

Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism Industry in Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria

Abstract

Globalisation and regional development have, over the years, been aided through the tourism industry. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused a public health emergency leading to huge loss of lives across the globe and at the same time, greatly affecting the global economy, the tourism industry has been the most affected. This impact is because tourism usually involves travel from one geographical area to another. Cultural tourism is an aspect of tourism through which individuals express their right to cultural life as they move to cultural attractions away from their place of residence, to gather new information and experiences in a bid to satisfy their cultural needs. To combat the outbreak of Covid-19, a prominent measure that has been utilised by states is the imposition of either a partial or full lockdown measure while restricting international travel. This research analyses the impact of Covid-19 on development in the tourism industry in Oyo State in southwest Nigeria. Its findings revealed that the tourism industry was negatively affected by COVID-19. The right to benefit from new inventions has not been adequately explored. Though heritage practitioners are aware of the need to ensure the tourism industry stays innovative to meet the challenges of the times, the government has not taken any steps in this regard. It needs to give priority to the heritage industry as tourism development has a huge role to play in achieving human rights.

Keywords: Pandemic, Cultural Institutions, Tourism, Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

The right to development can be referred to as the vector of all rights.² Donnelly sees it as the conflation of all existing rights.³ Development cannot be separated from man's culture⁴ and the Declaration on the Right to Development places man at the centre of development.⁵ Development is a comprehensive

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2 Arjun Sengupta, 'The Human Right to Development,' in *Development as a Human Right: Legal, Political and Economic Dimension*, (2nd Ed.), Bård A. Andreassen and Stephen Marks (eds), Antwerp: Intersentia, 2008, pp.13–44.

3 Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013.

4 Afolasade A. Adewumi. 'Protecting Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Era of Rapid Technological Advancement,' *International Review of Law, Computers and Technology*, 2021 (accepted for publication).

5 The right to development was proposed in 1970 by a Senegalese Jurist Keba M'baye,

process that is multidimensional, surpassing economic growth and embracing political, cultural and social elements.⁶ The right to cultural life⁷ and the right to education are assumed in the right to development. The right to cultural life has three components, namely the right to choose one's identity and participate in cultural practices, the right to access one's culture through education and information and the right to benefit from cultural heritage and the creations of others.⁸ In the same vein, cultural heritage – being the foundation for cultural and social identity – is linked to the right to human dignity.⁹

Civilisation hinges on education and one of the keys to heritage lies in its educative value.¹⁰ Education can be formal or informal. The purpose of education is found in every human activity undertaken consciously in every environment.¹¹ Tourism entails movement from one place to another for the education of the tourist while adding to the revenue of the territory visited, generating foreign currency for the local economy. Picard claims that “tourism cannot be conceived of outside of culture at all: it is bound up in an ongoing process of cultural invention.”¹² As a country develops to the level that the people can afford leisure services, tourism services will be demanded, achieving high level of economic growth for the country with low level of human specialisation.¹³

recognised in law in 1981 through the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and incorporated into the Human Rights framework in 1986 when the declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

- 6 See: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights), *Declaration of the Right to Development*, Articles 2(1), 4(2) and 8 (1), 1986.
- 7 International instruments such as Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and regional instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 17(2) among other instruments affirm this right.
- 8 The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights), *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Section 15(1)(a), 1976.
- 9 Afolasade A. Adewumi and Adeniyi I. Olatunbosun, 'Child's Rights without Cultural Identity: A Mirage,' *Justice Journal*, Vol. 7, 2015, pp. 116–137.
- 10 Afolasade A. Adewumi, 'Curbing the Illicit Traffic in African Antiquities through Legislation,' *Art, Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XXI, Issue I, 2016, pp. 43–56.
- 11 Afolasade A. Adewumi and Olujemisi A. Bamgbose, 'Attitude of Staff and Students to Clinical Legal Education: A Case Study of Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan,' *Asian Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 3, 2016, pp. 106–116.
- 12 Michel Picard, 'Cultural Heritage and Tourist Capital: Cultural Tourism in Bali,' in *International Tourism: Identity and Change*, Marie-Françoise Lanfant, John B. Allcock and Edward M. Bruner (eds), London: Sage, 1995, pp. 44–83.
- 13 Adamos Adamou and Sofronis Clerides, 'Tourism, Development and Growth: International Evidence and Lessons for Cyprus,' *Cyprus Economic Policy Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2009, pp. 3–22.

Tourism is the third largest export sector of the global economy.¹⁴ It encompasses a high level of activities and services which cut across regional to global mutual relationships spreading into other economic and social areas.¹⁵ While tourists move from one place to another, services such as food, transportation, accommodation, and entertainment will also be in demand. These services provide job opportunities for those who are low skilled, thus helping to overcome poverty.¹⁶ The tourism industry therefore facilitates the enjoyment of several rights accruing to an individual. Tourists exercise different rights in the singular act of moving around. As the right to freedom of movement¹⁷ is enjoyed, the right to cultural life is also.¹⁸ The right to education¹⁹ is enjoyed by the knowledge gained from the environment while the right to development²⁰ is equally guaranteed. All these rights end up finding a balance in the right to human dignity, as cultural identity is the basis of other rights.²¹

In sub-Saharan Africa, the development of tourism has been a key driver in closing the gap between poor and rich countries.²² Travel and Tourism accounted for 10% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 320 million jobs worldwide before the outbreak of COVID-19.²³ UNESCO²⁴ noted that in 2019, 1.9 billion people crossed international borders to experience other cultures and creativity and noticed the decline in tourism which has weakened access to culture. The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the enjoyment of the right to cultural life which is guaranteed by Article 27 of

14 United Nations, *Policy Brief: Covid-19 and Transforming Tourism*, United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2020, <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-covid-19-and-transforming-tourism> (accessed 8 October 2021).

15 Birgit Steck, *Sustainable Tourism as a Development Option. Practical Guide for Local Planners, Developers and Decision Makers*, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1999.

16 Asif Khan, Sughra Bibi, Ardito Lorenzo, Jiaying Lyu and Zaheer Udden Babar, 'Tourism and Development,' *Developing Economies: A Policy Implication Perspective. Sustainability*, Vol. 12, 2020, p. 1618.

17 This right is guaranteed under the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999, Section 41.

18 This right comes under Chapter II of the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999 that deals with Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy; see also Article 17 of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* adopted in 1981.

19 See: *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999.

20 See: *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* adopted in 1981, Article 22.

21 Afolasade A. Adewumi and Adeniyi I. Olatunbosun, 'Child's Rights...'

22 Adam Behsudi, 'Tourism-dependent Economies are Among Those Harmed the Most by the Pandemic,' *IMF*, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/12/impact-of-the-pandemic-on-tourism-behsudi.htm> (accessed 8 October 2021).

23 Behsudi, 'Tourism-dependent...'

24 'UN Warns of the Pandemic's Lasting Impact on Tourism,' UNESCO, 2 September 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/warns-pandemics-lasting-impacts-tourism> (accessed 8 October 2021).

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁵ This right is enjoyed through cultural tourism, an aspect of Tourism. The lockdown and travel restrictions imposed by countries all over the world to restrict the spread of the infection has in turn greatly affected the tourism industry, especially communities that depend on cultural tourism for their livelihood. This paper focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry in Oyo State, Nigeria, a state that has several landmarks in the history of Nigeria.

Therefore a question arise what impact has COVID-19 had on the tourism industry in Oyo State? The research aims to determine how COVID-19 affected development in the tourism sector of Oyo State during the lockdown.

This research seeks to:

1. examine the types of domestic tourism outlets in Oyo State.
2. determine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist flows in 2020.
3. examine the various ways COVID-19 impacted tourist outlets (economic, personnel, technology etc).
4. determine the level of preparedness to avert negative impact from any future pandemic.

This paper is divided into five parts, the first being this introductory one. The second part is a brief overview of Oyo State. The third part is the methodology. The fourth showcases the findings and carries out a discussion on them. The fifth part is recommendations and conclusions.

1. Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria

The capital of Oyo State is the historic city of Ibadan,²⁶ which came into existence in 1829 during a period of turmoil that characterised Yorubaland at that time. Ibadan is the largest city in West Africa in terms of geographical area and the third largest city by population in Nigeria. Oyo state is known to be a state with landmarks and ‘firsts.’ In 1893, Ibadan area of Oyo State became a British protectorate. The chief administrative building was Mapo Hall situated on top of a hill known as Oke Mapo. It was commissioned during the colonial era by Captain Ross in 1929.²⁷ Mapo hall is one of the oldest historic buildings in Nigeria and has played host to major political and

25 Afolasade A. Adewumi, ‘COVID-19 Pandemic and the Right to Enjoyment of Cultural Life in Nigeria,’ *Art, Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XXVI, Issue 1, 2021, pp. 71–82.

26 The name ‘Ibadan’ was coined from the Yoruba expression *eba odan*, which in English language means “edge of the meadow.”

27 ‘Mapo Hall – One of The Oldest Historical Buildings in Nigeria,’ *Travel Waka*, 8 August 2020 <https://www.travelwaka.com/mapo-hall-one-of-the-oldest-historical-buildings-in-nigeria/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

social events in Ibadan city, shaping the socio-political direction of Nigeria in general. For example, the Presidential Address of Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria (1 Oct. 1963–16 Jan. 1966) was delivered in Mapo Hall. The Neoclassical architecture of the hall is a constant reminder of early British influence in the administration of Ibadan as part of the Oyo Province. In 1936, Bowers Towers²⁸ was erected to the east on Oke Aare (Aare means commander in chief) in honour of Captain Ross L. Bower (1893–1897) who was the first Resident and Travelling Commissioner of ‘Interior Yorubaland.’ Bowers Towers served as a vantage point of the whole city of Ibadan and can be seen from any point in the city.

Oyo state has the first skyscraper in Africa, Cocoa House, which was completed in 1965, with 26 storeys at a height of 105 metres and is the tallest building in tropical Africa.²⁹ It was built from the proceeds from commodities such as cocoa, rubber and timber. It is the property of Odu’a Investment Company Limited, Ibadan formerly known as *Ile awon Agbe* meaning “the house of farmers.” Oyo state houses the Nigerian Television Authority formerly known as Nigerian Television (NTV). It is the first television station in Africa inaugurated in 1977.³⁰ It is partly Nigerian government owned and partly a commercial broadcaster. It has the sculpture of *ori olokun* head on its wall. The *ori olokun* is referred to as the head dug up in the late 19th century from the *olokun* groove and used in annual rites to honour *olokun olokun* the goddess of the sea.

The first radio station in Nigeria started in Oyo State as the Radio Diffusion Service. It was founded in 1933 by the British colonial government to allow the public to hear the British broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) foreign radio service broadcast in certain public locations over loudspeakers. In April 1950, the Radio Diffusion Service became Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) which was reorganised into the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on April 1, 1957, by an Act of Parliament. In 1962, the NBC expanded its stations into the North, where it was called the Broadcasting Corporation of Northern Nigeria (BCNN). In 1978, NBC and BCNN merged to become The

28 ‘Bowers Memorial Tower,’ Nigeria Galleria, 2021, https://www.nigeriagalleria.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Oyo/Bower-Memorial-Tower-Oke-Aare.html (accessed 8 October 2021).

29 Adom Tabbey-Botchwey, ‘The History of Nigeria’s Cocoa House, the First Skyscraper in West Africa,’ *Face 2 Face Africa*, 14 August 2019, <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/explore-the-history-of-nigerias-cocoa-house-the-first-skyscraper-in-west-africa> (accessed 8 October 2021).

30 ‘History of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA),’ *Media Nigeria*, 26 April 2018, <https://www.medianigeria.com/history-of-nigerian-television-authority-nta/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN).³¹ The FRCN's southwest zonal headquarters is in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Liberty stadium Oyo State was opened in 1960 and named liberty stadium in honour of Nigeria's Independence. It was the central location of sports in the old western region of Nigeria.³² Oyo State is host to Nigeria's premier higher institution of learning, the University of Ibadan.³³ Established as a college of the University of London in 1948 and was later converted into an autonomous university in 1962.

The National Archives of Nigeria started in Oyo State. The colonial period of Nigerian history (1849–1899) ushered in Nigerian archive-keeping of the British administration, some of which were salvaged from decay by Kenneth Dike and kept in the record rooms provided for the purpose at the University of Ibadan.³⁴ The Public Archives Act was enacted in 1957 and ushered in the post-colonial period. The national archives moved to its own building within the University of Ibadan in 1958. The National Archives now has branches in Kaduna, Enugu, Benin and Sokoto states.

Oyo state is also home to the only suspended lake in Africa and second in the world known as Ado Awaye Suspended Lake.³⁵ Other major tourist attractions located in the state include Agodi Botanical Gardens created in 1967 as the foremost recreational and tourist attraction in the Western region,³⁶ Ido Cenotaph,³⁷ Iyamapo and Agbele Hill in Igbeti, the Cultural Centre Mokola, Zoological Garden University of Ibadan, Botanical Gardens University of Ibadan, University of Ibadan Museums, ODU'A Hall of Fame and Museum, Oke-Ogun National Park in Old Oyo-Ile, the Cultural Centre Mokola among others. Aside from these tangible heritage sites, Oyo state has several intangible

31 'Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria – History,' *Liquisearch*, 2021, https://www.liquisearch.com/federal_radio_corporation_of_nigeria/history (accessed 8 October 2021).

32 'Liberty Stadium: An African Pride "Abandoned" For Reptiles,' *Oyo Insight*, 18 October 2019, <https://oyoinsight.com/liberty-stadium-an-african-pride-abandoned-for-reptiles/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

33 'University of Ibadan – History,' University of Ibadan, 2021, <https://www.ui.edu.ng/History> (accessed 8 October 2021).

34 Afolasade A. Adewumi, 'Historical Treasures in Ruins: Salvaging Archives in Nigeria,' *Art, Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XXIV, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 151–160.

35 'Ado Awaye Mountains and Suspended Lakes,' *Trip Advisor*, https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g317071-d9792396-Reviews-Ado_Awaye_Mountains_and_Suspended_Lakes-Ibadan_Oyo_State.html (accessed 8 October 2021).

36 'Agodi Gardens Ibadan – A State of the Art Botanical Garden,' *Travel Waka*, 17 September 2019, <https://www.travelwaka.com/agodi-gardens-ibadan-a-state-of-the-art-botanical-garden/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

37 'The State,' *Oyo State, the Peacesetter State*, 2021, <https://oyostate.gov.ng/about-oyo-state/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

heritage domains within her territory, some of which are showcased during festivals and at other social events and gatherings.

2. The Research Methodology

The study was conducted using a questionnaire administered at tourism outlets. At the beginning of the survey, there was an informed consent section that described the voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality of responses for all organisations and places visited. There was no incentive or coercion of any participant.

The study was conducted in Oyo State, which is ‘a state with many firsts’ in Nigeria. Moreover, the study population consists of some types of domestic tourism outlets found within Oyo State which enjoy a high level of patronage. Percentages were used to describe the data collected.

3. Results and Discussion

Objective 1: Examine the types of domestic tourism outlets in Oyo State.

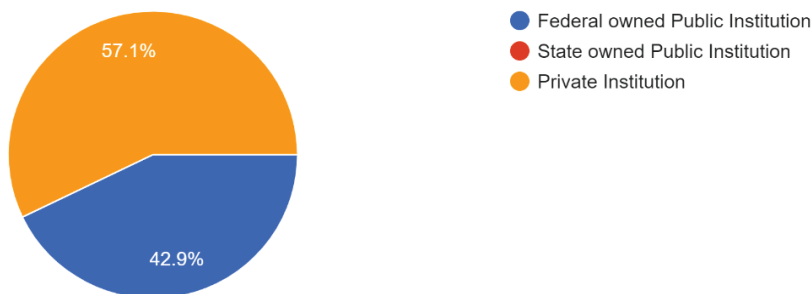


Figure 1: Type of Domestic Tourism Outlet

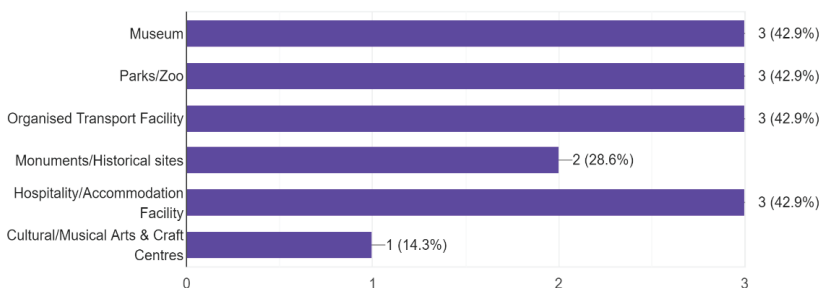


Figure 2: Type of Institution

Figures 1 and 2 show that tourism outlets in Oyo State are either owned by the Federal government, the State Government or private institutions/organisations.³⁸ This is so because Antiquities, Monuments and Archives are on the legislative list which contains items that both the National and State Houses of Assemblies can legislate upon.³⁹ It is unfortunate that none of the institutions owned by the state government volunteered information to be used for this survey.

Objective 2: Determine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the traffic/tourists flow during the year 2020.

Table 1. Impact of COVID 19 on tourist flow

Question	Yes	No
Was there a reduction in the number of tourists that came around?	100%	-
Did COVID-19 negatively affect daily activities	100%	-
Did the pandemic stall social interaction at your facility?	100%	-

Table 1 depicts that COVID-19 affected tourism flows during the lockdown in 2020. Social activities were reduced. Cultural development was limited by social distancing, which put limitation to social gatherings to avoid spreading of the virus. This is in line with the position in Italy where Ing. Paolo Iannelli,⁴⁰ stated that “The lockdown imposed since March 9, 2020, providing for the closure of all cultural institutions and sites, as well as all churches, led for the first time in the history of the country in times of peace, to a state of almost total inaccessibility to cultural heritage.”

Objective 3: To examine the various ways COVID-19 impacted tourist outlets (economic, personnel, technology etc).

38 *National Commission for Museums and Monuments Act*, 1979 Section 12(c) and 14 shows that individuals can own cultural property.

39 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999 Part II, Concurrent Legislative List. Extent of Federal and State Legislative Powers. Items B and C.

40 Paolo Iannelli, ‘The Initiatives of the Italian Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the Management of Cultural Sites in Relation to Covid-19 Emergency,’ *ProCultHer*, 24 June 2020, <https://www.proculther.eu/the-initiatives-of-the-italian-ministry-of-culture-and-tourism-for-the-management-of-the-cultural-sites-in-relation-to-covid-19-emergency/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

Economic impact: Economic development has to do with the creation of wealth. This covers the creation of wealth by the nation state, private industries and individuals via the production of economic goods and services⁴¹ and these goods and services yield returns which improve the standard of living of a person, increase wealth, create jobs and also support innovation and new ideas. Economic development can be associated with or measured by the unemployment rate (job creation and retention), increase in income, government projects which improve the quality of living of people in the area, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the Nigerian economy and many other nations' economies a state of economic shock in that it brought to a standstill to many economic activities and projects in the country; demand and supply chains were broken, factories and borders closed during the period, poor health facilities in the nation also dragged down economic development at the time as Nigeria has inadequate health infrastructure and as such had to rely on supply from other nations for support during the pandemic thereby losing money to other economies but with no domestic revenue.⁴²

Both domestic tourism and international tourism⁴³ have been discovered to aid economic growth by generating employment and income. The economic impact can be direct, indirect or induced. Hotels, restaurants, tourism organisations all enjoy increased revenue when tourism is undertaken. When the hotels and restaurants make purchases to meet the needs of tourists, the indirect impact is felt by the organisations that make supplies to the hotels and restaurants. The multiplier effect of tourism made both developed and developing nations feel the impact of COVID-19 on sustainability in the tourism industry.⁴⁴

Aside those working in the tourist centres, there are a lot of vendors who sell or hawk food items and drinks around the tourist sites. These vendors were seriously affected by the lockdown as they had no customers to sell their wares to. They generated no income and some of them have gone out of business due to the economic hardship experienced during the lockdown.

41 Carol M. Kopp, 'Development Economics,' *Investopedia*, 25 November 2020, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/development-economics.asp> (accessed 8 October 2021).

42 Abdullahi A. Ahmad, M. Mohammed and Yusuf Nakaduna, 'Economic and Political Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Nigeria,' *Asian People Journal (APJ)*, Vol. 4, 2021, pp. 34–49.

43 Isabel Cortés-Jiménez, 'Which Type of Tourism Matters to the Regional Economic Growth? The Cases of Spain and Italy,' *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 10, 2008, pp. 127–139.

44 United Nations, *Policy Brief...*, p. 8

This finding tallies with the United Nations Policy Brief that stated that ‘the economic and social disruption brought by COVID-19 threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions.’⁴⁵ The cultural and social framework of the communities and ethnic groups have been affected by the pandemic⁴⁶ including indigenous women’s revenues.⁴⁷ The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also stated that the pandemic has put 100 million jobs at risk.⁴⁸

During the research, unofficial information gathered around the zoo revealed that the lockdown seriously affected internally generated revenue to the extent that there were no funds to purchase food for the lion. Some heritage sites however did not suffer any economic impact because they are not profit making. No fee is paid for admission into the sites as they belong to the Federal government. However, locals that depend on selling wares and food items to the tourists that visit such sites suffered loss of income because of the pandemic. Loss of income increases poverty and can translate to low self-esteem and depression.⁴⁹

Impact on Personnel: The prospects of job creation offered by tourism constitute an important instrument in poverty reduction strategies.⁵⁰ From the research at some private offices we found out that salaries were slashed. At some other private offices, the staff were not laid off but received no salary during the period of the lockdown when there was no interstate movement. Some offices downsized or slashed salaries of workers by half, which in turn led to economic hardship in some homes.

The findings support the position of the United Nations that unemployment could rise because of the pandemic.⁵¹ Unlike some tourism-dependent economies that focused support on vulnerable informal workers in the tourism sector with cash transfers, grants, tax relief, payroll support, and loan guarantees,⁵² no such support was allocated by heritage practitioners in Oyo state.

45 United Nations, *Policy Brief...*, p. 11.

46 United Nations, *Policy Brief...*, p. 14.

47 See also: ‘On International Day, UN Chief Spotlights Indigenous Peoples’ Resilience in Face of COVID-19 Pandemic,’ *United Nations*, 9 August 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1069822> (accessed 8 October 2021).

48 Behsudi, ‘Tourism-dependent...’

49 Jen Wilson, ‘The Relationship Between Self-esteem and Depression,’ *Good Therapy*, 5 July 2012, <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/self-esteem-depression-anxiety-effects-0705123> (accessed 8 October 2021).

50 SNV Netherlands Development Organization, *Tourism and Development, Agendas for Action*, 2007.

51 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *COVID-19 and Tourism: Assessing the Economic Consequences*, 2020.

52 Behsudi, ‘Tourism-dependent...’

Impact on social interactions: Mansouri has stated that the ideal phrase should be physical distancing and not social distancing, as social interactions can continue through other channels while social distancing connotes disconnectedness.⁵³ He however noted that not everyone has access to the internet, which is because of social inequalities and economic marginalisation. The lack of access to the internet limited cultural interactions even in some areas of the developed countries. The digital education is necessary at all levels to enhance the digitisation of culture while preventing the exclusion of any member of society.

In Oyo State, the lockdown limited social interactions. Schools were closed so students and pupils, who form the greater proportion of tourists in Oyo State, were at home and had no access to the education received at the heritage sites, thus hampering their enjoyment of the cultural rights and right to education.

Periods of uncertainty affect the flow of tourists. The pandemic put a halt to many physical forms of cultural promotion and development as it resulted in the cancellation of planned trips, gatherings and excursions to museums and heritage sites. Festivals were cancelled, tourist attraction centres were not patronised due to the lockdown. The Awujale of Ijebuland, a traditional ruler, announced the cancellation of the *Ojude Oba festival* due to the pandemic and the onset of the delta variant of the virus.⁵⁴

This situation support the findings of the UNWTO that “Physical distancing and lockdown measures led to the cancellation or postponement of many festive events and rituals around the world, which has raised major social and economic consequences on communities that rely on cultural tourism associated with these intangible cultural heritage practices.”⁵⁵

A recent UNESCO report on the impact of COVID-19 on museums found that 90% of the world’s museums were forced to close at the height of the pandemic, and that more than 10% may never reopen.⁵⁶ An ongoing IMF research on tourism in a post-pandemic world has also stated that globally in the first half of the year 2020, tourist arrivals fell by over 65% and reduced

53 Fethi Mansouri, ‘The Socio-cultural Implications of COVID-19,’ *UNESCO*, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/socio-cultural-implications-covid-19> (accessed 8 October 2021).

54 Bertram Nwannekanma, ‘Palace Cancels 2021 Ojude Oba Festival over Covid,’ *Guardian*, 16 July 2021, <https://m.guardian.ng/news/palace-cancels-2021-ojude-oba-festival-over-covid/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

55 UNWTO, *UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide – Sociocultural Impacts of Covid-19, Issue 2: Cultural Tourism*, 2021, <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284422579>: 10 (accessed 8 October 2021).

56 UNESCO, *Museums around the World in the Face of Covid 19*, 2021, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530> (accessed 8 October 2021).

to a near standstill by April 2020, compared to an 8% reduction after the period of the global financial crisis and 17% during the 2003 SARS epidemic.⁵⁷

Impact on Technology: Technology can be said to be one aspect that benefited greatly from the pandemic. Since the natural order of things had to change, the world turned to technology. The educational sector, commerce, health, work life and even entertainment all benefited from technological development during the pandemic. Distance learning was pushed to the fore as educational institutions at all levels moved online to teach, examine and even graduate students. The pandemic forced educational institutions to consider alternatives such as the use of Google Meets or Zoom for lectures and some institutions developed e-learning platforms of their own⁵⁸ to cater for their students' educational needs.⁵⁹

In the tourism industry in Nigeria, the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications was exercised by those who had access and had been empowered to use technological gadgets for work before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Table 2. Impact of COVID-19 on technology

Question	Yes	No
Is your line of business such that is technologically driven?	71.4%	28.6%
Was there an option to move your activities online to be able to reach your audience that could not physically visit during the pandemic?	71.4%	28.6%
Did your institution have online presence before the pandemic?	71.4%	28.6%
Did your institution create online presence during the pandemic?	42.9%	57.1%
Was your institution able to explore the technological platform in reaching your audience?	28.6%	71.4%

57 Behsudi, 'Tourism-dependent...'

58 Afolasade A. Adewumi, 'Students' Perspective on Globalisation of Legal Education: A Case study of Bowen University Law Students.' A paper presented in the International Conference on Globalisation of Professional Legal Education: Constitutional Conspectus organised by School of Law Bennett University India on April 3, 2021.

59 Priya Seetharaman, 'Business Models Shifts: Impact of Covid-19,' *The International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 54, 2020, pp. 102–173.

From the responses in Table 2 above, 28.6% of respondents were able to explore the technological platform in reaching their audience. This percentage represents the travel agencies that were able to move all their activities online immediately the lockdown was partially eased. However, institutions like museums, archives, hotel accommodations only use technology to create awareness of their existence, their services being solely rendered physically and so could not make use of technology to achieve the performance of their services during the lockdown.

Though many of the tourism outlets have an online presence and are aware that there is the option of reaching out to their audience using technological platform, they however did not explore this option. The right to benefit from invention was therefore neither explored nor enjoyed in this regard.

This is very unlike the situation in Italy, where MiBACT initiatives made use of digital means to reach the community and give a virtual visit of museums and cultural sites during the lockdown.⁶⁰

However, for hotels that offer home delivery catering services, technology offered an avenue to reach out to some of their customers. However there seems to be no income for them in respect of housing tourists that lodge for business purposes as business meetings have gone virtual. The World Tourism and Travel Council⁶¹ has stated that the rebound of the tourism sector will depend on the personal decision of leisure travellers as they weigh the necessity of travel against falling ill. While business travellers may suffer a permanent shift or return in phases as many business transactions have gone virtual.⁶²

Generally, COVID-19 impacted the activities of the tourism outlets in Oyo State, Nigeria negatively. Over the years, it has been noticed that low levels of technology and basic labour skills are needed for operation in the tourism industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it obvious that this trend is due for change.

60 The Digital Initiatives of Museums, Archaeological Sites, Libraries, Archives, Theaters, Cinema and Music, '#Iorestoacasa,' *Storico*, https://storico.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_422536076.html (accessed 8 October 2021).

61 World Travel & Tourism Council, *To Recovery and Beyond: The Future of Travel and Tourism in the Wake of COVID-19*, September 2020, <https://wtcc.org/Initiatives/To-Recovery-Beyond> (accessed 8 October 2021).

62 Andrew Curley, Rachel Garber, Vik Krishnan and Jillian Tellez, 'For Corporate Travel, a Long Recovery Ahead,' *McKinsey and Company*, 13 August 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-infrastructure/our-insights/for-corporate-travel-a-long-recovery-ahead> (accessed 8 October 2021).

Objective 4: To determine the level of preparedness to avert negative impacts from any future pandemic.

Has your institution deliberated on new ways of operating your line of activities in preparation for future pandemics?

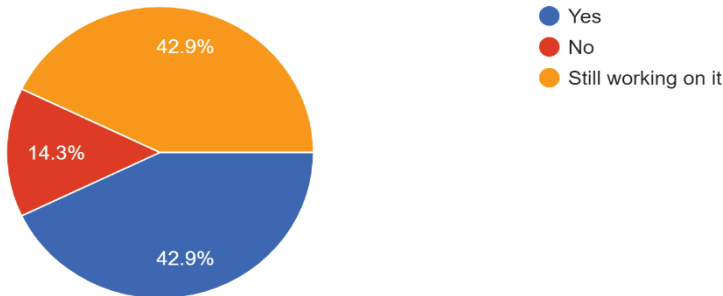


Figure 3. The preparedness to avert negative impacts from any future pandemic

The responses in Figure 3 show that the staff in institutions are aware that steps need to be taken to embrace technology in the tourism industry but no active measures have been concluded on the way forward. A heritage practitioner at one of the federal-government owned tourism outlets, who preferred to stay anonymous said:

“From the pandemic I suppose we should have learnt lessons, but I don’t think the govt has learnt anything from it. Our boss has written proposals to the Federal govt but no response yet. Digitisation is not something you just come and do because acquisition of records is continuous. Digitisation has started but not all materials can be placed online. Some are sensitive materials that cannot be placed in open access.”⁶³

UNESCO has noted that the future of tourism is tied to the creativeness and innovativeness displayed in responding to challenges in the face of pandemics to ensure sustainability of the tourism industry. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has drafted a guide to assist countries in recovering from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.⁶⁴ The recommendations to countries range from adopting measures that promote synergies between the

63 Anonymous.

64 UNWTO, *UNWTO Inclusive Recovery...*

tourism sector and the culture sector in observing COVID-19 protocols and gaining the confidence of tourists; adopting measures to strengthen the revival of urban and rural experiences by creativity and cultural diversity that boost entrepreneurship and innovation in urban destinations; building up of resilient tourism and culture workforce through digital literacy to ensure digital access to heritage sites and using technology to make the experience competitive while promoting the rights of cultural creators; fostering community-based tourism through living heritage.

It is sad to note that no concrete steps have been taken towards recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 on heritage, nor are there any policy in place presently to avert negative impact of any future pandemic on the tourism sector in Nigeria despite the awareness among heritage practitioners that steps need to be taken to ensure resilience is not lost in the heritage and tourism industry.

Conclusions

COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the world is at a turning point concerning the sustainability of the tourism industry as tourism models and structures needs to be readily responsive to changing circumstances and situations. The Nigerian government, both at the federal and state levels, needs to give priority to the heritage industry and ensure that records are documented and preserved in such a way that they can be accessed remotely in the absence of physical access. Digital education is necessary at all levels to enhance the digitisation of culture while preventing the exclusion of any member of society. The focus of Nigerians should be directed at reconnecting its citizens with Nigerian cultures, by creating digital platforms for showcasing local cultures and local ways of life. This should be done with regard to the rights of the cultural creators. Policymakers in Nigeria are urged to formulate appropriate policies geared towards investing in infrastructures that would enable the tourism industry to remain relevant as a tool for sustainable development and the enjoyment of the right to access technological advancement unhindered. The well-being of the people should be at the heart of tourism development as the human rights of the people is realised through the development process.