

# Recreation and Leisure Management as Fundamental to Tourism and Hospitality Development and Sustainability in a Troubled Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines tourism and hospitality development and sustainability in an environment of uncertainty such as Nigeria's. This is done with a special interest in their connection with recreation and leisure management. The paper highlights the growing interest to develop the tourism and hospitality sectors worldwide, their contributions to the GDPs of many economies as well as the impacts on the socio-cultural lives of many Nations. The paper explores the concepts of tourism and hospitality industries, the Nigerian environment of today since tourism and hospitality development can only thrive in a favourable environment. It also explores the concepts of recreation and leisure to show the relationship between them and the thin line separating them before examining the part recreation and leisure could play in creating conducive environment (or otherwise) for the development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industries laying emphasis on the use and misuse of leisure time. Recommendations were made with a view to achieving favourable environment for tourism and hospitality growth in Nigeria, including investing in education which has been acknowledged as the bedrock of all forms of development.*

**Key Words: Tourism, hospitality, recreation, leisure**

## **Introduction**

The increasing development of tourism and hospitality industries worldwide and their associated impacts are no longer in doubt to both the operators and the consumers of the industries. Ngoka and Umeakuka (2013) noted that tourism, as a sector, has produced positive impacts on the environmental and economic and socio-cultural lives of many nations. Sutton in Ngoka and Umeakuka (2013) reported that tourism has broadened the cultural perspectives of peoples and contacts in matters of food, dress, decoration, music, architecture and automobile as well as much broader political and business horizon. Tourism and Hospitality form a major source of revenues for many nations of the world. Atlas Big (2022) ranked 178 countries of the world according to their tourism income. Only seven of such nations are presented here to show the huge income from tourism

- United States had the highest total tourism income with \$210,747,000,000 yearly amounting to 1.1% of the country's total GDP.
- Spain had the second largest tourism income in the world with \$67,964,000,000 yearly which makes 5.2% of the country's total income.
- France was the third on the list with \$60,681,000,000 yearly tourism income.
- Thailand was fourth with \$57,477,000,000 yearly total tourism income.
- United Kingdom was fifth with \$51,211,000,000 yearly total tourism income.

- Nigeria was ranked 70<sup>th</sup> with yearly total tourism income of \$2,549,000,000.
- Tanzania was 75<sup>th</sup> in the world with yearly tourism income of \$2,339,000,000.

According to McCain (2023), the global Hospitality industry is worth over \$4.548 trillion as of 2022.

To buttress the point being made, it is also important to examine the contributions of travel and tourism to GDP in leading Travel Markets worldwide from 2019-2021. Hall and Page (2006) see travel as the activity of moving between locations often for any purpose, but more so for leisure and recreation. Statista Research Department (Nov 22, 2022) documented the contributions (in billions of dollars) as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP in Leading Travel Markets in Billions of Dollars**

Characteristics	2019	2020	2021
USA	1,979.1	1,042.3	1,271.0
China	1,856.6	696.3	818.0
Germany	391.2	239.1	25.0
Japan	371.1	167.1	206.0
United Kingdom	280.8	112.3	157.0
France	233.3	126.5	177.0
Italy	214.5	113.0	17.0
India	212.8	124.0	17.0
Mexico	199.6	136.6	168.0
Spain	198.3	74.2	113.0

According to Statista Research Department (Feb 20, 2022), the total contribution of travel and tourism to global economy is 5.8 tr USD, while the number of international tourist arrival worldwide was 917 million and Leisure travel spending stood at 2.1 trillion USD.

Considering how profitable the tourism and travel industries are (plus the other accruable benefits), many countries have the incentive to invest in policies that enable the development of the industries (Statista, 20 Feb 2023).

### **Tourism and Hospitality Industries: What they are**

Tourism and Hospitality are two mutually inseparable industries. Activities of tourism industry are complemented by the activities of hospitality industry. In tourism, somebody is expected to travel out and in hospitality somebody is expected to arrive at a destination. All things being equal, a traveller must arrive his destination to a hospitable experience.

It has never been easy to come up with a comprehensive definition of the term tourism. Okpoko and Okpoko (2002) noted that it is very difficult to define

tourism in absolute terms. Without going into the debate about the definitions, this author would want to settle for the definitions by Walton (2023), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Okpoko and Okpoko (2002), and Statista Research Department (2023) because they contain the variables relevant to this paper.

Tourism is more commonly and popularly defined as the act and process of spending time away from home in pursuit of recreation, relaxation and pleasure while making use of the commercial provision of services (Walton, 2023). United Nations World Tourism Organization had explained tourism as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business purposes. This position agrees with the view expressed by Okpoko and Okpoko (2002) that tourism touches all aspects of man and society - be they social, political, economic, cultural, historical or physical environment. According to Statista Research Department (2023), tourism refers to when people travel and stay in places outside their usual environment for less than one consecutive year for leisure, business, health or other reasons. We can deduce from the above definitions as follows:

- Tourism involves movement from one's usual environment to another unusual environment (destination).
- The movement is with a clear purpose to the traveller.
- Commercial involvements await the tourist at his destination.
- The tourist at his destination expects to engage in social, cultural, economic, political interactions as the case may be.
- Tourists are not expected to spend more than one consecutive year in their destinations.
- The tourist should be ready to pay for the services of the available service industry at his destination.
- Tourism is a multi-disciplinary field.

Hospitality, on its part, is an industry that could not also easily be defined in absolute terms. Hospitality industry is a vast sector (Rochat 2023), that includes all the economic activities that directly or indirectly contribute to or depend upon travel and tourism namely hotels and resorts, restaurants and catering, night club and bars. Hospitality industry is a field within the service industry that includes lodging, food and drink services, events planning, travels and tourism. If hospitality industry depends upon travel and tourism, perhaps, an idea of the direction of movement in and out of a geographical area, such as Nigeria, will help in estimating the extent of development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industries expected in a country. Let us take a look at net migration rates of three leading travel markets alongside Nigeria, which is the focus of this paper from 2015 - 2022.

**Table 2: Net Migration Rate**

Year	USA	Germany	UK	Nigeria
2022	2.784	2.695	2.572	-0.280
2021	2,820	3.664	2.903	-0.288
2020	2.857	4.632	3.235	-0.295
2019	2.893	5.601	3.566	-0.303
2018	2.929	6.569	3.898	-0.310
2017	2.973	6.209	3.923	-0.319
2016	3.018	5.849	3.948	-0.327
2015	3.062	5.489	3.972	-0.336

**Source: United Nations**

Without going into the processes of calculating the net migration rate, suffice it to say that the figures in Table 2 above represent net number of migrants per 1000 population for the respective countries and years. A positive net migration rate means more people are coming into an area than the number leaving. A negative net migration rate means that more people are leaving than the number coming in. The table above clearly shows that more people have been leaving Nigeria over the years than the number coming in. This trend has serious implications for the development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality in Nigeria and as well questions the nature of the Nigerian environment. The insecurity experienced in Nigeria today, no doubt, will negatively impact on people's movement into the country, and tourists will not be any exception.

### **Nigerian Environment of Today**

Nigerian environment of today can be described as anything but safe. An unsafe environment is a dangerous environment which is not favourable for development and sustainability generally and for tourism and hospitality in particular. There are overwhelming documentations to support the claims. Some of the general comments regarding Nigeria and the Nigerian environment today corroborate the points being made.

- The Cable of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 reported that WHO rated Nigeria as the most dangerous African country by road.
- Akinloye (2018) in Gallup poll Global Law and Order reported in *This Day Online* noted that Nigeria is one of the least safe countries of the world.
- US government in *Tribune Online* of 3 August 2018 listed 20 of Nigeria's 36 states as unsafe and asked her citizens living in the country to stay away from them due to the risk of kidnapping, robbery and other forms of armed attacks.
- Save the Children International (2020) reported in *Sahara Reporters* that Nigeria is among 12 most dangerous countries for children in conflict.

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- Nigeria Government (2020) in her Nigeria International Travel Information that year warned on the 5<sup>th</sup> December that people should reconsider travel to Nigeria due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping, and maritime crime.
- Canadian Consul (2023) in her Nigeria Travel Advice and Advisories for Nigeria advised her people to avoid non-existential travel to Nigeria, including Abuja, due to unpredictable security situation throughout the country and significant risk of terrorism, crime, inter-communal clashes, armed attacks and kidnapping.

Security warnings, naturally, will instil fear in both the citizens and visitors. Investors in tourism and hospitality industries, no doubt, will not want to invest in such an unsecure environment.

The Nigerian environment of today is, more than sufficiently, characterized by political assassinations, political thuggery, executive lawlessness, political robbery, security compromises, voter intimidation, vote buying, falsification of election results, miscarriage of justices, and violation of constitutional provisions with impunity by the powers that be. Time and space will not permit report of all the specific incidents which contribute to the toxicity of the Nigerian environment.

There are some other pointers to the fact that all is not well with Nigerian environment. The National Bureau of Statistics (17 Nov 2022) publication on Multi-dimensional poverty index survey report revealed as follows:

- ❖ 63% of the poor persons living in Nigeria (about 133 million people) are multi-dimensionally poor.
- ❖ 65% of the poor (about 86 million people) live in the north and 35% (about 47 million people) live in the south.
- ❖ Over half of the population of Nigeria are multi-dimensionally poor.
- ❖ Multi-dimensional poverty is higher in rural areas than in the urban areas.
- ❖ 51% of all poor people are children.
- ❖ Over half of the population of poor children lack intellectual stimulation that is pivotal to early childhood development.

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) projected that poverty headcount will amplify to 45% in 2023 (Bailey, Jan 18, 2023). National Bureau of Statistics (18 March 2023) noted that poverty is a critical issue that affects various aspects of life including health, education, and security.

Let us now have a look at the statistics of out-of-school-children by states as at 13 October, 2022. Only 10 states, according to ranks, are presented.

**Table 3: Out-of School-Children by States by Rank Order**

	<b>States</b>	<b>Number of out of school children</b>
1.	Bauchi	1,239,759
2.	Zamfara	88,952
3.	Kebbi	877,677
4.	Katsina	873,633
5.	Kano	837,479
6.	Jigawa	784,391
7.	Kaduna	652,990
8.	Gombe	567,852
9.	Adamawa	489,855
10.	Niger	478,412

**Source: The Guardian Online**

The impact this could have on development generally and that of tourism and hospitality in particular could better be imagined than experienced.

A cursory look of literacy rates of some African Countries, as documented by Macrotrends (2023), reveals the unsatisfactory state of Nigeria.

**Table 4: literacy Rates of Some African Countries**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Literacy Rate %</b>
Zambia	86.75
Kenya	81.54
Rep. of Congo	80.30
Ghana	79.04
Cameroon	77.07
Morocco	73.75
Nigeria	62.02

**Source: Macrotrends**

The picture painted in the table above reveals the fact that too many Nigerians are still illiterate and this is not good for the development of any sector of the economy, including tourism and hospitality. Employment is yet one area Nigeria has not done well. Bailey (18 Jan 2023) reported that the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) has projected unemployment rate in Nigeria for 2023 to 37%.

The Nigerian environment has been characterized to enable one visualize the impact on development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industries. It is therefore necessary to address the variables of recreation and leisure which we consider fundamental to development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industries in the present day Nigeria.

## Recreation and Leisure

Recreation and Leisure are two concepts which are, again, very well related to each other. Some authorities even use the concepts interchangeably. They share many features like activities, and even theories yet there is still a thin line of difference. Leisure activities encompass recreational activities and more, but not all leisure activities qualify as recreational activities. A brief highlight on each of the concepts will make the claims clearer.

Numerous definitions of the concept of recreation abound in literature. A very popular understanding of recreation sees it as a leisure-time activity that is socially acceptable in which people voluntarily engage in due to the enjoyment and satisfaction the participants directly derive from the activity. Recreational activities have some special attributes:

- Engagement in recreational activity must be voluntary and by choice.
- Activity to engage in must be socially acceptable (constructive).
- The participant must be enjoying what he is doing and deriving satisfaction from it.
- The activity is engaged in during leisure time.
- The reward of engagement in recreational activity is in itself. The reward of recreation is **re-creation**. The reward is not future-oriented.
- The state of mind of the person involved toward what he is doing determines whether he is recreating or not.

If all the leisure-time activities people engage in were wholesome and socially acceptable then a favourable environment would have been created for development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality. Regrettably, some leisure activities could be socially unacceptable. Anti-social engagements during leisure will create unfavourable environment for tourism and hospitality development and sustainability.

Leisure is viewed from many different perspectives by many different authorities and this makes the definition of leisure difficult. Leisure is a contentious term with a variety of meanings (Bull, Hoose and Weed, 2003). They posited that there are basically four approaches to defining leisure: **Time-based approach** which views leisure as a block of time; **Activity based approach** which views leisure as an activity; **Quality-based approach** in which leisure is seen from the angle of the quality of experience or encounter claimed by leisure like "leisure has re-creative capacity;" and the **Attitude-based approach** which sees leisure as a state of mind or a state of being. Bull, Hoose and Weed (2003) define leisure as the time remaining after employment time and the practical necessities of life have been attended to. They explained that leisure time is the free time, and is the time that remains after all obligations have been met and the individual can make a choice as to how that time is

spent. Further view on leisure is that it is that part of a man's life where the struggle between white and black angels for the possession of his soul goes on with the greatest intensity (Danford and Shirley, 1964). The winner of this competition decides the choice between constructive engagement and anti-social involvement. An idle mind may become devil's workshop. For sure anti-social engagements such as kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, ritual murder etc during the unobligated periods will not create favourable environment for development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality. Investors and visitors definitely will be scared away.

Certain factors and forces contribute to availability of this block of time called leisure. No doubt **science and technology** made many time-saving devices available for man's use thereby resulting in abundant time for man to use as he likes. **Unemployment** implies that there are people who are not gainfully and meaningfully engaged and there are many in Nigeria as the projection for 2023 by Bailey (18 Jan 2023) puts it at 37%. **Retrenchment/down-sizing of workforce, retirement, natural disasters, activities of bandits and terrorists that force people out of their homes, activities of unknown gunmen/separatist groups** that enforce "sit-at-home, **holiday periods, break periods, periods of suspension** from places of work, **harsh economic policies** among others, have contributed to availability of free time for use at man's discretion. Misuse of this unobligated time in any geographical space, such as Nigeria, will create an unfavourable environment for development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality. Ngoka (2005) had noted that the **prevailing socio-political and economic climate in Nigeria cause frustration and general disillusionment**. Availability of free time to the frustrated and disillusioned, no doubt, will be a good opportunity to vent their frustration on the society.

### **Leisure Time, Tourism and Hospitality**

Leisure time is critical to the development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality in the sense that what people engage in during the free time could create conducive environment or otherwise for the operation of tourism and hospitality. Right environment will encourage development and sustainability while adverse environment will discourage involvement in the industries. The following views on leisure by some authorities can serve as pointers to the dicey nature of leisure time usage.

- What a person is depends upon what he does when he has nothing to do - Danford and Shirley
- Tell me what you do when you are free to do what you wish and I shall tell you what kind of person you are. - C.K. Brightbill
- Time is what we want most but what we use worst. - William Penn

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- It is not man's working hours that is important, it is how he spends his leisure time. – Marilynne Robinson
- Leisure occurs in the context of a society. – C.k. Brightbill

The Nigerian environment has been inundated with multiplicity of vices. Greed and corruption have contributed, in no small measure, to escalation of the vices. Unpalatable experiences and deprivations could have driven many people into crime especially with availability of the surplus time for the frustrated and the disillusioned to use as they like.

Engagement in criminality by the frustrated and alienated will make the environment toxic and therefore unfavourable for development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industries. Most of the vices in the Nigerian society today that scare investors from Nigeria could be traced to misuse of the block of time called leisure time. Bandits that terrorize some sections of the country today are claimed to be people who do not have any reasonable means of livelihood, the herdsmen that turn into kidnapping for ransom claim they have been living in penury and suddenly discovered that kidnapping gives them enough and more money as confessed by one of them who was nabbed. A Muslim cleric, who claims to be mediating between the government and the bandits, noted that the bandits do not have a reasonable engagement to earn a living and so are looking for what to eat. It is also observed that most of the criminal gangs in Nigeria today are composed of illiterates who are poor without reasonable sources of income. Unemployment also has driven many graduates into criminality and of course more sophisticated crimes. Harsh economic policies and poor implementation of good ones have crippled many businesses thereby pushing many people into the poverty and unemployment groups. Most of these people misuse the circumstantial free time. Any misuse of the leisure time, occasioned by whatever factor, contributes in creating unfavourable environment for business generally and for development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality in particular.

## **Conclusion**

Tourism and hospitality are among the trending industries presently all over the world. Their contributions to many countries' GDP are very significant. For many countries, they form major sources of income. To actualise sustained development in tourism and hospitality industries, there has to be very conducive environment. An environment characterized by banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, ritual killings, armed robbery, armed attacks, inter-communal clashes, political unrest among other vices, will be toxic and hence unfavourable for development of the industries. Availability of leisure time, when people are free to choose what to do, has been implicated in most of the

engagements in unconstructive and anti-social activities. Dangerous environments, such as the Nigeria of today, drive both the investors and the consumers of the products of the industries away. The vices highlighted in this paper plus some other factors like harsh economic policies, greed, corruption, injustice, to mention but a few, are anti-development forces and as such could not have encouraged tourism and hospitality industries in Nigeria. Nigerian environment is full of uncertainties and therefore not safe enough for the expected level of development and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industries.

### **Recommendations**

1. Nigerian government should seriously tackle corruption in the polity to create enabling environment for revival of most of the sectors of the economy with potentials to generate job opportunities for the teeming population of the unemployed. When people are gainfully employed, there is bound to be reduction in engagements in anti-social activities which make Nigerian environment unfavourable for any form of meaningful development.
2. Addressing injustices in Nigeria of today should be the priority of the government. This will lessen the feelings of alienation in many sections of the country thereby reducing chances of engaging in anti-social activities as a way of registering protest which impacts negatively on the environment.
3. Nigerian government should invest heavily in education which has always been the bedrock of development in every nation, the world over. Education will reduce vulnerability to join cult, banditry, terrorist groups which have been stalling developments and investments in every sector of the Nigerian economy specifically tourism and hospitality.

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