



COVID-19 EXPERIENCES IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY: INSIGHTS FROM NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER RECORDS

UGWU-EZEUGWU, Blessing M.

Department Of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email: blessingmartha40@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The thrust of this study is to examine the Covid-19 experiences in tourism and hospitality industry as reported in the three selected newspapers within the period of 11 months, (February to December, 2020). Hence, 48 editions of the selected newspapers formed the sample size for this study, while 31 stories were found in the selected newspapers. This study built its foundation on social system theory as it is potentially important in identifying the big strategic alternatives in collective responses. Findings of the research reveal that the outbreak of the pandemic disease led to rapid shutdowns in cities and States across the country, which greatly affected the tourism and hospitality industry. This pandemic showed rapid negative impact on the country's tourism and hospitality industry. The findings also revealed that Covid-19 increased cancellations of hotels and travel bookings, strain on the operations, revenue loss and increase incidence of poverty among others. The research therefore recommends that provision of alternative service and products and compensation be given to business operators in the sector to return back to normal operations.

Keywords: Pandemic, hospitality, tourism, Covid-19

Introduction

Covid-19 caught the world's attention when it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) with its rapid spread within and between countries. Covid-19 was classified as a public health emergency of international concern that required a systematic international response (Iheanacho, et al, 2021). Covid-19 is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome. That, affects the respiratory tract and causes severe respiratory infections. In December 2019, the disease was first reported in Wuhan City China in a wholesale food market and infected different groups of people such as stall owners, market employees and visitors. The disease spread to other countries of the world including Nigeria (Iheanacho et al, 2021).

In the past few decades, the world has continued to witness and be threatened by infection outbreaks of varying severity in terms of consequences, experiences and geographic coverage. Covid-19 rocked the globe with threats, uncertainties and mounting consequences. As the global communities continued with the threats of the pandemic, the disease was described as an infectious disease that is caused by severe acute

respiratory syndrome (Aladi, et al, 2022). The covid-19 disease spread to about 196 countries and territories in every continent across the globe.

According to Solomon Mequanent (2020), the disease greatly slowed down economic activities across the world with many countries coming under partial or total lockdown. The pandemic not only brought the entire socio-economic structures to a halt but challenged the globalization and global operations of enterprises. Covid-19 infections first attacked the international travelers and the pandemic thus, confronted mainly the affluent social class globally. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the shutdown of mass production and supply chain of goods and services causing global ripple effects across all economic sectors in a manner that was never expected. It was projected that the spread of the disease will have serious humanitarian challenges to major countries of the world especially Africa and Nigeria in particular.

Tourism and hospitality is one of the reasons for human mobility in the modern world. According to the world tourism organization (2020), the international tourism has indicated continuous growth for the tenth consecutive year reporting 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals in 2019.

The tourism and hospitality industries are fast becoming a major source of employment contributing greatly to the GDP'S of many countries of the world, including Nigeria. In Nigeria, Tourist arrivals were about 1.9 million increases, while hospitality was about 7.2% improvement.

Statement of Problem

The outbreak and spread of covid-19 affected the tourism and hospitality industry the most. As countries of the industries were facing declining demand and patronage. For example, in Nigerian alone, about 40 to 50% of hotel reservations were cancelled.

Also, the pandemic placed up to 8million jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector at risk. The pandemic statistics in the Africa continent according to the United Nations health agency said 10 countries account for 89% of all reported Covid-19 cases in Africa region; Nigeria. Covid-19 had an unprecedented impact on the Nigerian tourism and hospitality industry. However, this research presents assessment of covid-19 experiences, impacts on tourism and hospitality sector in Nigeria with the aim of suggesting areas that will require critical intervention as the country struggles with measures of revitalizing the economy and mitigating the impact of covid-19 on the Nigerian economy.

Objectives of Study

The main objective of this study is to assess Covid-19 experiences in tourism and hospitality industry as reported in the three selected newspapers

Specific objectives include:

- To examine the experiences of tourism and hospitality industry.
- To explore how covid-19 have negatively affected the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigerian.

Literature Review

Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of root and residence while hospitality industry explains all businesses that are responsible for the provision of accommodation, food, drinks and other supplementary services required by vacationers (Bello &Bello (2020) including assurance of reasonable degree of comfort, safety and above all adequate relaxations.

Robert, et al (2007) sees hospitality industry as a wide range of businesses such as hotel, clubs among other aimed at providing accommodation and food services as well as other related catering services for people when away from home. Hospitality industry is defined as, those internationally impactful industry with wide across section components of products such as accommodation (Bello & Mafebi (2018) food and beverages (Anthony et al. 2004; Jennifer &Thea 2013; UNWTO, 2016) and other related services. Tourism also gives support to local and cultural activities; both in urban and rural areas. Expenditure by tourisms has a multiplier effect and also generates considerable tax revenue for the local economy. Tourism has become a major and integral part of economic, social and physical development (Viyaja 2016).

According to World Tourism Organization (2020), the international tourism has indicated continuous growth for the tenth consecutive year reporting 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals in 2019 and estimated 1.8billion of international tourism arrivals by 2030. Reporting covid-19 outbreak started from Hubei province, Wuhan City in China in November 2019 and spread all over the world by March 2020 has been remarkable in world history as the most challenging tragedy occurred in the world (Iheanacho et al 2021). The major challenges on the global economy from the transmission of this virus especially to the retail sector, food, consumer goods, healthcare delivery and a potential curtailing of travel and tourism as major drivers of the most of the countries in the world is in immeasurable and severe than expected by many.

However, the decisions on limiting the movements of people and commodity mainly affected the industries like tourism and hospitality, because they include air transportation, rail way transportation, food handling, accommodation sector, entertainment, recreation etc. The restrictions of movement enforced by the government of Nigeria to curb the spread of the covid-19 virus, especially the closure of the country's land borders put a strain on the inbound tourists and business travelers who come from outside the country; thus, the border closures and restrictions on public gatherings, deprived hospitality and tourism industry.

For instance, hotel revenue before the emergence of covid-19 in Nigeria expanded at 22.6% compound annual rate of 1.1 billion dollars in 2018 (prince water house Coopers,2018). The result further opined that Nigeria's hotel revenue was expected to grow by 507 million dollars by 2020. However, reports from four of the major listed hotels on the Nigeria stock Exchange, shows a revenue decline of nearly 90% due to a fall out of the covid-19 induced lockdowns (Naira-metrics, 2020).

Table 1: Covid-19 Infections According To NCDC 2020)

Source: NCDC Nigeria in 2020

Total cases reported	Nigeria	Africa	World
Total Infections	266,000	1,158,217	22,582,543
Total Deaths	3,155	26,968	791,029
Total Recovers	259,850	770,000	15,304,296

Theoretical Framework

The theory most suitable for the subject under study is social system theory. Social theory is potentially important in identifying the big strategic alternatives in collective responses and experiences to Covid-19. This needs to include the social distancing, loss of individual freedom, social contact etc. which Covid-19 brought about through public health practices and institutions. According to Talcott Parsons (1951), this

theory posits that, components of the system are interconnected and what happened in one component affects the other and the **system** as a whole. In hospitality and tourism, Reichert and Billek(2003) used it as a tool for analysing the need for older adult's communities to promote welfare among the community and residents. Therefore, the theory was used to examine the experiences, interrelations between individuals and their communities such as the hospitality, tourism and the world as they relate to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology

To explore the changes and experiences brought about by Covid-19 in the tourism and hospitality industry, this study adopts qualitative content analysis. According to Pavelko & Grab (2017) content analysis is the systematic research method that provides the researchers with the capability to detect patterns in media content that are often delectable through unsystematic observation. This method was adopted because it serves as the best possible means to achieve the research objectives.

Population of Study:

The population of this study comprised all the Nigeria newspapers records. However, there are 28 national dailies in Nigeria.

Sample Size:

Three out of the 28 leading national dailies were selected using the purposive sampling technique. These newspapers include *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *The Vanguard*. The three newspapers were selected based on certain criteria; the newspaper must be a national daily; the newspaper must have been established for more than a decade; the newspaper was based on access to online archives. These newspapers were studied for a period of 11 months - February 2020 to December 2020, while the covid-19 pandemic was prevalent. Thus, the number of editions of the dailies under study published were calculated which brought the total number of editions published by the selected newspapers to 1002. That is 334 editions of each of the three newspapers for the period under study. To arrive at the sample size, the study used Nwana (1981) sampling formula. An expected frequency of 5% was used as the population size is above a thousand.

$$n = \frac{NV(p)}{100}$$

Where:

n = sample size

NV = Population Value

P = Expected frequency value

The population value for the three newspapers is 1002 editions.

$$\text{Thus: } n = \frac{1002(5)}{100}$$

$$N=50.1.$$

The sample size is therefore 50 editions. Hence, to achieve uniformity of distribution among the three selected newspapers the sample size is reduced to 48 editions, apportioning 16 editions to each of the newspapers selected. The quota sampling technique was used to apportioning 16 issues to each newspaper. In quota sample, subject are selected to meet predetermined percentage (Wimmer & Dominic 2011). The issues to be studied for the newspapers we're selected using the simple random technique. Thus, the whole days of the week and months were written down and folded in a sheet of paper and drawn one at a time without replacement. From the process described, the following was drawn

Table 2: The Selected Days For the Three Newspapers

Guardian				
Months	Day1	Day2	Day3	
February	Thursday, 13 th	Monday, 24 th	Thursday 27 th	Friday, 28 th
March	Wednesday, 4 th	Monday 16 th	Saturday, 21 st	Sunday, 28 th
April	Saturday, 4 th	Monday, 6 th	Friday 24 th	Thursday, 30 th
May	Wednesday, 13 th	Friday, 22 nd	Wednesday, 27 th	Friday 29 th

Punch				
Months	Day1	Day2	Day3	
June	Friday, 12 th	Wednesday, 17 th	Monday, 22 nd	Saturday, 27 th
July	Wednesday, 8 th	Thursday, 9 th	Monday 13 th	Saturday, 18 st
August	Thursday, 6 th	Wednesday, 12 th	Saturday 16 th	Thursday, 13 th
September	Friday, 11 th	Saturday, 12 th	Friday 18 th	Sunday, 27 th

Vanguard				
Months	Day1	Day2	Day3	
September	Saturday, 12 th	Friday 18 th	Thursday 29 th	Wednesday, 30 ^t
October	Sunday, 4 th	Thursday, 8 th	Friday, 16 th	Wednesday 21 st
November	Monday, 2 nd	Wednesday, 18 th	Saturday 21 st	Sunday, 29 ^t
December	Sunday, 13 th	Thursday 17 th	Saturday, 19 th	Sunday, 27 th

Unit of Analysis

According to Asemah el tal (2012), unit of analysis is the smallest element in content analysis. Unit of analysis consists of those variables that a researcher would look at in the course of the analysis. Hence, the unit of analysis for this study entails the straight news, feature stories, editorials opinion article etc.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for collecting data for the purpose of this research is the code-sheet. Coding is the assignment of numbers to content categories Sobowale(1983) as cited in Nwodu(2006) observed that coding remains an essential factor for the data collected. It makes for easy quantifications of qualitative data. The details are as follows:

Category A: Media

1-Vanguard

2-Guardian

3-Punch

Category B: Subject Matter

1-Restrictionsof movement

2-Change in active lifestyle

3-Social distance

4-Boredom

5-others

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher adopted quantitative method in presenting, analyzing and interpreting the data that were collected from the sample newspapers. In analyzing the data, the coded data were presented in raw table.

Table 3:Tabula representation of some cases of Covid-19- Experiences and Its Effects on Tourism and hospitality industry while the pandemic was prevalent by the selected Newspapers.

Newspaper / Date	Issues Reported	Effects of issues Reported	Remarks
Guardian 27 th Feb., 2020	Africa has its first confirmed case after a person in Egypt tested positive	Panic all over Africa as its first case is reported	
Vanguard 27 th Feb.,2020	Nigeria’s index case was confirmed, the Italian who returned from Milan Italy	The index case brought Covid-19 in Nigeria.	It was successfully managed by infections disease in Yaba. However, people were already exposed to it
Punch 24 th Feb., 2020	Corona virus may be around for months	Measures were taken, but spread continued	
Guardian 4 th March, 2020	A summary of the biggest developments in the global corona virus outbreak	Number of global cases nears 93,000, the activities of the tourism and hospital industry were beginning to suffer	
Vanguard March 16 th 2020	Covid-19: six million people killed globally says DG, NCDC	Even as the DG of NCDC Dr.Ifedayo advocated for	

		finding of vaccines, people were still scared	
Punch March 24 th 2020	Corona virus: stay at home, Buhari tells FG workers	Nigeria cases hit 40, movement were restricted gradually.	
Guardian 6 April, 2020	Nigeria's active covid-19 cases now 92002	As at April the NCDC says the number of active cases in Nigeria stands at 92002	The reported cases were majority from Lagos (27) Lagos continental hotel for instance loss million in two weeks
Vanguard 4 th April, 2020	Corona virus: April is Nigeria's make or mar month	As the country head starts of two months into Covid-19 it great loss	
Punch 1 st April, 2020	Four months after Wuhan, WHO troubled by covid-19 increase	At the escalation of new cases with number of deaths globally tourism and hospitality Index is suffering loses	
Guardian 13 th May, 2020	People are more scared of hunger Corona virus is just one more threat	The pandemic has left many people in orile Lagos state struggling for survival and compounding the risk of infection due to heavy population	
Vanguard 29 th May, 2020	Number of covid-19 cases in Nigeria increases further by 182	Despite efforts by the authorities, its continued to increase thereby affect the tourism and hospitality.	
Punch 22 nd May 2020	Nigeria records 265 new covid-19 cases	Confirmed cases increased to 7,526 in Nigeria punch report.	
Guardian 21 st June 2020	NCDC reports zero cases	Effect of issues reported the spread of covid-19 in Nigeria continued to records significant decrease	
Vanguard 1 st June 2020	Covid-19: 18m Nigerians vaccinated so far – FG	Services and vaccines were made available to Nigeria thereby decreasing the spread	
Punch 13 th June 2020	Nigeria records 627 new covid-19 cases	As the cases increased to 1,5181, it is affecting the economy.	
Guardian 12 th July	Coronavirus: Nigeria situation report	FCT-93, Lagos 79, Plateau-64, Kaduna-34, Oyo-47, Ondo-32, Adamawa-23, and Bauchi-19. From the figures, activities were	

Vanguard 6 th July 2020	Covid-19 cases jump by 67 th in two records.	Even as led with 150 new cases, its tourism inflow was brought to a halt.	
Punch 13 th July, 2020	Covid-19 infection jumped by 324 th one month	Punch reports that the increase comes amidst warning of potential fifth wave of the pandemic.	
Guardian 7 th August	Covid-19 situation report for Nigeria	As new cases continued to increase, the major cities continued to face setbacks.	
Vanguard 17 th August	Covid-19 rate continue to drop with 298 new cases	Positive new cases continued to drop.	
Punch 27 th	Covid-19: Sample collection by states declined in August	The report indicated that all states analyzed showed a significant decline in sample in August	
Guardian 5 th	Corona virus – Nigeria update	New cases Lagos has it 53, Gombe 21, Oyo 19 etc.	
Vanguard September	Covid-19 sample test exceed 100,000 in Lagos	Since the inception, Lagos continued to suffer in hospitality and tourism	
Punch 19 th	Health achieves page 43 of 344	Corona virus vaccine may be ready for public	
Guardian 18 th	Corona virus-Nigeria new cases update	Lagos-37, Kaduna-16, Ogun-11, Plateau-11, Taraba-8, Rivers-7, FCT-6, Enugu-4, Niger-4, Edo-13, the total of 113 new cases brought that old hardship.	
Vanguard 12 th	NCDC announce 163 new covid-19 infection	The new cases cuts across the country	
Punch 31 st	Covid-19: Uk imposes fresh four-week national lockdown.		
Guardian 20 th	Corona virus-Nigeria case update	143 new cases as reported by guardian continued the surge to the decline of tourism and hospital.	
Vanguard 29 th	Another lockdown is not welcomed	President Buhari in his tweet warned that another lockdown is not welcomed as its taking a toll on the economy especially hospitality and tourism	
Punch 11 th	Covid-19: Nigeria is second wave imminent says minister.	Osagie Ehanire warned that the failure of Nigeria's to adhere to covid-19	

		protocols could lead to further spread. As a result of this, Nigerian experiences of the Covid-19 was a hectic one.	
Guardian 24	Corona virus – Nigeria update	1133 new cases were reported by the guardian thereby increases the number of cases reported.	
Vanguard 18 th	Nigeria records 1145 new cases	In this month, there were records of the death	
Punch 24 th December	My covid-19 experience – SanwoOlu	The governor of Lagos state shared his experience of the Covid-19 as it affected him financially and emotionally.	

Data Analysis

According to Guardian, there have been more than 6.65 million officially reported Covid-19 deaths since the virus was identified in China in December 2019. However, countries count Covid-19 deaths differently and methods and experiences have changed throughout the pandemic. The major inference that could be drawn from the subject under study is that covid-19 pandemic had a great impact on Nigeria's hospitality and Tourism industry. The experiences each sector had far out weights the losses. Unlike other crises which allow operators of hospitality and tourism business in Nigeria to diversify markets, the pandemic caused abrupt breaks in all its economic activities. The severe consequences both sectors experiences include;

- ❖ Strain on the revenue generation.
- ❖ Strain on the Operations
- ❖ Steep decline in hotel occupancies
- ❖ Steep decline on customer's turnover.
- ❖ Job loses for members of staff.
- ❖ Mass sales of business facilities.

Discussion of Findings

The major discussions of findings of this study are as follows;

The study found out that the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria experienced strains in its operations and revenue generation as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. According to gosling et al (2020). The hospitality industry always suffers setbacks in its revenue generation due to disasters and crises such as natural disasters pandemic and other threatening emergencies to human life.

The study also established a steep decline in hotel occupancy rates and low customers turnover in hospitality facilities such as restaurants and events centres. This conforms to the findings of Anderson et al (2000) who opined that the novel corona virus pandemic has negatively impacted on the global business including the hospitality and tourism industry. Gosling e tal (2020) further opined that hospitality and tourism industry globally experiences little or no patronage due to non-pharmaceutical procedures such as

border closure, self-quarantines, social distancing and business short down put in place to manage the increase of covid-19.

The study affirmed that there were many job losses due to the pandemic. Many hospitality and tourism industries paid off their employees to reduce operational cost. Mass sales of business facilities is another finding of the study; Mckibbin and Sidorenko (2006) opined that the impact of epidemic and pandemic on the global business is enormous thus, leading to zero capability on the part of the owners and managers.

This correlates the report in Dube et al (2020) that many hospitality facilities may be unsustainable due to drop to zero sit-in guests for hotels and restaurants as a result of social distancing and other restrictions on movement instituted by the government to reduce the spread of covid-19 hence making mass sales of these facilities inevitable.

Conclusion

The unprecedented covid-19 crisis left a catastrophic impact on the tourism and hospitality industry. The recovery and experiences have to be gradual parallel to the recovery of other sectors combating the outbreak and regaining economic performances. Therefore, ensuring the safety of the guests and members of staff was of top concern to the tourism and hospitality stakeholder. At the same time to recover business loses and rebuild the positive image in the minds of the customers, it is essential to start strong marketing and promotional campaigns. Promoting flexible prices, cancellation policies and flexible work environment would be beneficial in achieving long term sustainability of both industries.

The outbreak of the pandemic shows rapid negative impact in both sectors and that includes cancellations of hotels, travel bookings and rescheduling of events resulting in billion-dollar revenue loss and job losses.

Recommendations/Suggestions:

The findings of this study give a better insight towards the need for the government of Nigeria to put in place feasible business safety nets such as relief fund for business owners' implementations of tax relief policy will also make a difference in addressing the acute consequences of the pandemic on the Nigeria's hospitality and tourism industry thereby repositioning the sector for national prosperity. Hospitality and tourism scholars are expected to shift their research focus to develop solutions for the industry.

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