Abstract: The hospitality sector is an important component of the overall economic activities of a nation. It thus helps to stabilize the socio-economic activities of individuals and government. Therefore, it is an important mechanism used by government to improve foreign exchange, generate revenues and create employments. Thus, governments look-forward to the hospitality and tourism industry to stimulate its economic activities to enhance standard of living of her citizens. This study, therefore, examines the impact of the novel circular coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on hospitality and event centre with emphasis on hotels in Bida Niger State Nigeria. The study examines customers' patronage during the covid-19 pandemic as the principal objective of the study. The study is anchored on the Maslow’s theory based on the fact that human needs differ; and hence, there is a need for service providers like hotelier to personalise customers’ needs based on their expectations. The study, therefore, found that customer patronage during the COVID-19 pandemic was very low and the hotel sector in Bida is operating at zero levels. Thus, some hotels gave temporary leave to their employees since their services are not needed at the moment. Furthermore, the study also found that the revenue generation during this era is at the ebb level. Although, they are not able to attract customers during this period, taxes being collected by the state and local government agencies have become a burden to the sector. The study, adopted a qualitative approach using interview techniques for the collection of data. The interview mainly focused on customer patronage, customer leave, and revenue generation emphasizing on some hotel managers and owners in Bida town. The study concludes with suggestions that will help the hospitality and tourism industry.

Keywords: COVID-19, Hospitality, Social Distance, Restriction, Leisure

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Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic is an infectious respiratory disease that affects man through direct contact with an infected person. The disease started in Wuhan, China in December 2019. When it was reported in China, the world and even the government of China never knew the impact of this disease on humankind; thus, some countries fail to take immediate action on travel ban within and outside their nations (UNWTO, 2020). Hence, this disease spread across the globe via travelling from one place to another. In February 2020, Nigeria first experienced the disease through an Italian businessman who came to Lagos (Ogbolosingha & Singh, 2020). By 9 March 2020, the Federal Government of Nigeria declared lockdown in Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja for three weeks. Subsequently, other states also experienced lockdown.
This lockdown and travelling restrictions which include - ban on inter-state travels, closure of hotels, restaurants, schools, banks and manufacturing companies, social events cancellation like sports centres, imposed by the federal and various states government in Nigeria has had a major impact on the hospitality and event centre in Nigeria. It is based on its socio-economic contributions to national development that this study examines its effect on Hospitality and Event centres as a service industry especially where visitors and guests look forward to accommodation, conferences, and meetings (Goodwin, 2020; Jain 2020; Tsionas, 2020).

The importance of hospitality and event centre in the life of humankind cannot be over emphasized. This is because, man is a social being, hence, there is a need for social interaction either for physical or health purposes (Kaur, 2014). However, this interaction has been interrupted by COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions globally. These restrictions have limited the hospitality and event centre activities, and also halted the entire industry services across the globe. Martins, et al. (2020) report that the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be more disruptive to hospitality and tourism than World War II. Besides, workers in these industries are reported to be the worst hit (Remeikis, 2020).

Similarly, large-scale events across various categories have been postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic outbreak across nations of the world; these include trade exhibitions, entertainment concerts, sports events, wedding events, and other social engagements. Hence, Gajjar et al. (2020) also report that the hospitality sector has been the one of the most affected industry.

The purpose of this study is to examine customer patronage before the outbreak of COVID-19 and the impact on customer patronage during the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality and event centre in Bida Niger State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Hospitality and Event Centre, work interdependently to ensure that quality services are provided to tourists, guests, and visitors across the globe. These services provided by the hospitality sector have been halted by COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the pandemic limited the supply of agricultural products to the travel and tourism industry due to the restriction imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Gossling, et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have caused a food crisis in developing countries like Nigeria, which largely depends on a manual farming system, an association of physical interaction which has been banned or marred by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In line with this assertion, Hossain (2020) opined that COVID-19 pandemic already has a direct and indirect effect on the Agric-Food Sector through its supply chains.

More so, Kumar (2020) argued that the hospitality sector perhaps has been the worse with hourly workers facing potential devastating hardships of no work; and lay-off. These threats brought by COVID-19 pandemic has put higher financial burden on the hospitality and tourism industry without the hope of recouping soon (Bagnera & Stewart, 2020). In addition, closure of hospitality services especially restaurants in most countries, ban on social activities in hotels, thus, limiting revenues for maintaining the industry. This, therefore, implies that restaurants are likely to face problems of recovering because they have limited and small profit margins (Gossling, et al., 2020). It is on this assertion that Salahu (2017) observed that these problems of COVID-19 pandemic seem to be profoundly worse in the hospitality sectors. That is, hotels, airlines, sports centres, museum, tourists’ destinations and cinema are faced with reductions or shutdown of activities. Similarly, the neighboring stores and groceries are also facing limited customers for purchasing necessities including hotels. These contributes to the rising economic and social crises in the global economy, especially among hotels (Wehbi, 2020).

Therefore, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has had adverse effects locally, regionally, and globally on people’s mobility and economic activities. Hence, the shutdown of communities; and the total implementation of restrictions on borders across local, states, and national governments across nations have halted the tourism economy (Goodwin, 2020). For instance, places of merriment and leisure during the outbreak are now seen as ghost centres in most cities of the world including Nigeria. That is, hotels and restaurants, museums, beaches, and ski-slopes are empty, and events of all kinds are cancelled (Ioannides & Gyimothy 2020; Kimmelman, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, poses greater challenge to the hospitality sector especially food supply.
chain, where the sector is restricted to operate at scatter services which in the long-run has multiple effects on the agricultural sector, transportation sector, and distribution activities which hospitality and event centres depend upon (Saleh, 2020). In this scenario, Jain (2020) stressed that the travel and tourism industry are likely to be affected in their service delivery system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He argued that even if by tomorrow the coronavirus disappears, people are likely to avoid tourism destination in large scale for a long-time. He, therefore, concluded that restaurant businesses are the key sector mostly affected by this pandemic as government-imposed lockdown and social distancing around the world. For instance, country like USA, where the contributions of hospitality industry to socio-economic development is evident, billions of dollars have been lost due to COVID-19 pandemic; nevertheless, a bailout package of $150B is being negotiated for the industry (Ozili & Arun, 2020).

On the other hand, the Nigerian government did not give a bailout to the hospitality and travel industry; it thus means that the sector has to struggle to survive through its services to be provided. Many workers in Nigeria have lost their jobs due to restrictions on border movement and total lockdown imposed by the government; hence hotels are empty without guests. In addition, the industry is likely to suffer more catastrophes in Nigeria on low patronage from the customers due to this social restriction which is a new order being imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, on-demand and online services that seem operational in the advanced countries like the UK, and the USA, may not work-well in Nigeria due to poor road, and network services.

In Malaysia, in March 2020, for instance, the local hotel industry laid-off its workers with further unpaid leave and wages cut as the sector suffered of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic; it was also reported that RM560.72 million estimated to be revenue losses due to movement control order period (Karim, et al., 2020). Similarly, in Nigeria, the industry had 3.4 million workers, but presently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it operates at 0% capacity (Saleh, 2020). On this assertion, scholars have argued that COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected world hospitality and tourism industry as compared to SARS in 2003 (Wen, et al., 2020). For instance, UNWTO (2020) report that the current situation is worse than the consequences of global economic crisis in 2009, when the international tourist arrivals declined by 4% and SARS declined to 0.4% in 2003.

Although, the various measures taken by the governments to shutdown hotels, restaurants, sporting facilities, cinemas, and theme-parks have a significant impact on the sector, the pandemic had also led to livelihoods being put in jeopardy with the cancellation of sporting events, festivals, and social events (Bas & Sivaprasad, 2020). It is observed that the global pandemic of COVID-19 hit hard on the hotel and airline industries, amongst other sectors of the economy (Tsionas, 2020). On this basis, Tsionas (2020) concluded that government like United Kingdom Chancellor announced in its 2020 budget that all hospitality, retail, and leisure businesses will not pay business rates for the 2020/21 tax year. Similarly, President of the United States of America assigned a stimulus bill of US$58 billion in aid for airlines - US$29 billion in payroll grants for workers and US$29 billion in loans for the airlines (Kimmelman, 2020).

While examining the COVID-19 impact that bewildered the hotel and event sector, Maslow’s Theory of Human Needs’ is being considered. This is based on the assumption that the theory underlies human needs (McLeod, 2007). Maslow identifies five distinctive levels of human needs, particular, physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Relating physiological needs in hotel and event management, guests and visitors expects sufficient basic amenities like shelter and foods during their stay in the hotel. Similarly, safety needs, visitors or guests expect maximum safety and comfort while in the hotel such as fire safety, electrical safety, and other disaster safety. More so, love and belonging level which is a reflection of a character of mankind as a social being. The hotel and event management staffs are expected to create a sense of belonging and conducive atmosphere for the customers. Nowadays, most hotels create a database of their customers to get their feedbacks on the services paid for and extends greetings after departure from the hotels. Furthermore, the customers’ confidence need be to boosted, which refers to esteem need level. Hence, hoteliers need to assure the guests that quality and quantity of services will be delivered at all times. A Self-actualization needs which is the last level of the hierarchy, implies that guests get maximum satisfaction as anticipated. Hence, hotel and event management must ensure that needs are considered paramount in line with the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The theory of Maslow’s needs fits into COVID-19 pandemic. That is, it is an environmental challenge, and no two individuals are the same in their needs and wants especially scanning their business environment, either
retaining royal customers or appealing to new prospects in the industry. Therefore, the application of Maslow’s needs to customers’ expectation on service delivery system, will provide guidelines on customers’ demands especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and thereafter. Through Maslow’s philosophy, the hospitality and tourism industry will be able to apply appropriate marketing strategies during and post COVID-19 business recovering appeals.

Customer Expectation

Hospitality and event centres are service industries that must strive to meet the customers’ expectation; otherwise, competitors in the market may take over loyal customers. The demand for the use of hotel and event centre services seem to be in high demand due to more conferences, wedding activities, meetings, and new product launching. Thus, customers’ expectation should have a direct influence on overall customers’ satisfaction. For instance, Qumariah, et al. (2019) argued that reliability, assurance, tangibility and responsiveness have a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, in meeting the expected needs and demands of the customers, hotels and event centres must give assurance to their customers in relation to the services provided in addition to safety of the guests. In line with this assertion, Fitri (2019) noted that the determinant of the success of an event is subject to comfort and security put in place as experienced by the customers in the hospitality and tourism industry. Thus, Buathong and Lai (2019) opined that the meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) industry account for a major segment of the tourist industry market and has experienced substantial growth and development in the past decade. For example, one of the tourism in Nigeria is cultural and religion activities that are tied to hospital and event centres. Therefore, hospitality in particular hotels and event centres is not just about commercial service activities provided but also the warranty of enjoyment, feeling, and experience which must be in line with the customers’ expectations (Truong, 2019).

The hospitality and event centres as service providers should look into customers’ expectations in order to guarantee customers’ satisfaction and loyalty. For example, Gallarza, et al. (2015) stressed that the success of any hospitality enterprise resides in meeting customers’ expectations. Similarly, Gursory and Chi (2020) report that COVID-19 has opened hospitality industry to diverse customers’ expectations. The restrictions imposed by the governments due to the COVID-19 pandemic imposes on the management of hospitality and event centres to adopt new strategies in order to sufficiently serve the customers.

The COVID-19 pandemic threats will change the behavior of the tourists’ and change the agenda of the scholars in the industry. For example, Jain (2020) report that hospitality scholars are expected to shift their research focus on pandemic issues to deployment of solutions for the industry. Also, Gursory, et al. (2020) states that reopening the sit-down restaurants and easing traveling restrictions will not bring customers back immediately; in general, customers still do not feel comfortable dining in at a sit-down restaurant, travel to a destination, and stay at a hotel may be seen as high risk to customers’. It is, therefore, observed, that customers may be comfortable in patronizing restaurants and event centres that make provision in line with COVID-19 pandemic guidelines (Gursory & Chi, 2020). These are likely expectations of the customers in line with COVID-19 pandemic guidelines; visible sanitizing efforts, social distancing, limited number of customers to be served, rigorous, and frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces of the environment and the use of disinfecting tunnels.

For example, scholars have argued that there is a global decline in accommodation provided by hotels and guest houses; for instance, one of the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on national tourism is cancellations, including hotels, camp sites, gastronomy, car rental, and destination marketing organizations (Gossling, et al., 2020). They argue that most businesses by the end of March 2020, especially in Norway, had temporarily laid-off staff. In line with this assertion, Yamano, et al. (2020) reported that before the outbreak of novel COVID-19 pandemic, travel and tourism contributes 10.4% to the development of socio-economic activities especially global gross domestic product (GDP) that provides 319 million jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected hospitality and tourism industries that culminated into reduction of workforce and provision of limited-service delivery system (Selim, et al., 2020).

Therefore, customers’ expectation and satisfaction should be reviewed in line with the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines. Satisfaction, therefore, is a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment emerging after comparing the
performance of products with the expected performance (Kotler, 1998). Thus, customer satisfaction seems to be an important instrument for the service industry in improving service delivering systems in the market. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited customer’s expectation vis-a-vis customer’s satisfaction. For instance, the pandemic has challenged hotel and accommodation management, revealing the sector’s vulnerability to the virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited social engagement services provided by the hospitality sectors to the general public; it has also reduced customers’ experiences in the hospitality services in the market (Farmaki, et al., 2020).

Customer Patronage Behaviour

Customer behaviour is an integral of consumer behaviour towards services and products in the market. A customer’s behaviour towards services in the market either positive or negative, depends on the business environment, purchasing power, and service packages provided by the firm. In line with this assertion Chebli and Said (2020) argued that the novel COVID-19 pandemic will adversely affect the travelers behaviour intentions regarding personal safety, economic expenditure, conviction, and attitude system in the market. They are views that hygiene and health awareness would be a burden to the hospitality and tourism industry. Hence, health standards and the performance of the host destination’s health system will become influencing factors on the travel decisions. They also argued that the economic crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic will had adverse effect on consumer purchasing power. This, therefore, will change consumers’ behaviours regarding the amount of income to be allocated to vacations. Hence, tourists are likely to reduce their travel expenses by targeting affordable destinations, and seeking for marketing promo tools to enhance patronages.

In Nigeria, for instance, hotels in particular and hospitality industry in general has experienced booking cancellations due to COVID-19 pandemic restriction (Saleh, 2020). The restriction led to laying off of staff and limited service-delivery in the country. The restriction also encouraged the use online shopping and e-payment (Ozili & Arun, 2020). This, therefore, led number of service providers such as accommodation supplies, travel agencies, event coordinators, and transportation supplies are not receiving any income from their tourism products, thereby making the hotel industry redundant and inefficient as income generating venture for many countries (Ranasinghe, et al., 2020). It is also noted that the environmental pressure, regulations, and global panic associated with COVID-19 have changed the travel and leisure mode among tourists (Wen, et al., 2020) resulting in visiting short-distance destinations and avoidance of crowded destinations for the purpose of avoiding COVID-19 pandemic.

Lakshmi and Shareena (2020) also report that economically, hotels and restaurants in general have been affected severely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, recovering of losses of restaurants may likely take a long time based on the losses incurred during this pandemic (Foo, et al., 2020). Food quality and hygiene practices, therefore, may likely be the most viable marketing strategy for the post COVID-19 pandemic to the hospitality and tourism industry. Thams, et al. (2020) further argued that the hospitality and tourism industry found itself in most difficult operational, commercial, and financial crises due to COVID-19 pandemic. This, therefore, call for new business strategies by hotels, airlines, cruise lines, and retailers in the market in coping with the changes due to COVID-19 pandemic to enhance customers’ patronage.

Methodology

This study is an exploratory study which focuses on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality and event centre on selected hotels in Bida town Niger State Nigeria. Hotels and event centres, being essential sectors in the hospitality and tourism industry in service delivery system, are considered paramount in this study, due to the COVID-19 pandemic severely affecting its operations. Hotels were selected in Bida town, based on accessibility and closeness to the road. The study, therefore, adopted an observational raid survey procedure as recommended by Malgosia, et al. (2013) that combined data from the survey, documentation, and information from key players, interviews, and questionnaires. The interview centered on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality and events, focusing on the hotel owners and managers during the lockdown period in relation to accommodation and conferences. The interview bothers on customers’ patronage before and during the lockdown period.
**Study Area: Bida Niger State Nigeria**

Bida is a local government area in Niger state Nigeria. Bida is the Capital of Nupe People or Kingdom. The Kingdom was established in the middle of the 15th century. It is located between the Niger and the Kaduna rivers; it has land area of 1,698Km2 and a population of 2 million people (Salahu, 2020). It is predominately dominated by Nupe speaking language. It shares a border with Agaie by the South, Lemu by the North, Kutigi by the West and Doko by the East. It is an emirate whose leadership is Emir Known as Etsu Nupe. It is the second-largest town after Minna, the headquarters of Niger State.

The main occupation in this area is farming and glass making. It has various primary and secondary schools. Besides, it has four higher institutions, the federal polytechnic, the school of Nursing, the Federal Medical Centre, and the National Cereals Research Institute Baddegi-Bida. As a result of these institutions, hotels sprung up to take care of visitors, guests, and students. Figure 1 below is the map of Bida and its location. Among the popular hotels found in Bida include-Aminci Guest Inn, Bida Guest Inn, Golden Crown Hotel, X-Pert Hotel, Desert Prince Hotel, and Sogbafo Guest Inn.

![Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing Niger State and Bida Traditional City (Source: Google Map June, 2020)](image)

Table 1 reveals available rooms, range from 23 to 32, which equaled to customers’ demands and expectation. Also, Table 2 shows rates per room.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>HOTELS</th>
<th>ROOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aminci Guest Inn</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bida Guest Inn</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Golden Crown Hotel</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>X-Pert Hotel</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Desert Prince Hotel</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sogbafo Guest Inn</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey
Table 2: Rate per Room

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>CLASS OF ROOM</th>
<th>AMOUNT(#)</th>
<th>DOLLAR (Equivalent $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suit/Presidential</td>
<td>17,500.00</td>
<td>46.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deluxe</td>
<td>13,000.00</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Classic</td>
<td>10,000.00 – 8,000.00</td>
<td>25.00 – 20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>6,500.00 – 4,000.00</td>
<td>16.00 – 10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>3,500.00 – 2,500.00</td>
<td>9.00 – 6.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 reveals that the rates per room depends on customer’s purchasing power and taste. It also reveals that the rate per room is based on the facilities attached to such room.

The remaining section provides detailed submissions with respect to the interview conducted for the study.

**Findings and Discussions**

The following sections discusses the findings and preferred suggestions for the study

**Customer Patronage During COVID-19 Pandemic**

In response to the question on customers’ patronage during COVID-19 pandemic, the study revealed that managers and hotel owners reported that before the COVID-19 pandemic; there were high demands for the hospitality and event centre services. These services are at the zenith when higher institutions in the town are in session. As a result, they usually experienced inadequate renting of rooms especially during festivities like Sallah, Nupe Day, and marriages. Nevertheless, during these lockdown periods, they operate at zero levels due to COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, it was further revealed that the inter-state travel ban restrictions worsen the demands for hotel services in Bida town, Niger state Nigeria. This is intendant with the view of Salleh (2020) that reported that the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic operates at zero capacity. Goodwin (2020) also corroborated these views that the shutdown of communities, and total implementation of restrictions on borders across local, states, and national governments across nations halted the tourism economy. Similarly, Kimmelman (2020); Ioannides and Gyimóthy (2020) reported that places of merriment and leisure before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic are now seen as ghost centres in most cities of the world. These include hotels and restaurants, museums, beaches and ski-slopes. They are nowadays empty, and events of all kinds are cancelled to reduce spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, Ozilo and Arun (2020) further revealed that number of service providers such as accommodation supplies, travel agencies, event coordinators and transportation supplies receives less revenues from their tourism products. In line with these views, that hospitality and event centres in Bida adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, application of the Maslow’s theory of needs need to be emphasized by the hotel and event management for post covid-19 business recovering purpose This should be based on the customers’ needs and market demands.

**Leave During COVID-19 Pandemic**

In response to the question on staff on leave, the study found that management of these hotels gave some of the staff temporary leave due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The respondents revealed that they experienced less patronage due to COVID-19 pandemic. This view was supported by Kari, et al. (2020) that in Malaysia, for instance, the local hotel industry laid-off its workers with further unpaid leave and wages cut as the sector suffers the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Also, Kozak, et al. (2020) support this view that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought more severe effects to the global hospitality and tourism market than SARS in 2003. Similarly, UNWTO (2020) argued that the current situation is much worse than the consequences of
the global economic crisis in 2009. Thus, this study found that the COVID-19 pandemic has a severe impact on hospitality and event centre both locally and internationally. Hospitality and event management as a service delivery system, should be based on human needs as identified by the Maslow’s theory which is a fundamental element for the industry success.

**Revenue Generation During COVID-19 Pandemic**

In response to the question on revenue generation during the COVID-19 pandemic, interviewees revealed that the revenues generated during the COVID-19 pandemic has dropped to zero due to lockdown restrictions; customers are restricted to their homes. This view is supported by Abdullah (2020) that the COVID-19 pandemic threats are specifically worsening in the hospitality sectors-hotels, airlines, sports centres, destination and cinema. He further states that these challenges also apply to super stores and groceries that experienced limited customers’ patronage. Furthermore, Thams, *et al.* (2020), found that the hospitality and tourism industry found itself in the most terrible time in terms of its operations. He added that the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced major operations of the key industry players like airlines, cruise lines, hotels, and retailers in the market. This has resulted in an abrupt and major cut of their revenues, and employees.

Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe adverse effects on the hospitality and event centres. The application of the Maslow’s theory of needs, therefore, becomes imperative for the industry in developing marketing strategies in line with customers’ needs in relation to post COVID-19 pandemic customers’ expectation. This becomes imperative for the hospitality and tourism industry to enhance customers’ patronage after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Challenges**

The study found that the hospitality industry is a long-term investment that requires patience on the part of the investors. Also, it was revealed that the hospitality business is seasonal and fluctuates from time to time. Furthermore, the study revealed that the high local taxes collected by the local government authorities’ impact negatively on the hospitality and tourism operations. This assertion is supported by Gossling, *et al.* (2020) that the global decline in accommodation provided by hotels and guest houses has resulted into cancellations of hotels, camp sites, gastronomy, car rentals, and destination marketing organizations; leading to temporarily of staff-lay-off (Selim, *et al.* 2020).

**Implications of the Study**

Hotel and event centre are indispensable component of the hospitality and tourism management. The industry provides services to prospective and potential customers. These service provision result in employment generation, tax payment, and socio-economic development of the host communities. COVID-19 pandemic went unnoticed, these findings will guide the stakeholders, investors, customers, and the public in developing and implementing appropriate policies and strategies on business-customers’ relationship. These findings also imply that collaboration, bi-lateral relationship, training, and retraining of employees, becomes imperative among governments, corporate organizations, and investors in the industry. It also calls for inter-disciplinary research among academic to enhance customers’ patronage and host community benefit.

**Conclusion**

The COVID-19 pandemic had shut the world down resulting in loss of jobs, revenues, and restrictions in social interaction among humanity. This has had severe impact on the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. This has further reduced customer patronage, reduction in employees’ numbers, and reduced revenues’ generation in Nigeria in particular, and the world in general. The host communities of the hospitality and tourism particularly in Nigeria were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in closure of shops, taxis, cultural festivals, music concerts, and other tourism activities.
To enhance customers’ patronage, increase revenues, and motivate employees in the industry, accessibility to stipulated government policies and guidelines by the Niger State and Nigeria Governments on the post COVID-19 pandemic in relation to business-customers’ relationship should be the main attention of the investors in the hospitality and tourism industry. The investors in the sector should look forward to providing hand-sanitizer, and encourage social distance whenever the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were relaxed. Also, hotel and event managers should consider the provision of Cars and Buses to aid accessibility to identified COVID-19 Testing Centres. All these strategies of providing maximum and satisfactory services to customers.

References


UNWTO. (2020). Current situation is much worse that the consequences of global economic crisis in 2009, when the international tourist arrivals declined by 4% and SARS led to a decline of 0.4% in 2003.


