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**Abstract:** This review work assesses the current state of Nigeria Tourism Industry with reference to COVID-19 and Insecurity. The research work weighs the two to know which one affected the industry more in Nigeria. The work considered the effects of COVID-19 as it affects tourism and also looked into the causes and effects of insecurity as it relates to tourism in Nigeria. The work relied on the Conflict Theory by Karl Max as the basis for its theoretical underpinning. The review work having considered the various cases of insecurity in Nigeria concluded that insecurity affects the development of tourism more than COVID-19. The study recommends that the government of the day should put all efforts in ensuring the insecurity become a thing if the past in Nigeria so as to achieve a sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Insecurity, Tourism, Sustainable Development

### Introduction

The Tourism sector in the whole world has suffered real setback as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions in order to curb the spread of the virus placed an embargo to travel and tourism activities, borders were shut which placed international tourism on hold. This is evident around the world for example according to Alasdair (2020), about half of the world's population was under some form of lockdown in April 2020, with more than 3.9 billion people in more than 90 countries or territories having been asked or ordered to stay at home by their governments. Saimak, Micheah and Bardia (2020) also noted that travel and tourism ban are not new depending on policies of countries but for the first time, there was ban all over the country as a result of COVID-19. Different authors noted the severe impacts of the pandemic on food security and nutrition through supply chain disruptions, global economic recession and income loss, widening societal inequities, disruptions of social protection programmes, altered food environments, localized food price increase and production changes (FAO, 2020), trade and development (UNCTAD, 2020).

Due to the discovery of vaccines for the COVID-19 virus (WHO, 2021), there has been movement around the world, although, according to reports, only 6.2% of the world population has been vaccinated, this is due to unavailability of funds for getting the vaccines.

While there is a battle against COVID-19 in Nigeria, there is even a greater cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Tourism Sector in the country. COVID-19 has been known to paralyze the tourism sector of the country but insecurity is sending the sector to its grave. Tourism has been defined by different scholars reflecting the following characteristics: transportation, accommodation and maximum satisfaction. All these elements are reflected in any form or type of tourisms, but

all are being threatened by the level of insecurity in the country. Nzekwe (2015) noted that insecurity remains the major problem of travel, hospitality and tourism industry. In most countries, domestic tourisms are often engaged in using road transportation because tourism starts at the source, throughout the journey to the destination, using a car to travel will give satisfaction and advantages. Trips that are not bound can stop anytime and gives a panoramic views along the way (Shahrin, Som and Jusoh, 2014). Only in the case of travelling out of a nationality can air transportation be necessary.

Ozoigbo (2019) noted that insecurity is at the verge of being the identity of Nigeria as no single day passes without cases of acts of insecurity. The history of insecurity in Nigeria can be traced to 1966 coup which is unarguably the ugly cornerstone of the insecurity experienced in the country. Also the 1967-1970 civil war was aggravated the security situation in the country. Likewise, the Obasanjo military regime which ceded the ownership and control of all mineral resources to the federal government also aggravated the situation resulting into the era of militancy and thuggery people especially in oil-producing states of Nigeria. The long history of insecurity in Nigeria paved way for the fore-runner of crime in the country, the Boko-Haram Islamic Sect who started operation in the country in 2002 in their most active region, the Sambisa Forest which happened to be a tourist centre before they took it over. The inability of the Nigerian Government to curb out the menace of Boko-Haram has also led to as many other groups as possible in Nigeria. Very notable among these groups are the Fulani Herdsmen and the Bandits whose activities involve kidnapping for ransom and killings at different levels. This work thus assesses and weighs the effects of COVID-19 and insecurity on tourism development in Nigeria. The work relies on previous

researches done and thereby provides recommendations for policy makers.

**I. Selected cases of insecurity in Nigeria (21<sup>st</sup> century) (source: wikipedia, 2021)**

- i. **Kaduna Riots (Year 2000):** Religious riots between Christians and Muslims over the introduction of sharia law in Kaduna State, which begin the religious riots phase of the Sharia conflict in Nigeria claiming between 2000 to 5000 lives
- ii. **Jos Riots (Year 2001):** Religious riots between Christians and Muslims claiming up to 5000 lives
- iii. **Kaduna (Year 2002):** Inter-religious riots that started on 22<sup>nd</sup> November in Kaduna, along with many houses of worship being burned by religious zealots. The root cause is the article that published in Thisday about the 2002 Miss World beauty contest (to be held in Abuja), in which Muslims took offence.
- iv. **Yelwa Massacre (Year 2004):** Religious motivated crises between Christians and Muslims resulting in the death of 975 persons in Kano
- v. **Muhammad Cartoons Crisis in Maiduguri (Year 2006):** The international crisis reached the Nigerian city of Maiduguri, in which over 50 people were killed and many buildings destroyed or damaged by rioting Muslims, outraged because of cartoons about Muhammad in the Danish newspaper which resulted in the death of over 50.
- vi. **Jos Riots (Year 2008):** Religious motivated crisis resulting in the death of 381
- vii. **Boko Haram Uprising (Year 2009):** In Maiduguri, the Islamic militants killed over a thousand people for refusal to convert to Muslims
- viii. **2010 Jos Riots:** Religious rioting; victims were mostly Christians killed by Muslims. Almost 1000 were killed
- ix. **2011 Abuja United Nations Bombing:** 312 injured while 116 died, Boko Haram attacked a United Nations building
- x. **2012 Kaduna:** Islamic Terrorists bombed a church on Easter leaving 38 dead
- xi. **2013 Baga Massacre:** Identity of the perpetrators remains unclear; some blame the Nigerian military while others blame the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram but over 228 were killed.
- xii. **2013 Yobe State School shooting:** Suspected Boko Haram terrorists killed at least 41 children and one teacher.
- xiii. **2014 Konduga Massacre:** About 39 people are believed to have been killed in an attack by Islamist militants on a Nigerian town. Local residents said the attack on Konduga, Borno, lasted several hours, beginning shortly before sundown with the arrival of gunmen in 4x4

trucks. A mosque and more than 1,000 homes were razed to the ground, residents said

- xiv. **2015 Zaria Massacre:** Nigerian army open fire on the Shiite minority when they were conducting a religious procession. It claimed over 1000 lives.
- xv. **2020 Lekki Massacre:** Nigerian army opened fire on peaceful protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate while they were peacefully seated, singing the National anthem and proudly waving their flags.

There has also been a number of killings orchestrated by Fulani-herdsmen and bandits, apart from the several massacres of which very few were selected. Examples are the recent killings by bandits in Kaduna State, Kidnapping across the nation by bandits and herdsmen.

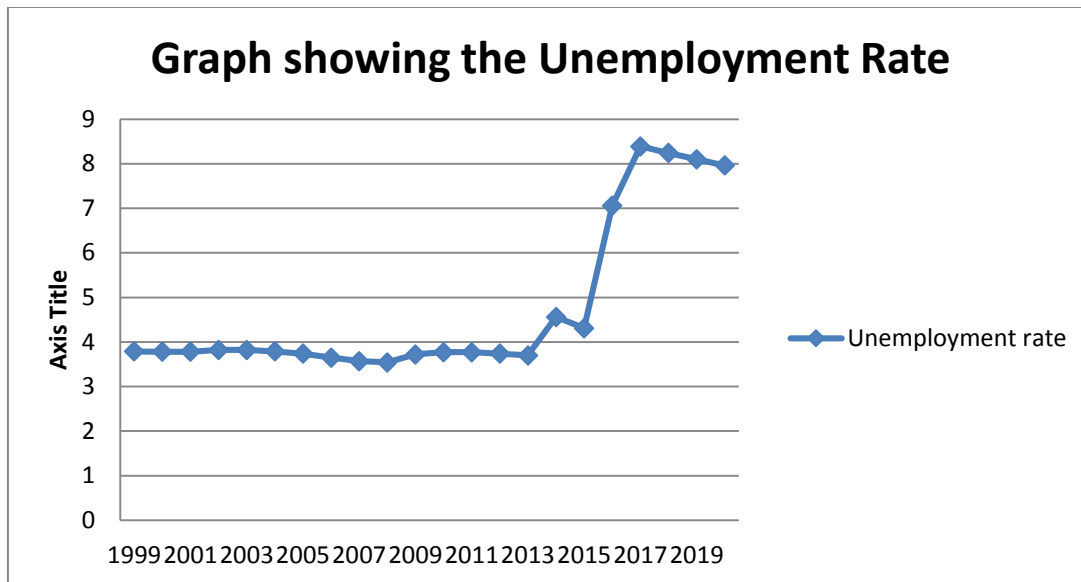
**Theoretical Underpinning**

This work is supported by the Conflict Theory by Karl Marx in 1847 who noted that due to society's never-ending competition for finite resources, it will always be in a state of conflict. The implication of this theory is that those in possession of wealth and resources will protect and hoard those resources, while those without will do whatever they can to obtain them. This dynamic means there is a constant struggle between the rich and the poor. Conflict theory states that tensions and conflicts arise when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in society and that these conflicts become the engine for social change. In this context, power can be understood as control of material resources and accumulated wealth, control of politics and the institutions that make up society, and one's social status relative to others (determined not just by class but by race, gender, sexuality, culture, and religion, among other things) (Crossman, 2019). By implication, tourism will also be affected as a result of tensions arising from religious conflicts especially in the areas with tourism sites and potentials.

**Various Causes and Effects of Insecurity as it Relates to Tourism Development**

There have been as many reasons as possible attributed to the current high level of insecurity that has not only affected the tourism sector, but the economy at large in Nigeria:

- i. **Bad Governance:** The major problem of Nigeria since her inception is bad governance. Nigeria is blessed with both natural and human resources, but the inability of previous and present governments to use these resources for the benefit of mankind has resulted in the many insecurity problems the country is battling with today. This has eventually caused a real decline in the development of the country's tourism sector. Most of our tourist centres are not accessible not to talk of infrastructural development at the sites.
- ii. **Unemployment:** The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is ever-increasing (see figure 1).



**Figure 1:** The Unemployment Rate since Inception of Democracy in Nigeria Source: Statistica (2021)

The figure above shows the unemployment trend in Nigeria since it started this democracy. The rate shoots up in 2015 which happened to be the beginning of the current administration in Nigeria. It is estimated that the unemployment rate will be at 31.5% by the end of 2021 (Statistica, 2021). As a result of the unemployment, crime rate has increased which has also led to increase in insecurity in the country. Resultantly, people will prefer to stay at home and preserve their lives other than engaging in tourism activities at the risk of being killed or kidnapped.

iii. **Religious/Ethnic Differences:** Nigeria is a circular and a multi-ethnic country. The fight for dominance of one ethnic group over the other has triggered more cases of insecurity in the country. The civilian government rule has promoted ethnic politicization and schism (Lewis, 2007) to the extent that a ruling ethnic group believes he or she is above other in everything. This has resulted in inequalities of tourism infrastructures across the nation.

iv. **Bad Security Apparatus:** Most of the security personnel joined the service because of their inability to secure a good job in the country. Inadequate training and poor remuneration is also another factor affecting the country security-wise. Borders are so porous, people are moving from neighbouring countries to Nigeria easily (Babatola, 2015). Arms and weapons of war are being smuggled into the country on regular basis (Mark and Iwebi, 2019). These have further increase the fear of ordinary travelers not to talk of people travelling for the purpose of tourism.

v. **Corruption:** A diversion of funds meant for securing the nation to personal purse has been a culture in Nigeria. The Nigeria political system is a very corrupt one. Embezzlement of public funds has been the order of the day. Even the way the federal government has been borrowing to finance the country, funds borrowed are

embezzled by top government officials (Ogundiya, 2009; Aliyu, 2014). If money meant for security purposes are being embezzled, what then will be the fate of money meant for tourism development.

**Others are:** Economic imbalance, Distrust in Government, Cultural reasons among others.

**Weighing Covid-19 Menace and Insecurity as it Affects Tourism**

COVID-19 has affected the tourism industry especially during the lock-down period. Also, there are still restrictions to some tourism activities. Generally speaking, two thousand, one hundred and seventeen (2117) deaths have been recorded in Nigeria as a result of COVID-19. This however, cannot be compared to deaths as a result of insecurity in Nigeria. A report dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2020 by Anadolu Agency (AA) shows that over 2700 deaths were recorded within 3 months as a result of insecurity. Finally, while COVID-19 is being monitored by relevant agencies, insecurity has never been monitored. This implies that the death toll as a result of insecurity will be much more than the figure above.

**Conclusion**

Conclusively, insecurity has caused more havoc than COVID-19 in the tourism industry. All efforts should not only be placed on the reduction of spread of COVID-19 while insecurity is having its place in the country.

**Recommendations**

As a result of the aforementioned, the Nigeria Government should be proactive about current insecurity issues in the country and look at ways of putting an end to it so that the development of tourism in the Nation can be smooth. Nigeria is blessed with many tourism potentials and also rich culturally. This alone if utilized will not only help with increase in foreign earnings, but also improve the image of the country internationally. The tourism sectors should be

improved because it will help solve the unemployment problem to an extent and resultantly reducing crime and insecurity in the country. The basic amenities for the survival of these sites should be improved on. An Intelligence network to decode security challenges should be used. Lastly, Good Governance which is the key to all this should be provided. This will help the development of the tourism sector and other sectors alongside.

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