities, and lead across different functions. This approach allows future leaders to transition more easily into unexpected roles, which can be critical in times of rapid organizational change or crisis. Leaders who are trained with an adaptable mindset are better positioned to sustain continuity and provide stability during times of transition.

Additionally, adaptability in succession planning requires establishing a culture that values flexibility and continuous learning. Organizations with a culture of adaptability encourage leaders to embrace change and approach new challenges as opportunities for growth. Reed and Boeker (2020) highlight that adaptable organizations often integrate cross-training, job rotation, and mentorship into their succession planning. These strategies expose future leaders to various roles and departments, allowing them to develop a comprehensive understanding of the organization and to build a diverse range of skills. By encouraging cross-functional experience, adaptable succession planning nurtures leaders who can step into different roles with a well-rounded perspective, making them more capable of managing transitions and unforeseen challenges. Furthermore, adaptability in succession planning involves a strategic openness to regular reassessment and realignment of succession plans based on the current business environment.

Concept of Organizational Success

Organizational success is a comprehensive concept reflecting an organization's achievement of its goals across multiple dimensions, including financial performance, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, innovation, and sustainability. This multi-faceted nature of success illustrates that it is not solely about immediate financial gain; rather, it is about the organization's overall health, longevity, and impact on its stakeholders and the broader community. Organizations that achieve success in these areas tend to be resilient, competitive, and better equipped to navigate changes in the market and in society (Okoro & Adewale, 2023).

One of the most commonly cited indicators of organizational success is financial performance, which includes metrics such as revenue growth, profitability, return on investment (ROI), and cost efficiency. Financial health is crucial because it provides the resources necessary for expansion, technology adoption, workforce development, and market positioning. Organizations with a strong financial foundation are more likely to sustain their operations through economic fluctuations, respond swiftly to market changes, and invest in areas that drive long-term growth. Eze and Obilor (2022) argue that while financial performance is not the sole indicator of success, it is a fundamental one, as it fuels other aspects of the organization's activities and enhances its stability. Thus, financial success is often viewed as both a measure of past achievements and a resource for future advancements.

Customer satisfaction and loyalty are equally significant components of organizational success, particularly in sectors where client experience and service quality are essential to building a positive reputation. When customers are satisfied, they are more likely to become repeat buyers and recommend the organization to others, contributing to brand loyalty and market reach. Opara and Duru (2021) emphasize that customer satisfaction serves as a barometer for an organization's success, as it indicates that the organization is meeting or exceeding customer expectations. High levels of customer satisfaction often translate into customer loyalty, which not only reduces marketing costs but also strengthens the organization's position in competitive markets. Therefore, customer satisfaction is a reflection of an organization's capacity to deliver value consistently, which is central to its long-term success.

Employee engagement is another critical dimension of organizational success, as it directly influences productivity, innovation, and service quality. Engaged employees are those who feel valued, motivated, and committed to the organization's mission and goals, which ultimately drives organizational performance. Amadi and Nwachukwu (2021) argue that organizations that prioritize employee well-being, professional development, and a supportive workplace culture often experience higher levels of employee engagement, which leads to reduced turnover rates and higher productivity. Engaged employees contribute to a positive organizational climate, promoting teamwork and commitment, and enhancing the overall capacity for achieving strategic goals. As such, employee engagement is a valuable component of organizational success, as it strengthens the internal structure of the organization and promotes sustainable growth. Another essential aspect of organizational success is innovation, which represents the organization's ability to develop new ideas, products, or processes that provide value to customers and improve internal efficiencies.

Measures of Organizational Success

Survival

In the hospitality industry, survival is often seen as the most fundamental indicator of organizational success, particularly in challenging business environments like the hotel sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. This perspective on survival considers the ability of hotels to maintain operations despite various challenges, including economic instability, intense competition, and changing customer expectations. For hotels in Rivers State, the concept of survival can encompass strategies that ensure not only financial viability but also customer loyalty and operational resilience.

First, survival as an indicator of success can be understood in the financial sense, where it represents the hotel's ability to consistently generate revenue, cover operating costs, and achieve sustainable

profitability. Ekejiuba (2020) defines survival as the capacity to endure through financial downturns by strategically managing expenses and maximizing revenue streams. In this context, hotels in Rivers State that can adapt to fluctuating demand, seasonality, and economic volatility demonstrate resilience and stability. The financial perspective on survival emphasizes a strong foundation in fiscal management, where hotels must optimize resources and innovate in revenue generation. Ekejiuba further explains that revenue generation in the hospitality industry often requires creative approaches, such as offering bundled packages, diversifying services, and leveraging local tourism (Ekejiuba, 2020). For hotels in Rivers State, achieving this level of financial agility and ensuring steady income streams can be particularly challenging due to factors like regional economic downturns, security issues, and occasional declines in tourism.

Another definition of survival in this context relates to the ability to adapt to external changes and maintain competitive advantage over time. According to Olumide (2021), organizational survival in the hotel industry is tied to adaptability and responsiveness to market shifts, including technological changes, evolving customer preferences, and regulatory requirements. Hotels in Rivers State face a unique blend of challenges, including high competition and the need for constant innovation to meet evolving guest expectations. As Olumide points out, one way hotels can enhance their survival prospects is by investing in digital transformation, such as improving their online presence and using data-driven strategies to predict customer needs and adjust services accordingly. By embracing technology and focusing on market alignment, hotels can position themselves to remain relevant and successful over time. This view on survival emphasizes the importance of a proactive and flexible approach to management, recognizing that adaptability is a key asset in staying competitive and attracting repeat business.

Objective Attainment

Objective attainment is a critical measure of organizational success, particularly within the hospitality sector. In the context of hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria, it involves assessing the extent to which a hotel meets its predefined goals, whether they are financial, operational, or related to customer satisfaction. This approach ensures that the hotel's management can evaluate its effectiveness and sustainability in a competitive market. According to Ezeani (2013), objective attainment is fundamental to assessing organizational success because it reflects the alignment between an organization's goals and its actual performance. For hotels in Rivers State, success may be defined by achieving targets such as maintaining high occupancy rates, optimizing revenue per available room (RevPAR), and improving customer satisfaction. Ezeani (2013) emphasizes that objective attainment is not just about meeting financial goals, but also about providing quality service, ensuring guest satisfaction, and creating a positive reputation in the market.

Expanding on this, Nwachukwu and Akinlolu (2019) argue that objective attainment also includes the pursuit of long-term organizational growth. They state that achieving operational goals such as minimizing costs, streamlining operations, and increasing efficiency are essential for sustaining business success over time. For a hotel in Rivers State, this could mean managing operational costs effectively while still providing exceptional service to guests. It could also include increasing market share by attracting both local and international tourists. The attainment of such objectives is critical for long-term survival and profitability in a competitive tourism market.

Moreover, Okafor (2021) highlights that in a region like Rivers State, where the economy is heavily reliant on the oil industry and fluctuating tourism trends, hotels must adapt their objectives to external economic factors. Objective attainment in this context extends beyond just achieving internal targets to managing external challenges such as economic downturns, inflation, or political instability. For instance, the ability of a hotel to maintain profitability and retain customer loyalty during economic recessions or political unrest is a key measure of its success. According to Okafor (2021), resilience in the face of external challenges is a crucial aspect of objective attainment in a volatile environment. In the same vein, Abubakar and Ahmed (2020) stress the importance of aligning resources with organizational goals. They argue that hotels must optimize their human

resources, invest in technological innovations, and improve their infrastructure to meet their objectives. In Rivers State, this could involve integrating modern booking systems, digital payment options, and improving online visibility to reach a wider audience. Hotels that leverage technology to enhance guest experience and streamline operations are more likely to achieve their objectives efficiently and effectively.

Employee Focus

In today's competitive and service-oriented industries, employee focus has emerged as a critical measure of organizational success, especially within hospitality sectors like hotels. As defined by contemporary management theories, employee focus refers to an organization's commitment to addressing employees' needs, ensuring job satisfaction, and fostering engagement. This concept is particularly relevant in the hotel industry, where employees serve as the front-line representatives of service quality and customer satisfaction, directly influencing business outcomes (Adeoye, 2023). In the context of hotels in Rivers State, Nigeria, adopting employee-focused practices has been increasingly recognized as an essential element for achieving sustainable growth and success (Okonkwo & Amadi, 2024).

Employee focus encompasses several facets, including job satisfaction, employee engagement, professional development, and overall well-being. Each aspect is crucial in cultivating a motivated workforce that is committed to upholding the organization's standards and objectives (Obasi, 2024). In Rivers State's hotel industry, the influence of employee focus on organizational success can be measured by examining key performance indicators such as customer satisfaction, employee retention rates, and operational efficiency. For instance, hotels that invest in training and development programs not only improve employees' skills but also demonstrate a commitment to their growth, which can lead to increased loyalty and reduced turnover rates (Nwokocha, 2023). One primary way employee focus contributes to organizational success is through its impact on customer satisfaction, a crucial factor in the hospitality industry. Hotels that prioritize employee well-being and satisfaction often find that these employees are more motivated to deliver exceptional service. The correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction is widely recognized, as content employees tend to perform better and are more attentive to guests' needs (Eke & Chima, 2024). In Rivers State, hotels that emphasize employee-centric policies have reported improved customer feedback and higher occupancy rates, showcasing the tangible benefits of prioritizing the workforce (Olu, 2024). Additionally, satisfied employees are more likely to exhibit loyalty to their employer, contributing to a stable workforce that enhances service continuity and builds trust with regular patrons.

Another significant dimension of employee focus is engagement, which is reflected in how invested and connected employees feel toward their organization. Engaged employees exhibit a strong sense of commitment, are often more productive, and contribute to a positive work environment that supports high-quality service (Ayodele & Okezie, 2024). In the hotel industry, engaged employees are crucial as they bring energy and enthusiasm to their interactions with guests. According to recent studies, hotels in Rivers State that implement engagement-driven practices, such as regular team-building exercises, employee recognition programs, and open communication channels, have shown marked improvements in operational performance and guest satisfaction metrics (Aina, 2023). Engagement-focused hotels tend to experience lower levels of absenteeism and higher retention, which not only reduces recruitment costs but also builds a consistent and reliable workforce.

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory, initially proposed by economists Gary S. Becker and Theodore W. Schultz in the early 1960s, offers a fundamental framework for understanding the value of investing in employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies as assets that benefit both the individual and the organization (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). Becker's work, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*, became seminal in this area, defining human

capital as the skills, education, and experience that enhance an individual's economic productivity. This theory posits that individuals and organizations that invest in human capital, through education, training, and development, are likely to achieve higher returns, with measurable impacts on organizational success.

The main idea behind Human Capital Theory is that investment in employees yields direct benefits to an organization by enhancing productivity and performance. Organizations that focus on developing the skills of their employees build a more capable workforce, which is integral to sustaining a competitive advantage. Becker (1964) argued that such investments yield positive returns by creating a pool of knowledgeable, skilled workers who can adapt to changes, drive innovation, and foster organizational growth.

Two central principles of Human Capital Theory are investment in education and training and the correlation between human capital and productivity. The first principle, investment in education and training, underscores that organizations, including those in the hospitality industry, benefit when they allocate resources to upskill employees, thereby creating a well-prepared workforce that can handle complex, dynamic roles. The second principle suggests a direct relationship between the level of human capital within an organization and its productivity, implying that a highly trained and skilled workforce is more efficient and capable of enhancing organizational performance (Becker, 1964). Human Capital Theory is highly suitable for explaining how succession planning enhances the organizational success of hotels in Rivers State. In the hospitality sector, succession planning is particularly critical because it ensures continuity in service delivery, leadership, and operational standards. By investing in training and developing employees for future leadership roles, hotels in Rivers State can mitigate the disruptions that often accompany leadership transitions, thereby promoting stability and sustained performance.

For instance, through targeted succession planning programs, hotels can identify high-potential employees and provide them with specialized training, grooming them for management roles that require technical, interpersonal, and strategic skills. This process aligns with the principles of Human Capital Theory, as the organization is investing in human capital that will eventually increase its overall productivity and maintain service excellence—a critical factor for competitive advantage in the hospitality industry (Becker, 1964). The application of Human Capital Theory in succession planning also extends to enhancing employee retention and engagement. Employees in organizations that prioritize succession planning are often more motivated, as they see a clear pathway for career advancement. For hotels in Rivers State, where employee turnover can affect service continuity and quality, an emphasis on succession planning based on Human Capital Theory can foster a stable, engaged workforce that contributes to the hotel's long-term success. By preparing employees to take on larger responsibilities, hotels not only safeguard against potential leadership gaps but also ensure that successors are well-versed in the organization's culture, values, and service standards (Schultz, 1961).

Empirical Review

Nwauzi and Uboegbulam (2022) addressed the relationship between innovative leadership and venture performance in the hospitality industry in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study investigated the relationship between innovative leadership and venture performance in some selected hotels in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between the dimension of innovative leadership (idea creation) with three measures of venture performance; financial performance, non-financial performance and market performance respectively. The population of the study consisted of 675 male and female members of staff of some selected hotels in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, which included both senior and junior staff of firms. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaires. A total of 240 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed. Spearman's Rank Correlation Statistical tool with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between idea creation and financial

performance, non-financial performance and marketing performance of hotels in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study therefore concluded that the innovative leader should make sure to have as many ideas under development as grains of sand in the desert, in order to ensure that some of the ideas reach the market as innovations. The innovative leader should also reduce the time from idea to invoice, and increase the "payback" in the realization phase. It was thus recommended that innovative leadership should take control over the whole process, from idea generation to commercialization and realization. However, they are expected to employ different external actors in various parts of the process as they take control.

Nwoke and Iyiola (2021) studied talent mobility: A management strategy for employee retention in SMEs in Ogun State. As a result, the study looked at talent mobility as a management strategy for retaining employees in particular SMEs in Nigeria's Ogun State. 289 respondents were given questionnaires as part of a descriptive study design, and a stratified sample technique was used to test the hypotheses. Results indicated that employee retention is significantly impacted by talent mobility, which demonstrates the effectiveness of talent mobility in retaining talent. It is advised that SME management utilize the potential of talent management by transferring personnel to open positions or from one job role to another within the company. Moreover, to boost employees' job knowledge and performance, organizational policies must encourage job rotation.

Obire(2024) examined delivering the goods of organizational commitment through talent management in the hospitality industry. The study addressed talent management practices and their impact on organizational commitment in the hospitality industry. Two objectives were raised to evaluate the influence of talent management on organizational commitment. There was training and development and job enlargement. The study used the right empirical frame. The study was hinged on Resource Based- theory. The study was analyzed empirically. This study used the survey research design method. The population of this study consists of the employees from the fifteen (15) selected hotels in Asaba, Delta State, Benin City, Edo State and Yenagoa Bayelsa State. Findings revealed that training and development and job enlargement impact organizational commitment positively. It was concluded that both variables have a positive effect on organizational commitment. It was concluded that at training, workers acquire the knowledge, skills, and capacities to alter their behaviour and attitudes, which can help the firm achieve excellent results. Worker attitude and behaviour will be impacted by compensation; satisfied workers are a show of commitment. It was recommended that Companies that want to maintain their competitive edge quickly should always ensure that employee training and development is part of their corporate strategy and Organizations should always ensure that workers are assigned new tasks that aid in minimizing workplace fatigue. Ojeyemi and Egbuta(2024) examined employee retention strategies and service quality of selected five-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. Service quality in the hotel industry involves all facets of a guest's stay, from staff interactions to the smooth running of operations, leading to their overall satisfaction. The committed efforts of hotel employees towards delivering excellent service not only improve guest experiences but also have positive economic effects, fostering hospitality growth, job creation, and destination development. Despite this, research suggests a decline in service quality within the industry. Implementing employee retention tactics, including career advancement, working conditions, support from the organization, and compensation, is presumed to address this issue of poor service quality. Hence, this study examined the effect of employee retention strategies on service quality in selected five-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. This study adopted survey research design. The population comprised of 2,548 employees of five selected five-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. The sample size of 434 was determined using Cochran's formula. Simple random sampling techniques was adopted in selecting respondents. A structured, adapted and validated questionnaire was administered. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.797 to 0.952. The response rate was 87.6%. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (Multiple regression) statistics at 5% confidence level. Findings revealed that employee retention strategies

have statistically significant effect on the service quality of 2 the selected five-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria (Adj.R = 0.180; $F(4,375) = 21.828$, $p < 0.05$). This study concluded that employee retention strategies improved the service quality of the selected five-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. The study recommended that the five-star hotels management should enhance their employee retention strategies to boost their overall service quality.

Promise-Elechiand Onuoha (2023) focused on talent development and firm resilience of hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study explored the relationship between talent development and firm resilience of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a population element of 105 hotel managers, it conducted a census of the managers from 35 hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. After data collection and collation, copies were analyzed using the Spearman rank correlation coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0). The findings revealed that talent development had a positive correlation with measures of firm resilience: firm robustness and firm agility. Based on the findings, the study recommended that managers of hotels should initiate talent development programs, support, and encourage talent/knowledge sharing among employees to enhance talented staff's ability to handle jobs more efficiently, with adequate funding to enhance their robustness and agility. Amongst the proposals for further studies include the study only focused on the quantitative method of analysis thus, other researchers can explore qualitative methods to adopt QSR Nvivo and other tools to see the level of outcomes and correlations between the constructs.

Ikalama and Eketu(2017) examined the relationship between talent retention and enterprise survival of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study examined the relationship between talent retention and enterprise survival within the context of hotel-based firms seeing employee retention and talent documentation as dimensions while adaptability and situation awareness served as measures. It adopts a cross-sectional survey and generated research data from 7 purposively selected hotels operating in Port Harcourt. The formulated research hypotheses were tested using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20.0). From the test results, the study found that hotels' survival is largely correlated with their talent retention practices. Based on this, the study concludes that talent retention is crucial for firms' survival. The study recommends that the human resource department of hotel operators in Port Harcourt should sustain and improve on the existing retention strategies for the survival of the organization. Job security should be improved to encourage employee's willingness to stay and be committed to survival of the organization.

Bestman and Nwiado-David (2019) investigated information systems strategy formulation and organizational success in the hospitality industry in Rivers State. The study investigated information systems strategy formulation and organizational success in hospitality industry in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The population of the covered 185 managerial staff of the 28 hospitality firms studied, while the study sample size is 123 respondents as determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. The study data were obtained using structured questionnaire. Instrument was tested using the face and content validity, while the instrument reliability was ascertained using the Cronbach alpha reliability instrument. The hypotheses for the study were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The findings revealed that information systems strategy formulation significantly relates with organizational success in hospitality industry in Port Harcourt. The study recommended that management of Rivers State hotels should follow an appropriate computer system approach that is appropriate for their market climate and consumer requirements.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The explanatory cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. Explanatory research design describes a research framework that involves the test of hypotheses using primary

or secondary obtained from the field using questionnaire, interview, observation or any other appropriate social science data collection tool. More elaborately, explanatory research design is concerned with providing explanations about the relationship between or among variables in a study. The study was equally explanatory in nature because it sought to find scientific explanation of how succession planning interacts with organizational success. The study therefore, adopted correlational statistical tool(s) to provide explanation on how the predictor variable interacts with the criterion variable. The term "cross sectional survey" is combined with the term "explanatory" in describing the research design that was adopted in the study because the study involved the collection of data at a go from accessible in Rivers State. Thus, there was a survey of the opinions of knowledgeable managers of the hotels under study on how the variables manifest within the context of their organisation.

Population of the Study

The target population of the study consisted of 55 hotels accessible operating in Port Harcourt, the Capital City of Rivers State. Away from their friendly disposition to providing information, these hotels were also engaged in the study considering the fact that by the standard of these categories of hotels, they are have leadership structure that can incorporate succession planning. It was better therefore, to focus on such hotels in studying how the phenomenon under investigation manifests rather including other categories of hotels that may not have such structure.

The data for the study on succession planning and organizational success in hotels in Rivers State were primarily be derived from both qualitative and quantitative sources. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaire distributed to hotel managers. Questionnaire was used capture numerical data on various aspects of succession planning practices and organizational success. In addition, secondary data from scholarly materials could supplement the primary data, providing insights into how succession planning correlates with organizational success.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study made use of primary and secondary data. The collection of primary data was done using a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument (questionnaire) was entitled "Succession Planning and Organisational Success Questionnaire (SPOSQ). A 4-point rating scale was used with the following response options: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2; and Disagree (D) = 1. The instrument was designed in two sections. Section A featured and elicits demographic data, while Section B contains information addressing the study variables directly. Five (5) questionnaire items were used to raise questions measuring each of the dimensions and measures. Thus, a total of 35 items were used to measure the study variables in the study.

Validity of the Instrument

Validity of instrument has to do with the capacity of a research instrument to measure what it ought to measure. The study adopted face validity which entails subjecting the instrument to scrutiny by the experts in test and measurement. In achieving this, copies of the questionnaire were submitted to the experts for vetting. Their comments were used to validate the questionnaire that was administered.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of an instrument is an indication of the firmness and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the "goodness" of the measure. Goodness of measure is the appropriateness of the constructs, dimensions and measures selected for variables in a particular study as contained in the measurement instrument. In order to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. A criterion of 0.70 and above was used as the benchmark for determining the reliability level of the questionnaire items.

Table 1 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test Results

Variables	Dimensions/Measures	Items	Alpha
Succession Planning	Strong Leadership Continuity	5	.842
	Retention of Top Talent	5	.726
	Adaptability	5	.740
Organisational Success	Survival	5	.771
	Objective Attainment	5	.722
	Employee Focus	5	.802
Organisational Culture	Values and Norms	5	.745

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Administration of the Instrument

A total of two hundred and twenty (220) copies of the questionnaire were administered through the help of two independent research assistants. With the help of these research assistants, the researcher was able to retrieve 187 copies of the questionnaire (85%) within the period of two weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used for univariate analysis, Spearman rank order correlation was applied for the bivariate analysis while, Partial correlation was used for the multivariate analysis. The test of hypotheses was done at 95% confidence level. If our statistical analysis shows that the significance level is below the cut-off value we have set (which is 0.05), we rejected the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis when the significant value is below 0.05. Alternatively, if the significance level is above the cut-off value, the null hypothesis accepted. In testing the hypotheses one to ten, the following rules were upheld in accepting or rejecting our null hypotheses. All the coefficient (r) values that indicated levels of significance (* or **) as calculated using SPSS were accepted and thus our alternate hypotheses were accepted and when no significance is indicated in the coefficient (r) value we rejected the null hypotheses. We set out a confidence interval at 0.05 level of significance to test the statistical significance of the study.

Test of hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between strong leadership continuity and survival of hotels in Rivers State.

Table 1: Correlations between Strong Leadership Continuity And Survival

		Strong Leadership Continuity	Survival	Objective Attainment	Employee Focus
Pearson <i>r</i>	Coefficient	1.000	0.412**	0.358**	0.313**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187
	Coefficient	0.412**	1.000	0.775**	0.776**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187
	Coefficient	0.358**	0.775**	1.000	0.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187
	Coefficient	0.313**	0.776**	0.627**	1.000

Employee	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Focus	N	187	187	187	187

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 1 above shows column two with r value of 0.412 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating strong leadership continuity and survival. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that there is no significant relationship between strong leadership continuity and survival of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a1}) was accepted. This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between strong leadership continuity and survival of hotels in Rivers State.

Column three shows r value of 0.358 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating strong leadership continuity and objective attainment. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) which states that strong leadership continuity does not significantly relate to objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a2}) was accepted. This implies that strong leadership continuity does have a significant and positive correlation with objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State.

Column four shows r value of 0.313 at significance value of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to strong leadership continuity and employee focus. Since the significant value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) which states that there is no significant relationship between strong leadership continuity and employee focus of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a3}) was accepted. This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between strong leadership continuity and employee focus of hotels in Rivers State. These results show that strong leadership continuity brings about organizational success of hotels in Rivers State.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between retention of top talent and objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlations of Retention of Top Talent And Objective Attainment

		Retention of Top Talent	Survival	Objective Attainment	Employee Focus	
Pearson <i>r</i>	Retention of Top Talent	Coefficient	1.000	0.564**	0.545**	0.588**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Survival	Coefficient	0.564**	1.000	0.775**	0.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Objective Attainment	Coefficient	0.545**	0.775**	1.000	0.627**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Employee Focus	Coefficient	0.588**	0.776**	0.627**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 2 above shows column two with r value of 0.564 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating retention of top talent and survival. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) which states that retention of top talent does not significantly relate to survival of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a4}) was accepted. This implies that retention of top talent has a significant and positive correlation with the survival of hotels in Rivers State.

Column three shows r value of 0.545 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating retention of top talent and objective attainment. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) which states that there is no significant relationship between retention of top talent and objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a5}) was accepted. This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between retention of top talent and objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State.

Column three shows r value of 0.588 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating retention of top talent and employee focus. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{06}) which states that there is no significant relationship between retention of top talent and employee focus of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a6}) was accepted. This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between retention of top talent and employee focus of hotels in Rivers State. These results show that retention of top talent brings about organizational success of hotels in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between adaptability and survival of hotels in Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlations of Adaptability and Survival

		Adaptability	Survival	Objective Attainment	Employee Focus	
Pearson r	Coefficient	1.000	0.602**	0.568**	0.510**	
	Adaptability	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
		N	187	187	187	
	Survival	Coefficient	0.602**	1.000	0.775**	0.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Objective Attainment	Coefficient	0.568**	0.775**	1.000	0.627**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187
	Employee Focus	Coefficient	0.510**	0.776**	0.627**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	187	187	187	187

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 3 shows column two with r value of 0.602 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating adaptability and survival. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{07}) which states that there is no significant relationship between adaptability and survival of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a7}) was accepted. This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between adaptability and survival of hotels in Rivers State.

Column three reveals r value of 0.568 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating adaptability and objective attainment. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{08}) which states that adaptability does not significantly relate to objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a8}) was accepted. This implies that adaptability does have a significant and positive correlation with objective attainment of hotels in Rivers State.

Column four reveals r value of 0.510 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating adaptability and employee focus. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{09}) which states that there is no significant relationship between adaptability and employee focus of hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a9}) was accepted. This implies that there is a significant and positive correlation between adaptability and employee focus of hotels in Rivers State. These results show that adaptability would bring about organizational success of hotels in Rivers State.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, below are the major findings of the study.

1. Strong leadership continuity has a significant positive relationship with the survival of hotels in Rivers State.
2. Retention of top talent has a significant positive relationship with the survival of hotels in Rivers State.
3. Adaptability has a significant positive relationship with the survival of hotels in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

The study on succession planning and organizational success within the hotel industry in Rivers State underscores the critical role of strong leadership continuity, talent retention, and adaptability in sustaining organisational success. Findings demonstrate that a well-structured succession plan ensures that leadership transitions occur smoothly, enabling consistent strategic direction and stability within hotel management. As such, effective succession planning is indispensable for sustaining an organization's mission during periods of leadership change. This continuity fosters resilience and aligns the workforce with the hotel's objectives, minimizing disruptions and allowing the organization to maintain its competitive position in a dynamic hospitality market.

Furthermore, the study reveals that retention of top talent is essential to organizational success, as it cultivates a high-performance culture that fuels growth and enables the achievement of strategic objectives. Hotels that prioritize the professional growth and retention of skilled employees benefit from a more dedicated, experienced, and engaged workforce. The retention of talented staff not only supports operational efficiency but also strengthens the organization's adaptability, which is vital for navigating the evolving challenges within the industry. In Rivers State, where the hospitality industry faces unique economic and environmental challenges, talent retention becomes a key differentiator, ensuring that hotels maintain a high standard of service and operational continuity. Finally, succession planning, through its focus on leadership continuity, talent retention, and adaptability, significantly enhances the overall success of hotels in Rivers State. Hotels that invest in these areas demonstrate greater resilience, achieve long-term objectives more effectively, and maintain a stronger focus on employee welfare. This study infers that a robust succession plan is not only a strategic advantage but also a fundamental requirement for survival and growth in the competitive hotel industry. Consequently, adopting comprehensive succession planning processes in the hospitality sector can lead to a more sustainable and successful organizational model, positioning hotels in Rivers State to thrive amidst both predictable and unforeseen challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends as follows:

1. To enhance the survival of hotels in Rivers State, hotel management should implement succession plans that prioritize strong leadership continuity to maintain consistent strategic direction.
2. Hotel managers should develop talent retention strategies in succession planning to strengthen the long-term survival of hotels in Rivers State.
3. Hotel management should integrate adaptability into succession planning efforts to better equip hotels for survival amidst dynamic industry challenges in Rivers State.

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