

Research article

# Evidencing the Significance of Landscaping on Sustainable Tourism Development in Nigeria.

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## Abstract

The study investigated the influence of landscaping on sustainable tourism development with a focus on Nigeria. A mixed method approach was explored using the survey, interview and review of relevant literature. Analysis was carried out with the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) tool for descriptive statistics; Pearson Moment Correlation (r) was also used to test the hypothesis. Results revealed that landscaping will greatly influence sustainable tourism and will attract patronage if the Nigerian tourists' attractions are improved.

**Keywords:** Hypothesis, Influence, Landscaping, Nigeria, Sustainable Tourism Development

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## 1. Introduction

World Tourism Organisation's (WTO) definition of tourism, is 'an activity involving travels of persons to places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure.' Going by this definition, countries worldwide have come to acknowledge the importance of tourism vis-à-vis the economic, social and cultural development. Consequently, these have drawn much attention as noted by Oguamaam and Odum (2013); of which Nigeria is not left out and will continue, due to the increasing awareness and enormous benefits it brings.

Tourism apart from the several benefits, Aniah et al. (2009) argues that it promotes peace and exposes people to new 'worlds or environments thus making participant learn about new environments.' This implies that in order to compete favourably with developed and upcoming developing tourism economies; Nigeria must strive to develop and manage the tourism sector sustainably in order to draw the attention of tourists locally and internationally. Thus, it is, for this reason, important to improve the physical environment of tourists' attractions in Nigeria using adequate landscape elements (Ayeni, 2012).

Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004) noted that what constitutes a developed tourism sector hinges on several characteristics; and these include the quality of the landscape, the diversity of wildlife, including flora and fauna; historical and cultural features. In addition, these characteristics define landscape and are "things to see, activities to do and experiences to be remembered" (Liu, Ko and Ko, 2011).

Landscape as argued by Oladeji et al. (2012), has a connection between people and their environment and that it is a consequence of the interaction of both natural and cultural components ranging from flora, fauna to historical as observed by man. So, for this reason, the quality of the environment whether natural or manmade is very vital to tourism and should not be taken lightly (Ayeni and Ebohon, 2012).

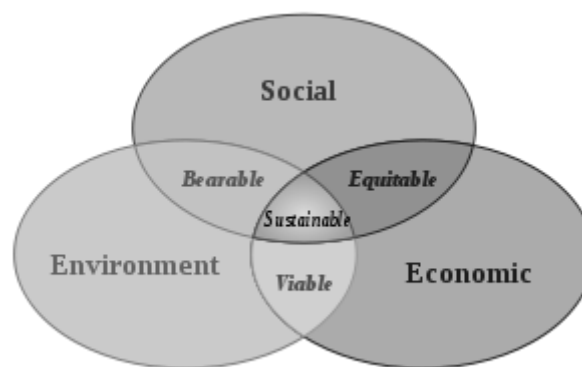
This paper emphasizes that landscaping is known to be an effective way through which the physical environment can be beautified and developed in order to revitalise the economy of tourists' destinations in Nigeria. Moreover, the Nigerian tourists' attractions must be developed sustainably for tourism to thrive and for Nigeria to benefit. Thus, the primary objective of this paper is to test if landscaping has any influence on sustainable tourism development in Nigeria through hypotheses.

## 2. Literature

The issue of sustainable development, as stated by Oguamaam and Odum (2013), is a 'pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment. So that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for the generation to come.' In the same vein, Elliot (2006) argues that plainly, sustainable development denotes maintaining development over time. This term emerged in 1987 from the World Conference on Environment and Development and was published in the report 'Our Common Future' also known as the Brundtland report. The report defined sustainable development as 'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987). This relates the carrying capacity of natural systems and human challenges and constitutes three parts

sustained (Swanbrooke, 1999; Oguamaam and Odum, 2013). These parts includes, environmental sustainability; that considers the consumption of natural resources in manners that enhance the integrity and carrying capacity of the natural environment. Economic sustainability; that encourages investment, and sustains businesses and jobs eventually. And social-political sustainability which considers how the quality of life of families and communities are enhanced and sustained (Swanbrooke, 1999; Oguamaam and Odum, 2013). Figure 3 below further explains the ties between the trio of social, economic and environment in sustainable development.

**Figure 3:** the Three Parts of Sustainable Development



Source: Adapted from Oguamaam and Odum, 2013)

Ever since the report, different disciplines have influenced and contributed to the sustainability debate, and evolved various definitions. In the field of tourism, Swarbrooke (1999) argues that, tourism which meets the need of tourists, the tourism industry, and host communities today without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own need is sustainable tourism. Thus, sustainable tourism is tourism development that avoids damage to the environment, economy and cultures of the locations where it took place and coordinated such that its activities do not destroy nature. And the idea of good tourists as argued by Isioma and Ashikodi (2014) suggests that the tourist behave in a responsible manner towards the environment and the host community in their vacation destination. As such, sustainable tourism, will inform responsible environment of tourist destinations.

Ayeni, (2013) noted that landscaping plays a crucial role, in beautifying tourists' destinations and help, determines tourist's choice of places to visit. In this view, Uduma-Olugu et al. (2013) argues that a place's landscape characteristics determines its character and subsequently, its uses. In addition, it serves as an interaction between human and the natural environment; this according to (Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2004) brings about a relationship and the attendant quality of the tourist's experiences.

This study underpins the need for landscape elements in the Nigerian tourists' attractions in order to aid sustainable tourism development. As well as enhancing the tourist environment by creating beautiful sceneries for a pleasing tourist experience. Thus, given the huge financial gains associated with tourism, and the

availability of varieties of natural and cultural tourism resources in Nigeria as noted by Ayeni (2013); attention can be paid to developing and enhancing the tourism resources sustainably through landscaping in order to attract tourists globally; at the same time benefit from the economic gains.

From aforementioned, Sinha (2005) views landscape as a symbolic creation that is designed carefully to appeal to man. As such, landscaping of tourist attractions should provide tourists with inspiring and delightful experience. In line with tourism, and going by the Brundtland report on sustainable development, Ayeni, Ebohon and Taki (2011) argues that tourism should be managed such that economic, social and aesthetics needs are fulfilled; as well as welcoming effective development (Tzanopoulos et al. 2011). This will in turn aid development as well as enhance the environment.

Tourism is competitive, and globally emerging tourists' destinations are constantly marketing their destinations as unique places to visit. In order to key into an attractive destination internationally and locally, the Nigerian tourism industry must harness landscaping strategies as a means to achieve sustainable tourism. Especially at this point when Nigeria is looking at tourism as possible alternative source of income besides its mainstay of crude oil.

Landscape refers to 'an area as perceived by man' (Mikulec and Antouskova, 2011) and encompasses all that is visible, looking across an area of land (Consultation Draft, 2000). It serves as a source of attraction and an important means of attracting tourists due to its combination of manmade and natural scenery. If well organised and planned, will improve the overall aesthetics of the Nigeria tourists' destinations and in turn attract tourists globally, at the same time, preserve greenery and serve as economy earner.

Landscaping, on the other hand, is the modification of man's surrounding as a result of the interaction with the environment (Ayeni, 2012). Landscape design elements can be categorised into soft and hard; whilst soft landscape comprises trees, ground cover, hedges, shrubs and flowers; hard landscape includes stones, fences, deck, path, Street lights, barriers or bollards, fences, signage, walkways, rocks, seats, bus shelters, bins, street furniture and anything made of concrete. These helps to create a visual balance between artistic composition of plants and non-living elements (Raff, 2006). Both the hard and the soft landscape, apart from their individual function collectively help to create pleasing visual effects in the environment.

Worldwide, beautiful and attractive scenery creates pleasing experiences and serves as a basis for a visit to such attractions (Ayeni, 2013). In addition, sighting beautiful surroundings can be inspiring and delightful Ozgen (2003) as such, improvement of landscape aesthetics in and around tourist destinations will help in developing and managing such attractions. In addition, well-landscaped attraction as argued by Ayeni et al. (2011) with nature, wildlife, water and other elements help people enjoy the environment, fresh air, engage in physical exercise. In addition, it also reduces anxiety and feel relaxed, by that, adding to the quality of life. Consequently are willing to pay a premium for the attractive environment (Jim and Chen, 2009), and will leave a bequest for future generations (Ayeni et al., 2011). Hence the need for the Nigerian tourists' attractions to be improved through landscaping to maximise the advantages and gains from tourism.

In Nigeria, there are many natural tourists' attractions as noted by Tunde (2012) and these include Warm Springs, waterfalls, Niger-Benue, confluence, beaches, caves, hills and mountains and others. However, Eja et al. (2012) stated that most of the states in Nigeria with great tourism potentials still witness low-level of inflow of tourist. This is attributed to the fact that most of the potentials within these destinations have not been provided with adequate facilities and attention. Common to all is low level awareness and low level of tourists visits (Izobo- Martins and Ijasa, 2012). Enhancing these attractions with landscape elements will improve tourists' visits as well as bringing to limelight and at the same time compete favourably with best attractions in the world. In addition, leads to the possibilities of improving the economic development of Nigeria as a country as well as ensuring sustainability.

#### **4. Methodology**

This study is a part of a larger research and was carried out in Nigeria. It explored the mixed method approach using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection; as well as the use of relevant literature. The quantitative made use of eight hundred and fifty questionnaires administered randomly within three geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Of these, seven hundred and forty-five were returned filled and analysed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. The analysis was carried out on two levels; the univariate for frequency distribution and the bivariate levels, using the Pearson Moment Correlation to test the Hypothesis of the influence of landscaping on sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. The qualitative made use of interview amongst twenty-five stakeholders in the tourism industry in Nigeria and analysed using the content analysis.

#### **5. Data Analysis**

##### *5.1 Descriptive Statistics*

The sample had more male than female respondents (Male 63.4%; Female 36.6%) making the male to be predominant in the survey. The age distribution of the respondents were in the age range of 20-50 (83.6%), this was followed by those above 50 years of age (16.3%). The data showed that the majority (49.3%) were government employees, followed by the unemployed (22.1%), while self-employed were 17.4% and 11.1% were privately employed, and the balance did not respond.

Majority of the respondents were educated (65.8%) to the tertiary level. Those who had secondary and primary education were 12.6% and 12.2% respectively while 8.8% had no form of education and .5% did not respond. In addition, the married were 58.9%, suggesting the married showed more interest in tourism. A total of 39.1% were single, the widowed were 1.6% and 0.4% did not respond.

##### *5.2 Inferential Statistics*

The aim of the research is to test if landscaping has influence on sustainable tourism and if sustainable tourism will have an influence on the Nigerian economy. On this basis, the research was guided by the two Null hypotheses  $H_0$ 1 and two alternate hypothesis  $H_A$ 1 as stated below:

*$H_0$ 1: Landscaping does not have significant influence on Sustainable tourism*

*$H_A$ 1: Landscaping has significant influence on Sustainable tourism*

$H_{O2}$ : Sustainable tourism does not have significant influence on the Nigerian economy

$H_{A2}$ : sustainable tourism has significant influence on the Nigerian economy

In testing the Null hypotheses, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) was used. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) is used to specify the direction and magnitude of linear association between two quantitative variables and can range from -1 to +1 (Stangnor, 2010; Pallant, 2007) and used for data measured on an interval scale of measurement (Jackson, 2009). This was done due to the large number of data involved; the types of variables involved (the interval variables) and also for accuracy.

In testing the first hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) was used to check for significance and relationship; between the two variables (LANDSTO) and (LANDINFR), that is, landscaping and sustainable tourism. Is landscaping as tourism infrastructure needed for tourism to be sustainable? This was examined assuming the significance level of Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) to be 0.05 two-tailed; that is, the confidence level of 95%. The level at which the Null hypothesis can be rejected when  $P$  is less than or equal to 0.05. The variable examined were Landscaping and sustainable tourism development (LANDSTO) and Landscaping as tourism infrastructure (LANDINFR).

Results obtained are presented in Table 1 and shows that there is a strong positive correlation between LANDSTO and LANDINFR which was statistically significant. The Pearson correlation coefficient  $r$  is 0.585 while the level of significance is 0.000 with degree confidence at 100%, that is, absolute significance ( $r = 0.585$ ,  $n = 745$ ,  $p < .005$ ). It implies that LANDSTO and LANDINFR correlate significantly. And, therefore, show that there is a relationship between landscaping and sustainable tourism. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that landscaping does not have significant influence on sustainable tourism is rejected since  $p < 0.005$  while the alternative hypothesis which is "landscaping has significant influence on sustainable tourism" is accepted. This shows that tourism can be sustainable with appropriate landscaping of the tourism attractions in Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Pearson Correlations for  $H_{O1}$

Correlations			
		v31 - Do you agree that landscaping can facilitate sustainable tourism development?	v40 - Do you agree that landscaping is a form of tourism infrastructure?
v31 - Do you agree that landscaping can facilitate sustainable tourism development?	Pearson Correlation	1	.585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	745	745

v40 - Do you agree that landscaping is a form of tourism infrastructure?	Pearson Correlation	.585**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	745	745
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The second null hypothesis H<sub>02</sub> that states that sustainable tourism does not have significant influence on the Nigerian economy was also tested. The variables examined in this case were Economic potentials of tourism (ECOPOTO) and Implementing landscaping in tourist attractions (IMPLAND). Also assuming a confidence level of 95% and a level of significance of Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) at 0.05, to check whether sustainable tourism has any influence on the Nigerian economy.

The Results also show a positive correlation as revealed in Table 2 between variables ECOPOTO and IMPLAND with the Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient (r) as 0.443 and significance of 0.000 at 100% degree of confidence (r =0.443, n= 745, p < 0.005). This implies that ECOPOTO and IMPLAND correlate significantly. Therefore, the null hypothesis which says that sustainable tourism does not have significant influence on the Nigerian economy is rejected since p < 0.005, while the alternative hypothesis “sustainable tourism has significance influence on the Nigerian economy” is accepted. This implies that sustainable tourism will present a good avenue for income generation and as such will influence positively the Nigerian economy.

**Table 2:** Pearson Correlations for Ho2

<b>Correlations</b>			
		v13 - Do you agree that tourism has huge economic potential?	v51 - Do you agree that implementing landscaping in the tourist attractions could lead to sustainable tourism?
v13 - Do you agree that tourism has huge economic potential?	Pearson Correlation	1	.443**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	745	745
v51 - Do you agree that implementing landscaping in the tourist attractions could lead to sustainable tourism?	Pearson Correlation	.443**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	745	745
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

### *5.3 Analysis of Interview*

The qualitative approach using the face to face interview was used. Twenty-five stakeholders in the tourism industry were chosen for interview based on the criteria of their position using judgemental and snowballing methods. The results obtained gave an insight into tourism development in Nigeria, and especially the state of attraction and the need to beautify the tourist' environment through landscaping.

During the interview, the interviewees were asked whether or not they were satisfied with the present state of tourists' attractions in Nigeria, and if not, what improvements need to be done. The response to this question was overwhelming and show that indeed the interviewees are not satisfied and call on the government to release the fund and improve facilities on the tourists' attractions. Furthermore, landscaping amongst other structural development be addressed as well as infrastructure given a facelift and delivered from dilapidation. This goes further to confirm that more needs to be done in relation to infrastructure development and beautification to underpin sustainable tourism development.

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked whether or not they think the environment of the tourists' destination is an aspect that needs to be considered for sustainable tourism to thrive in Nigeria. Interviewees responded that aesthetics gives tourists location the appeal that serves as a means of attracting people to such locations. As such, aesthetics, landscaping and beautification gives good scenic views; and so if used in tourism potentials will help tourism to thrive in Nigeria.

The general agreement from the interviewees' responses is that tourists' attractions should be improved through landscaping because tourists are happier in an attractive environment. This further suggests that the environment play an important role in tourism development. Interviewees further affirming that better patronage will be recorded with better landscaping.

## **6. Discussion of Findings**

The analysis revealed that indeed landscaping is one vital infrastructure needed for tourism to be sustainable. This goes further to prove that a destination with unattractive environment will discourage tourist' visits. This was also proved in the strong and positive correlation exhibited between the variable LANDSTO and LANDINFR and showed that they correlate significantly.

Going by this, if the Nigerian tourists' destinations are properly beautified, it will go a long way in bringing the Nigerian tourism to limelight, thereby attracting both local and international tourists. The findings from the analysis corroborates the literature that beautiful tourists destinations gives the opportunities of choices of places to visit. In addition, the literature also revealed that attractive and beautiful sceneries are some reasons why tourists visit certain attractions.

It was also revealed through the analysis that sustainable tourism has significant influence on the Nigerian economy; and would greatly improve the Nigerian economy. Increasingly, many countries worldwide sees



tourism as a vital tool for promoting economic growth and can play this role significantly in the Nigerian tourism. Corroborating this finding with the literature, if the tourist' attractions are well developed, it will not only provide avenue for revenue generation, it will at the same time ensure sustainability. Furthermore, damage to the environment and nature will be avoided, and responsible tourism will be encouraged.

Responses from the interview show that indeed, the people are not satisfied with the unattractive state of many of the tourist destinations. The tourism industry has many facets and encompasses several areas which could serve as avenue for job creation; vis-à-vis, hotels rentals, souvenir shops, tour services, restaurants to mention but a few. These services presents opportunities for the growth of the local economy as well as create employment for the people in and around the tourist' destinations.

Thus, the results of the hypotheses tests corroborate the earlier findings that landscaping will greatly enhance tourism sustainably and will in turn have a positive influence on the Nigerian economy. The study, therefore, suggests the need for the Nigerian government to focus and invest in tourism through landscaping for aesthetics and the growth of the Nigerian economy.

## **7. Conclusion**

Landscaping whether natural or man-made is acknowledged to add to the beauty of the environment. The environment of the tourist destination in Nigeria are characterised by the dearth of aesthetics and infrastructure facilities that could serve as an avenue to improve tourist's patronage. This study through the hypotheses has proved that landscaping has influence on sustainable tourism development and will greatly add to the aesthetics of the tourists attractions and improve tourists' visits if explored thereby making the economy to thrive.

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