

## Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Tourist Resorts in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Victoria Ebong Nkebem; <sup>2</sup>Njoku Raymond Amanze;

<sup>3</sup>James, Runyi Daniel; <sup>4</sup>Mbu, Theresa Azin;

<sup>5</sup>Imanyi Victor Ushie; <sup>6</sup>Florence Patrick Ebiowei;

<sup>7</sup>Ogar Angela Andornimye; <sup>8</sup>Okorie Jenefail Paul;

<sup>9</sup>Ekpenyong Kingsley Bassey

<sup>1,3,4,5,6,7,8</sup> & <sup>9</sup>Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management,  
University of Calabar-Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Public Administration, University of Calabar,  
Nigeria

Corresponding Author: **James, Runyi Daniel**

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### **Abstract:**

*The study investigated the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist resorts within Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research sought to identify the tourism facilities and recreational activities available in the selected resorts and to evaluate the pattern of visitor patronage before and during the pandemic period. Data for the study were gathered through the administration of questionnaires and the use of observational checklists. A hypothesis was formulated to determine whether any significant variation existed in visitor arrivals prior to and during the COVID-19 outbreak. The findings indicated noticeable differences in the level of tourist patronage and revenue generated across the resorts during the two periods under review. The study further revealed that reduced customer turnout, decline in revenue, and workforce downsizing were among the major difficulties faced by resort operators during the pandemic. Based on these findings, the study recommended that resort managers should make adequate financial provisions to support staff welfare and minimize job losses during periods of crisis. It also suggested that the government should strengthen security measures within tourist destinations to ensure the protection of both employees and visitors.*

**Keywords:** Calabar Municipality, COVID-19 effects, Tourism Survey, Tourist Resorts, Visitor Patronage

### **1. Introduction**

COVID-19, an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei, China (Mayo Clinic, 2020)

but now the whole world is suffering from COVID-19 outbreak. It creates an unstable and emerging situation around the world. Around two-million people in 185 countries around the globe have identified as confirmed cases of COVID-19 (Corona virus) (Dong, Du & Gardner, 2020). Tourism is a critical sector of the international economy. In 2019, the tourism sector accounted for 29 per cent of the world's services exports and about 300 million jobs globally. It is an important source of income and employment for developed and developing countries. The global contraction in tourism arrivals could have devastating economic consequences as some developing countries are highly dependent on tourism. In some countries, such as several small island developing states (SIDS), tourism accounts for more than half of the GDP.

Tourism drives cities, but in the region, it also contributes to local, coastal, rural and remote communities which have specific advantages, especially in a post-COVID19 recovery scenario. It creates employment opportunities for specialists and professionals, and attracts women, migrants, students and older workers; however, it mostly provides lower skill jobs. Tourist activities were remained closed till second week of March 2020. New, hotel, motel, restaurant, transportation facilities are opened in a limited away. But people were afraid to move and travel to the increase number of COVID-19 patients. Globally, tourism is one vibrant sector that offers employment to both skill and unskilled labour. Several countries in the world has invested in the sustainable development of tourism sector due to its socio-economic viability to the growth of the economy. Tourism, often describes as the movement of people away from home to other places of interest, it's one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world, Travel and Tourism Council (Al-Badiet *al.*, 2017). As an alternative form of export to other commodities, many countries of the world now adopt tourism as a major source of foreign exchange earnings (Kasimu, *et al.*, 2012).

Tourist resorts are recreational facilities such as hotels, parks and even attraction which provide essential services and comfort to visitors. In recent times, tourism resorts have encouraged inflow of visitors to any given tourism destination especially with great tourism potentials. The development of tourism resort in most destinations is commendable and becoming the main engine of local economic development (Seetanah, Juwaheer & Subahu, 2011).

Nigeria is still battling with COVID-19 pandemic as it is on the third wave of the pandemic since its first confirmed case on 27th February 2020 and gradually spread across the 36 states including the FCT bringing a total number of 205,940 confirmed cases in Nigeria as of 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2021. With Calabar having the total number of 576 confirmed cases, 15 on admission, 538 discharged and 23 deaths as published by Nigeria Centre for Disease

Control (NCDC, 2021). The nationwide spread of the virus led to the Federal government of Nigeria effecting certain measures to contain the virus. The available information on the virus and the welfare of her citizenry were guiding beacons in periodic restrictions to maximize containment. Educational and Religious institutions were the first bodies restricted before containment measures extended to non-essential services (Oyeranti, & Sokeye, 2020).

Tourism development becomes more and more a complex phenomenon whose social, political, cultural and economic implications are bigger and becoming the main engine of local economy, at the level of certain territorial systems (Seetanahet *al*, 2011). According to Panasiuk (2007) tourism resort is a component of regional touristic product which comprises of basic tourism support services and facilities such as resorts, accommodation, transportation and retail networks which provide and enhance a smooth operation and service delivery to tourist's and visitors in a destination. Scholars like Gunn (1988) and Timothy, (1998) believes that the main determinants of most tourist attractions are usually the tourism resorts located in the destination.

For instance, most resort provides essential facilities such as restaurants, accommodation and other utility like water and recreational facilities which are utilize and also provide varieties experience to the visitor with the needed comfort while their stay in a given destination. Facilitates such as communication and transportation among others are also believed to result in more reliable services and at the same time enhance the attractiveness of the destination (Saayman, 2004).

The existence of tourism resort in Calabar is one thing, their level of utilization is another, this is because vast tourism resorts in Cross River State lie under-utilized and are seriously degrading due to poor utilization (Eugene & Eja, 2005). Tourism resorts in Cross River State and Calabar in particular plays a fundamental role in the destination development and its effective utilization depends on the inflow of visitors into the state (Eja, 2012). Therefore, tourism resorts as one of the component of Tourism have often been cited as an important attraction of tourism. The development of tourism resort and the promotion of tourism in ground style have boosted the huge tourism activities in Cross River State and Calabar in particular as one of the famous tourism destination in West Africa.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic sector has necessitated the need for hotels to adapt to the "new normal" to stay afloat and remain competitive. The hospitality market will need to rethink its operation and build anew. In the future, stakeholders in the hospitality sector will need to adapt to fit the new status-quo which is the "new normal" and forgo any hope of going back to "normal". For example, hotels that provide spaces for conference centers would record little patronage as most companies,

government agencies, and stakeholders have resorted to hosting their events online. Hence, hotels that would remain relevant after the heat of the coronavirus pandemic cools off would need to invest aggressively in their digital future, rethink their marketing strategy, make bold moves towards innovation, etc. Therefore, the new thinking should be visionary and involve bold steps to adapt strategy to new trends in the hospitality sector.

Hotel industry offers varieties of services and products to customers. Apart from the services the hotel operators offer, they also create customer relationship management as a strategy to retain and gain the trust of their customers (Eja, Inah, Osonwa, & Itu 2019) Tourists or visitors rely on the services provided by the hospitality industries within the destination where they find themselves, and this naturally creates a symbiotic relationship between visitors and the hospitality industries (Eneyo, 2018). This study will discuss about the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist resorts in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Cross River State is one of the major states in Nigeria with great tourism potential. The numerous tourist potentials such as the Obudu mountain resort, Agbokim waterfall, the Nkarasi monolith, and Epotocave, among others necessitated the government affords to turn Cross River State and Calabar in particular into a natural paradise where fun-seekers, tourists, and other visitors would want to visit.

The tourism developmental stride by the Cross River State Government gave rise to the rapid growth of the hospitality and tourism industry to center for the needs of visitors in the state (Eja, Ukwayi, & Ojong, 2012). The tourism and hospitality industry provides various opportunities for visitors to have or embark on recreational activities during their leisure hours. Moreover, the increase in the inflow of visitors in Calabar has led to the establishment of most existing tourist resorts such as Orange resort, Marina resort, Tinapa resort, and Harbour resort which provide numerous recreational facilities such as a swimming pool, restaurants, and relaxation points which attracts visitors and tourists to the area. More so, the operators of these resorts provide services that generate income on daily bases and also ensure that the tourists or visitors received adequate satisfaction during their stay in the resort. The recent COVID-19 pandemic created a series of crises that have affected the smooth operations of the tourism resorts located in Calabar the State Capital and Calabar Municipality in particular.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis was backed by the government's decision for all businesses to close down and movements were equally restricted in Nigeria during this pandemic. In abide to comply with the Federal Government directives and decision, the Cross River State Government order the general locked down of various tourism support services and other businesses in Cross River State to avoid the spread of the pandemic in the

State. Furthermore, the restriction by the State Government affected the existing tourism support services such as the hotel industry, conferences, and restaurant operations among others which even led to the closing down of most businesses in Calabar. Apart from these, the existing resorts such as Marina resorts, Harbour resorts, and Orange resorts suffered from fluctuation in terms of visitors or tourist patronage, income generation, and employment generation which affected the smooth operation of the resorts. In most cases even when visitors are found recreating in the resort, security agencies such as the police, civil defense, and the army chases them away hence leaving the resort empty with no visitors or tourists. Besides, despite several works on tourist resorts such as Eja, Ojong, and Eteng (2019) assessing visitor's leisure time and constraints to tourism resort utilization in Calabar and (Aniah, Eja, Otu, & Ushie, 2009) on resort potentials as a strategy for sustainable tourism development in plateau state, none of such works have considered the aspect of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist resorts in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. Furthermore, there is still insufficient data on the subject matter which is the basis of the research work to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist resorts in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria.

**a. Challenges in the hospitality industry in the year 2020**

This pandemic causes several challenges in the Hospitality industry, due to COVID-19, the hospitality industry is facing drastic changes, because of lockdown in various countries around the globe, and the hospitality industry is facing a huge drop in reservations and a large number of cancellations at the ends of both leisure and business.

Even after lockdown, it's difficult for people to reach your hotel, as the fear of the virus is still bear in their minds. It's a huge challenge for the hospitality industry to gain trust in their customer so that they will choose their hotel instead of others. Also, there are a number of challenges in the hospitality industry that they have to tackle this year. Let us now see the challenges in the hospitality industry in year 2020:

**Regaining Guest's Confidence is one of the Challenges in the Hospitality Industry:** The first step in overcoming the crisis is regaining the guest's confidence. The guest must feel a sense of safety while visiting the hotel. Hotels can help mitigate the fears of their guests by maintaining proper sanitization and also by regular check-up of staff temperature and they must wear masks in the hotel premises. Hoteliers must make sure guests know via marketing or messaging the measures are taken by them to guarantee guest's safety and communicating guests about the measures hoteliers are taking to ensure their safe stay in the hotel will play a huge role. Guests must feel safe enough to travel again and stay in hotels during

their visits, the industry won't bounce back to the normal occupancy level, until guests are having an assurance that their stay won't impact their health negatively.

**Innovative technologies are challenges in the hotel industry:** The hotel industry should start adopting the latest technologies, to ensure the safety of staff and guests, when new technologies are installed in the hotel then it reduces the chances of human contact. For this, investments are required and many hotels are facing challenges in arranging funds, but many have already adopted it. Many hotels have eliminated the front desk by giving guests options to check-in online, as social distancing is the need of the hour, your hotel can adopt mobile PMS for superfast check-ins and check-outs. Guest's mobile apps must be able to connect to switches in rooms to avoid contact with switches, payments for beverages, drinks, etc must be done digitally. Coins and paper money can transmit the virus from one person to another. Use a mobile app for ordering food and beverages in place of a paper menu.

**Revenue management as challenges in the hospitality industry:** Till last year, hotel revenue managers can rely on historical data when making pricing decisions, but after an unexpected and never known before an event like the COVID-19 crisis, historical data is not much help. Countries for estimating demand take cues from other nations or states that are days or weeks forward in the COVID-19 curve. They can also gather information from social media, price charge by competitors, look to book ratios, etc. Hoteliers need access to real-time pricing intelligence to properly capitalize on demands. Thus, after that hotels will able to bounce back and book rooms at strategic rates. As we cannot foresee exactly how and when people will be traveling again, hoteliers will need to pick up on patterns and take decisions accordingly. Thus, for all these, we need to automate the *revenue management* process and place a high emphasis on revenue.

**Financial Crisis:** Due to COVID-19, the whole world is facing huge damage which results in an economic crisis. Hotels remain shut down, thus occupancy rates continue to the dropdown. Consumers are not looking to book new trips or travel in the coming months, resulting in more cancellations than booking. Thus, there is a huge reduction in cash flow due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Below are the options which lender and borrower can do-:

- Because of COVID-19, the financial performance of business hinder.

- Thus it affects the business ability to meet its repayment *obligations* under a loan agreement.
- The borrower must be aware of when it is due to make a repayment.
- The borrower should enter into early negotiations with their lender
- This is to defer scheduled payments, reduce the amount of repayment, or in more extreme circumstances, attempt to restructure all of their debt.
- With creditors concerning actual or anticipated financial difficulties.
- Lenders and borrowers should consider the impact of negotiating on the borrower's actual or anticipated financial difficulties.
- And, the borrower can request to modify loan terms and defer payments from their lender.

**Maintaining Hygiene:** Cleanliness is not a new issue for hotels. The demand for cleanliness should not be a surprise, especially at the times of the COVID-19 outbreak. Overall hygiene is crucial for the good health and safety of staff and guests in the hotel. Keep hand sanitizers in check-in points, gym, basement hall, etc.

All the frequent touch points of the hotel require thorough cleaning. Disinfect pieces of furniture, cutlery, crockery, surfaces, etc is essential at regular intervals. Give your hotel staff proper training about the hotel cleaning process. You can also use technology to automate certain tasks at your hotel and also enhances coordination among departments. A housekeeping software works in complete harmony with the front desk of your hotel. Thus, improving service efficiency effectively, and reducing paperwork. It keeps you inform about every room status. Furthermore, this software also helps housekeeping managers easily delegate tasks to workers, monitor tasks for timely completion and also helps avoid duplication of work.

**Safeguarding Hotel Staff:** Employees need to be made aware of the guidelines of the World Health Organization and/or Centers for Disease Control. These guidelines provide information to avoid the spread of infection. It includes hand washing, surface cleaning, and respiratory hygiene, to ensure employee safety as well as that of guests. Staff should also have access to, and encourage them to wear personal protective equipment. As it will assure guests that the hotel and its staff are concern regarding their health and safety.

**b. Impacts of COVID-19: An overview**

The impacts of COVID-19 are grievous on individuals, families, and the socioeconomic fabrics of society. The intensity of nCov on humans and

social institutions made United Nations Development Programme – UNDP (2020) to posit that the pandemic is the greatest global health crisis and a defining challenge the world has faced since World-War II. COVID-19 is moving like a wave crashing on those who are least able to protect themselves and cope. The pandemic is more than a health crisis since it stresses countries and has great potentials of creating devastating economic, social, and political crises.

COVID-19 as of September 9, 2020, accounts for some 894,228 deaths globally (WHO, 2020d). Apart from deaths, the human consequence of coronavirus is enormous. As businesses shutdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19, job losses and financial concern become the first impact of the virus. Financial market, manufacturing, travel and hospitality industries are among the most vulnerable, and their closure, affects SMEs and risk millions of jobs globally. For instance, the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and travel obstructs about 10 per cent of global GDP and some 50 million jobs worldwide. The self-employed and employees working in the informal environment with least-pay are the foremost affected by the business closure (World Economic Forum, 2020).

According to World Bank (2020), apart from the immediate impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes, it is crystal clear that nCov outbreak will have long-lasting socio-economic impacts worldwide. Sharp slides in domestic demand and supply of goods and services, is forcing many countries and regions to revise downward their GDP projects. Similarly, the International Labour Organization – ILO (2020) observe that lockdowns adopted by countries and regions to mitigate COVID-19 have vastly affected the production of non-essential goods and services. It accounts for the reduction in work hours and job losses globally. The fall in the prices of export commodity worldwide has weakened the economy of exporting countries and reduced employment in these sectors.

COVID-19 is exacerbating existing global unemployment situation as it affects vulnerable workers, including women, older workers, workers in the informal economy, and the self-employed. Workers also affected by nCov are young workers, micro-entrepreneurs, migrant and refugee workers. Trade imbalance and the massive outflow of capital as a result of COVID-19 have led to huge currency devaluations making debt servicing and the import of essential goods and service an uphill-task for governments especially in developing economies (ILO, 2020). In the same vein, COVID-19 affects human rights and the rule of law worldwide. The fight against nCov requires restrict measures that infringe on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to privacy and data protection. COVID-19 renders individuals and groups extremely vulnerable to cybercrime as authorities in many countries are unable to fully engage and detect malicious actors who exploit the current situation to their selfish advantage

(Council of Europe, 2020).

COVID-19, therefore, have a wide range of consequences far beyond the mere spread of the virus itself; it impacts on political institutions, education, equality, psychological, religious, human freedom, and the family. It accounts for the largest global recession in human history. According to UNESCO, COVID-19 alters the existing culture and our total way of life. It accounts for the closure of cultural institutions, World Heritage sites, and suspension of community cultural practices. It also obstructs cultural tourism worldwide.

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist resorts in Calabar municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the tourism facilities and activities in the various resorts
2. To examine visitors arrivals in the resorts before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

## ***II. Methodology***

In this study, the two main variables examined were tourism facilities and activities visitors' arrivals, which were assessed through a survey questionnaire.

### ***a. Research Design***

The study employed SurveyResearchdesign. This study is aimed at evaluating the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on tourist resort in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria.

### ***b. Participants and Sampling***

In order to conduct this research a sample size of one hundred (100) participants was used and drawn from the various tourism resorts used for the study. The purposive sampling technique was adopted for questionnaire administration. The rationale for adopting purposively sampling technique is based on the types of data and information needed for this study (i.e only staff that would give good information on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist resorts in Calabar municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria).

### ***c. Data collection***

Data would be collected through questionnaire administration and interviews. A checklist would be design to enable the collection of data such as the visitor's arrivals in the various resorts, employment generation, income generation which could base on before and after the COVID-19 pandemic in the study area. Questionnaire were administrated to the various resort staff to obtain information such as the various tourism

activities and facilities provided by the resorts and their socio-demographic characteristics. However, the geographical positioning system (G.P.S) was based to obtained the location of the various resorts.

#### **d. Data Analysis**

In the light of the above stated objectives and hypotheses of the study data were analyzed using simple tables and averages. The student t-test was used in testing the stated hypothesis so as to establish the difference between visitor's arrivals before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in the study area. This was done using the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS).

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### **The various facilities and services provided in the tourist resorts**

The various facilities and services provided by the tourist resorts presented in Table 1 show that all the aforementioned facilities and services where almost found in the resorts. Although, the data presented in Table 1 shows that lodging facilities was the major facilities that was provided and found in the resorts as observed with a high value of 33.33 percent followed by swimming pool, reception and kitchen with values 13.,33 percent respectively.

**Table 1: Various facilities and services**

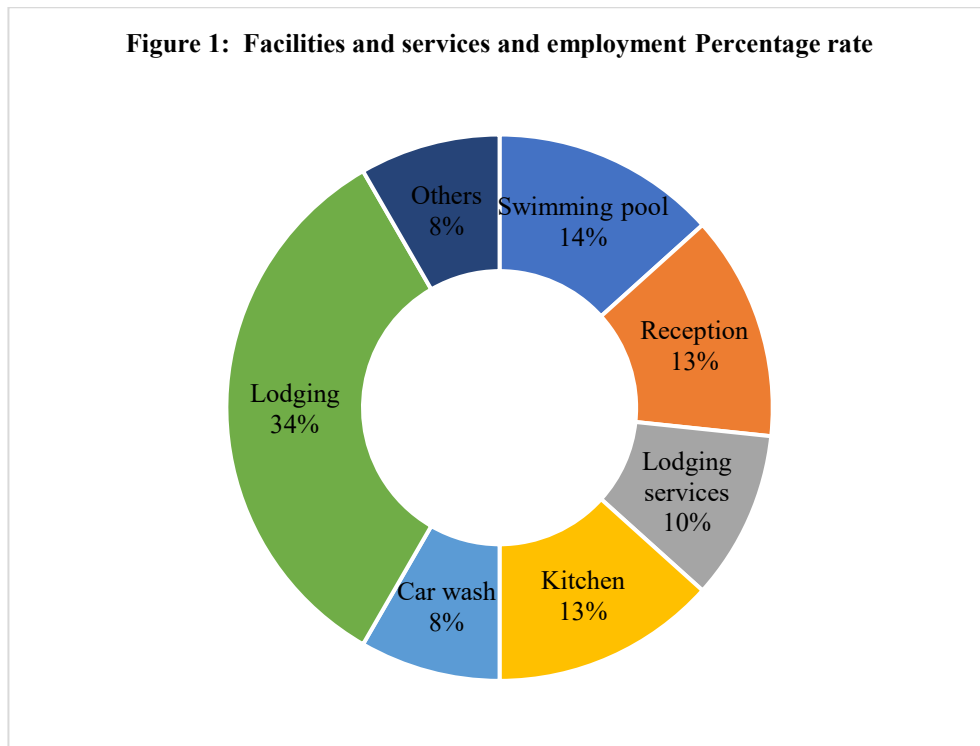
various facilities and services	Orange Resort	Marina Resort	Tinapa Resort	Harbour Resort		Employment
	No. of Staff	No. of Staff	No. of Staff	No. of Staff	Total	Percentage rate
Swimming pool	2	2	4	0	8	13.33
Reception	1	3	3	1	8	13.33
Lodging services	1	1	3	1	6	10.00
Kitchen	1	3	3	1	8	13.33
Car wash	1	2	2	0	5	8.33
Lodging	2	7	7	4	20	33.33
Others (specify)	0	3	1	1	5	8.33
Total	8	21	23	8	60	

Source: Field survey (2025)

It was noticed in the data collected that some of the resorts had kitchen and car wash as noticed in table 1 with a value 10 percent and 8.33 percent respectively even some of the resorts also provide other facilities and services with a value of 8.33 percent.

### Visitors arrivals in tourist resorts non-Covid-19 pandemic and pandemic period

The rate of visitors arrivals non-COVID-19 pandemic period presented in table 2 revealed a total of one hundred and nine thousand seven hundred ninety two (₦109,792) visitors arrivals in the resorts as compared to two thousand eight hundred and forty (₦2,840) visitors arrivals during COVID-19 pandemic period. It was noticed in table 1 that out of the four resorts used Marina resort recorded the highest rate of visitors arrivals during non-COVID-19 pandemic with a value of seventy one thousand three hundred and sixty seven (₦71,367) showing 65 percent compared to visitors arrivals during COVID-19 pandemic period with a value of one thousand three hundred and eight (₦1,308) indicating 46.00 percent. It was also observed that Tinapa resort recorded high value of 17.42 percent of visitors arrivals during non-COVID-19 pandemic period compared to COVID-19 pandemic period.



#### Hypothesis I

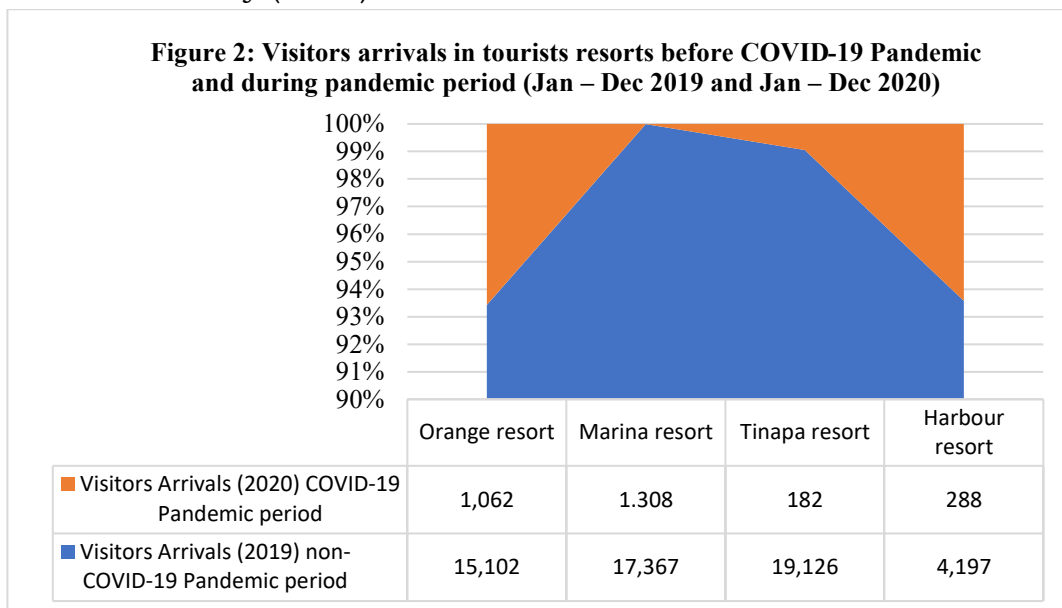
The stated hypothesis one states that there is no significant difference between visitor arrivals before and during the COVID-19 pandemic period in the study area. Table 2 presents a summary of student t-test results before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in tourist resorts in Calabar, Cross River State. From the results, visitors' arrivals in tourist resorts before COVID-19 and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Calabar were significantly different as evidenced by the student t-test results ( $t\text{-cal} = 3.9344$ ;  $t\text{-critical} = 2.4469$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ) at the 1% level of significance (Table2). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis and

concludes that there is a significant difference between visitors' arrivals before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Calabar.

**Table 2: A summary of visitors arrivals in tourists resorts before COVID-19 Pandemic and during pandemic period (Jan – Dec 2019 and Jan – Dec 2020)**

Tourist resorts	Visitors Arrivals (2019) non-COVID-19 Pandemic period		Visitors Arrivals (2020) COVID-19 Pandemic period	
	Total visitors Arrivals	Percentage visitors arrivals	Total visitors arrivals	Percentage visitors arrivals
Orange resort	15,102	13.76	1,062	27.39
Marina resort	17,367	65.00	1,308	46.06
Tinapa resort	19,126	17.42	182	6.41
Harbour resort	4,197	3.82	288	10.14
Total	109,792	100	2,840	100

Source: Field survey (2025)



Source: Field survey (2025)

The findings revealed that tourist resorts witness a reduction in the rate of visitor arrivals in the study area. Moreover, it was noticed that there was a fluctuation in the rate of visitor arrivals in each of the resorts (Eja&Amalu, 2017). This, however, can be attributed to the fact that the

distance between each of the resorts differs from one another in the study area.

Again, it was observed that marina resorts and orange resort recorded the highest number of visitor arrivals before the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to other resorts in the study area. However, the same scenarios occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic period as orange resort and marina resort received the highest number of visitor arrivals in the study area.

### **Employment generation in tourist resorts before and during Covid-19 pandemic period (2019 - 2020)**

The employment generation in the tourist resorts before and during Covid-19 pandemic presented in Table 3 indicate that employment level was low during Covid-19 pandemic period as observed with a total employment rate of sixty (60) staff indicating 40.54 percent compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic with employment rate of eighty eight (88) staff indicating 59.50 percent. The data presented in Table 3 also reveal that Orange resorts and Harbour resort recorded the least employment between January to December 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic period with employment value of Orange resort eight staff (8) indicating 5.41 percent and Harbour resort eight staff (8) indicating 5.41 percent while other resorts such as Marina resort and Tinapa resort had high employment rate of twenty one (21) and twenty three (23) staff indicating 14.19 percent and 15.40 percent respectively.

The reverse is in the case of employment generation before Covid-19 pandemic as high employment rate were recorded in all the resorts even though Marina resort and Tinapa resort recorded the highest employment rate with values 18.24 percent respectively.

The results in Table 3 and 4 showing the monthly employment rate indicate that there is high drop in employment generation during the Covid-19 pandemic between the month of March to September 2020 as observed with fluctuation in employment generation as compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic period. The research findings reveals that between the month of June, July, August and September many of the resort staff were lay off due to the Covid-19 pandemic which affected the rate of visitors arrivals in the resorts with values thirty six, thirty five, thirty four and thirty six staff respectively. This scenario was not applicable to before the Covid-19 pandemic as indicated in table 3 showing employment generation before the Covid-19 pandemic period.

**Table 3: Employment generation in tourist resorts before Covid-19 pandemic and pandemic period (Jan-Dec 2019 – Jan-Dec 2020)**

Tourist resorts	Employment generation before Covid-19 Pandemic period		Employment generation Covid-19 Pandemic period	
	Total Employment generation (2019)	Percentage Employment generation	Total Employment generation (2020)	Percentage Employment generation
Orange resort	23	15.54	8	5.41
Marina resort	27	18.24	21	14.19
Tinapa resort	27	18.24	23	15.54
Harbour resort	11	7.43	8	5.41
Total	88	100	60	100
Percentage of total staff (2019 - 2020)	59.50	148	40.54	

Source: Field survey (2025)

**Table 4: Estimated employment generation during Covid-19 pandemic period (January – December 2020)**

Resort	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	%
Orange resort	8	8	7	7	7	7	6	6	7	7	8	8	86	16.10
Marina resort	22	19	19	18	17	17	17	17	18	19	19	21	225	42.14
Tinapa resort	24	19	23	12	9	8	8	8	7	7	15	23	163	30.52
Harbour resort	8	6	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	6	8	60	11.24
Total	62	52	53	42	38	36	35	34	36	38	48	60	534	100

Source:Field survey (2025)

### Challenges of resorts management during Covid-19 pandemic period

The challenges of resorts management during Covid-19 pandemic period presented in Table 5 indicate that low income generation and low patronage were the major challenges associated with resorts management during Covid-19 pandemic with values of 26.69 percent and 20 percent. It was noticed that retrenchment of staff and high cost of maintenance was another challenges faced by the management of tourist resorts as observed in the data collected with values of 16.67 percent and 11.67 percent . The data obtained in Table 5 reveal that increase in work local in the tourist resorts was also a challenge to tourist resort management during Covid-19 pandemic period with a value of 8.33 percent followed by salary subsidy and insecurity with values 6.67 percent and 5 percent respectively.

**Table 5: Challenges of resorts management during Covid-19 pandemic period**

s/n	Challenges of the resorts	Orange resort		Marina resort		Tinapa resort		Harbour resort		Total	Percentage s
1	Low patronage	2	25.00	4	19.05	4	17.40	2	25.00	12	20.00
2	Insecurity	0	00	2	9.52	1	4.35	0	00	3	5.00
3	Salary subsidy	1	12.50	2	9.52	1	4.35	0	00	4	6.67
4	Retrenchment	1	12.50	3	14.29	5	21.73	1	12.50	10	16.67
5	Low income generation	2	25.00	5	23.81	7	30.43	2	25.00	16	26.67
6	High cost of maintenance	1	12.50	2	9.52	3	13.04	1	12.50	7	11.67
7	Increase in work load	1	12.50	2	9.52	1	4.35	1	12.50	5	8.33
8	Others(Specify)	0	0	1	4.80	1	4.35	1	12.50	3	5.00
	Total	8	100	21	100	23	100	8	100	60	

Sources:Field survey, 2025

### IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative effect on the operations and sustainability of tourist resorts in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study showed that the selected resorts recorded higher levels of staff strength, visitor patronage, and revenue generation before the outbreak of the pandemic compared to the period during the COVID-19 crisis. Available

records indicated that visitor arrivals declined drastically during the pandemic period, leading to a corresponding reduction in income generated by the resorts. The pandemic also resulted in fluctuations in employment levels as many resort operators were forced to reduce staff strength due to declining patronage and financial challenges.

The study further established that the pandemic disrupted the normal functioning of tourism activities within the study area and exposed the vulnerability of tourist resorts to global health emergencies. Consequently, there is a need for all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, resort operators, and tourism managers, to develop effective strategies capable of sustaining tourism businesses during periods of crisis and uncertainty.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that resort operators and management should adopt flexible operational measures that can reduce pressure on workers during emergency situations such as pandemics. Resort management should also establish adequate financial reserves and support mechanisms that would enable them to sustain staff salaries and maintain operations during periods of low patronage. This will help minimize workforce retrenchment and improve organizational stability during future crises.

Furthermore, government and relevant security agencies should strengthen security and protective measures within tourist resorts to ensure the safety of facilities, employees, and visitors. Adequate support policies and intervention programmes should also be introduced to assist tourism businesses in recovering from the adverse effects of pandemics and other unforeseen disruptions.

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