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EFFECT OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON THE SURVIVAL OF THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN PORT HARCOURT

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Abstract
A cross-sectional survey on economic pressures was conducted in selected hospitality and tourism firms to examine the extent to which high inflation, taxation, regulatory challenges, and security challenges affect the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt. A Resource-Based View (RBV) was adopted to guide the study. An EPSHTI-structured questionnaire was used to facilitate data collection. The data were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics and multicollinearity with the variance inflation factor (VIF) to ascertain the accuracy of the dataset. A Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses, and the findings revealed that high inflation (Beta = 0.652, P<0.05), taxation, regulatory challenges (Beta = 0.633, P<0.05), and security concerns affect the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt (Beta = 0.626, P<0.05). The study concluded that economic diversification and job creation are driven by hospitality and tourism, where investment in tourism fosters the development of hotels, transportation networks, and amenities. It is recommended that the government commit to raising the interest rate to curb inflation and offer financial grants to help hospitality businesses manage rising operational expenses. That government should continuously addresses the hospitality and tourism challenges by streamlining tax structures to reduce multiple taxation, offering targeted tax incentives, and simplifying regulations for SMEs. The government also should commit to addressing insecurity in the country by strengthening law enforcement, engaging communities, and enforcing strict regulatory standards for security infrastructure

***Keywords*:** Economic pressure, High inflation, Taxation, Regulatory challenges, Security challenges, Hospitality and Tourism

Introduction
The development of market oriented economy is influenced by the tourism and hospitality industry. The 21st-century Nigerian hospitality and tourism industry is a fast-growing sector, increasingly crucial for economic diversification beyond oil, contributing roughly 3.9 percent to 6.1 percent to the GDP. Driven by urbanization, a rising middle class, and digital

technology, the sector features growing international luxury brands and the rise of digital platforms, despite facing significant infrastructure deficits, security challenges, and regulatory hurdles (Zhang et al., 2023). Over the years, this has been an indication that the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria faces severe economic pressures driven by high inflation, unstable power supply (energy costs), high taxation, and low consumer purchasing power. These factors increase operating costs, reduce foreign/domestic demand, and hinder growth, despite the sector's high potential for economic diversification and revenue generation

The tourism and hospitality industry offers employment, especially for skilled, non-skilled, and migrant workers. This, in turn, promotes prosperity and has a major positive social impact, giving young people, women, and minorities opportunities to earn a living. However, the tourism industry is facing a growing trend towards greater automation (Gooroochurn & Sinclair, 2025).

Strategic areas that have been of concern for hospitality and tourism survival are in the areas of high inflation, taxation, regulatory challenges, and security concerns. Inflation reduces the purchasing power of employees, creating pressure for higher wages and increasing staff turnover, which in turn increases recruitment costs (Jordan, 2023). Taxation and regulatory challenges affect the survival of the hospitality and tourism sector by increasing operational costs, squeezing profit margins, and restricting competitiveness, leading to higher prices, reduced patronage, and decreased productivity. (Agbor, 2023). Security challenges in Nigeria including terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and civil unrest severely threaten the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry, causing decreased occupancy rates, declining revenue, and increased operational costs (Ayeni, 2025).

In Rivers State, the hospitality and tourism industry is crucial, for which serve as a key driver for economic diversification, job creation, and infrastructural development. The state has leveraged its cultural heritage, coastal beauty, and urban centers, and the sector generates significant revenue, reduces poverty, and enhances the state's global image. As a major alternative to the oil sector, hospitality provides a stable income source through hotel taxes, recreational fees, and tourism services. The sector is a high-volume employer, offering jobs to youth, women, and various skill levels in hotels, restaurants, tourism agencies, and event management. Tourism necessitates improved infrastructure, such as better roads, security, and amenities, which benefit both visitors and local communities. Based on this recognition, this study became a resource to explore the economic pressures affecting the survival of hospitality and tourism in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Statement of the problem

The survival of the hospitality and tourism industry is affected by economic pressures, with high-end luxury thriving. At the same time, mid-scale and economy segments struggle with tighter margins and softened demand. These sectors have navigated a period of persistent inflation, labour shortages, and geopolitical shocks, which are forcing rapid operational reinvention.

In Rivers State, the hospitality and tourism sectors have been affected by persistent high inflation, taxation and regulatory challenges, and security challenges, which threaten their

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survival. Persistent high inflation in the hospitality and tourism sectors has placed businesses under mounting pressure to balance high operating costs with competitive pricing to avoid reduced profitability and potential closures. The regulatory challenges in the hospitality and tourism industry involve navigating complex, fragmented licensing requirements across jurisdictions, high operational compliance costs, and stringent labour laws. Lastly, security concerns in the hospitality and tourism industry involve the need to protect guests, staff, and assets from threats like crime, terrorism, and cyberattacks, which could make the system unattractive for visitors

Objective of the problem

The broad objective of the study was to examine the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the extent to which high inflation affects the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt.
2. To assess the extent to which taxation, regulatory challenges affect the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt.
3. To investigate the extent to which security challenges affect the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework: Resource-Based View (RBV)

This study is anchored on the Resource-Based View (RBV) developed by Barney (1991). RBV argues that sustainable competitive advantage arises from a firm's valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. In the hospitality and tourism industry, such resources include physical assets, technology, organizational culture, brand reputation, employee competence, and service quality. The theory emphasizes leveraging internal capabilities rather than relying solely on external market conditions. It further suggests that firms must continuously adapt and develop these resources to remain competitive in changing environments. RBV is relevant to this study because hospitality and tourism firms require adequate internal resources and capabilities to withstand economic challenges such as inflation, taxation, regulatory constraints, and security threats while sustaining performance and growth.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualizes economic pressure (high inflation, taxation/regulatory challenges, and security challenges) as key factors influencing the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry.

Concept of Economic Pressure

Economic pressure refers to financial constraints and challenges that affect individuals, businesses, and governments, often resulting from inflation, debt, unemployment, rising living costs, or resource scarcity (Ojukwu, 2023; Sunarti et al., 2022). It can influence decision-making, reduce financial stability, and compel behavioral changes (Zhong et al., 2021). At the household level, economic pressure may cause stress and family conflicts

(Citarella et al., 2020), while at the business level it threatens profitability through rising costs and market uncertainties (Sukmawati & Puspitawati, 2021). Studies also show that economic pressure contributes to poor value systems, unemployment challenges, and social instability among youths (Voydanoff & Donnelly, 2018; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2018; Evans, 2018).

Survival of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

The survival of hospitality and tourism firms depends largely on adaptability, innovation, and resilience. Key strategies include digital transformation, domestic tourism promotion, sustainable practices, cost optimization, and effective digital communication (Mhango et al., 2025; Tian, 2023). The adoption of AI, contactless services, flexible booking systems, and strong social media engagement has enhanced industry recovery and competitiveness (Wakelin-Theron et al., 2019). However, crises such as pandemics, safety threats, and economic disruptions continue to challenge the industry, making crisis management, leadership effectiveness, and organizational resilience essential for survival (Xie et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023; Zamoum & Gorpe, 2018; Elkhwesky et al., 2022).

High Inflation and the Survival of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

High inflation significantly affects hospitality and tourism operations by increasing the costs of food, utilities, transportation, and labour while reducing consumers' purchasing power (Zelenka, 2019; Wong et al., 2023). These pressures reduce profit margins, lower occupancy rates, and increase staff turnover due to wage demands (Jordan, 2023). To remain viable, firms adopt strategies such as technology-driven operations, AI-based pricing systems, local sourcing, menu optimization, and service automation (Shariff, 2021). Inflation also increases operational costs and reduces customer spending on travel and leisure activities, particularly affecting businesses in rural and suburban areas (Whyte, 2021; Yvanovish, 2022; Chiang et al., 2022).

Taxation, Regulatory Challenges, and Survival of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Taxation and regulatory requirements significantly influence the sustainability of hospitality and tourism firms. Multiple taxes, high tax rates, and complex compliance procedures increase operational costs, reduce profitability, and weaken competitiveness (Agbor, 2023; Cross, 2019). Taxes such as VAT, property taxes, hotel taxes, airport charges, and licensing fees often increase service prices and reduce patronage (OECD, 2024; Gooroochurn & Sinclair, 2025). Regulatory obligations related to safety, data protection, and reporting requirements further increase compliance costs, particularly for SMEs. Although taxation generates government revenue and supports infrastructure development, excessive tax burdens may discourage investment and reduce industry productivity (Faulkner et al., 2023; Ilieș et al., 2022; Safarov et al., 2023; Forsyth & Dwyer, 2022).

Security Challenges and the Survival of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Security remains a critical determinant of tourism development and business survival. In Nigeria, challenges such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and civil unrest negatively affect tourist arrivals, occupancy rates, revenue generation, and investment flows (Ayeni,

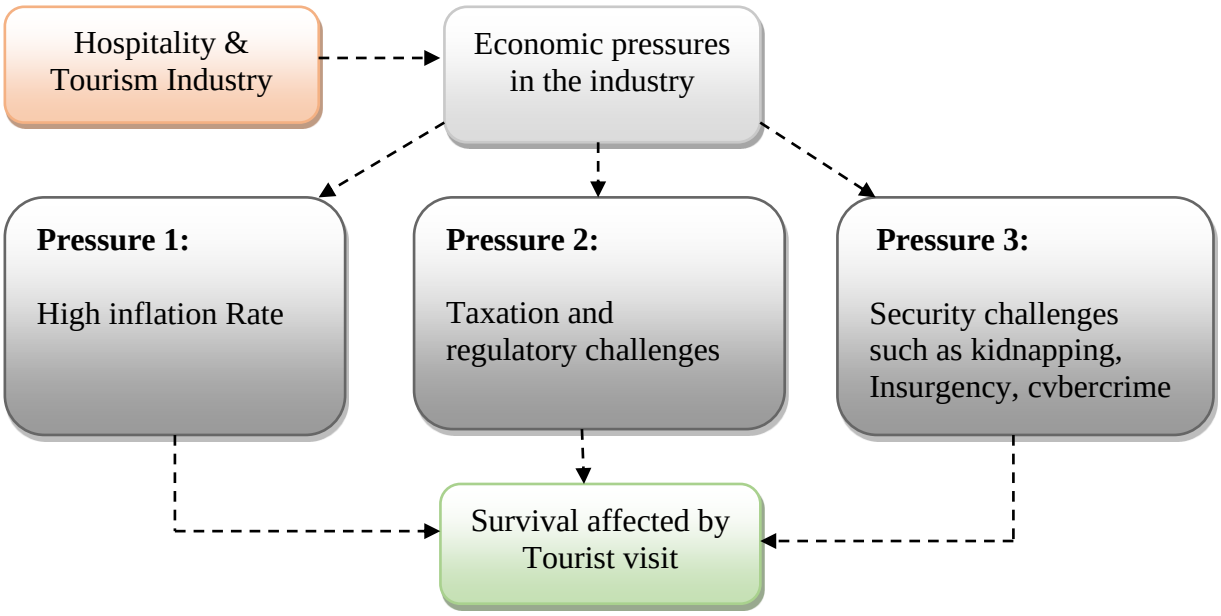
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2025; Achumba et al., 2023). Persistent insecurity creates perceptions of danger that discourage domestic and international visitors and increase operational costs for hospitality establishments (Jasinskas, 2020). Consequently, effective collaboration among tourism operators, security agencies, and government institutions is essential for ensuring safety, restoring investor confidence, and promoting sustainable tourism growth.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies support the relationship between economic conditions and hospitality industry performance. Wosu and Ogan (2022) found that hospitality tourism in Rivers State contributes significantly to job creation, revenue generation, and socio-economic development. Ojukwu (2023) reported that economic pressure significantly affects the value systems and behaviour of Nigerian youths. Adesina et al. (2022) revealed that multiple taxation adversely affects the productivity and pricing decisions of tourism and hospitality firms in Ogun State, recommending tax reforms to enhance performance. Similarly, Edwin et al. (2019) found that security conditions influence hotel patronage and guest loyalty in Owerri, while inadequate security measures and poor collaboration among hotels undermine industry performance. These studies collectively demonstrate that economic pressure, taxation, and security challenges significantly influence the survival and sustainability of hospitality and tourism businesses.

Fig1: Researcher's conceptual model on economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry



Methodology

The survey on the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry covered six firms from the hospitality and Tourism industry which are: Echelon Heights Hotel, Claridon Hotels and Resorts, The Addrex Hotel and Suites, Port Harcour Polo and Racing Ground, Oak Park Gardens, and Friends Beach House with a population 142, covering administrative, operational, and contract staff. A sample size of 105, which was

determined using the Taro Yamane sampling formula. A descriptive research design was used to explore the data. The random sampling method was used to select the sample for the study. An EPSHTI-structured questionnaire was adopted to elicit relevant information for the study. With the administered questionnaire, 96 copies were retrieved with a response rate of 91 percent. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and multicollinearity tests to assess the adequacy of the data, while multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. The validity of the research instrument on economic pressure was obtained through the use of content and face validity, while Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to ascertain the reliability. For instance, the instrument was found reliable and fit for the collection of data with the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.745 for high inflation, 0.856 for taxation and regulatory challenges, 0,758 for security concerns, and 0.845 for survival of the hospitality and tourism industry. The hypotheses were tested with the use of multiple regression analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

The study examined the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt using four constructs: high inflation, taxation and regulatory challenges, security challenges, and industry survival.

High Inflation: Respondents agreed that inflation threatens industry survival through rising operational costs, reduced consumer demand, declining employee purchasing power, increased wage demands, staff shortages, and vulnerability to economic shocks. Mean scores ranged from 3.68 to 3.92, while standard deviations were below 1.0, indicating positive responses and moderate variability.

Taxation and Regulatory Challenges: Mean values ranged from 3.46 to 3.71, showing agreement that multiple taxation, higher VAT rates, weak regulatory enforcement, and inadequate industry data negatively affect business performance. Standard deviations below 1.0 indicate adequate data dispersion and consistency of responses.

Security Challenges: Respondents agreed that kidnapping, regional instability, fear of insecurity, and rising security expenses threaten hospitality operations. Mean scores ranged from 3.45 to 3.87, with standard deviations below 1.0, indicating moderate variability and positive responses.

Survival of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry: High mean scores of 4.45 to 4.83 indicate strong agreement that digital technology adoption, market diversification, staff training, and sustainable tourism practices enhance industry survival. Standard deviations below 1.0 suggest a high level of consensus among respondents.

Overall, the descriptive statistics show that respondents perceive economic pressure as a significant factor influencing the survival of hospitality and tourism businesses in Port Harcourt.

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The tolerance values for high inflation (.855), taxation and regulatory challenges (.757), and

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security challenges (.747) exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.1, while VIF values ranged from 1.486 to 1.531, well below the maximum limit of 5. These results confirm the absence of multicollinearity among the predictor variables.

Test of Hypotheses

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry.

The model produced R = .826**,** R^2 = .682, and Adjusted R^2 = .648, indicating a strong relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. The results show that high inflation, taxation and regulatory challenges, and security challenges jointly explained 68.2% of the variation in industry survival, while 31.8% was attributable to other factors.

The ANOVA result (F = 171.461, $p < .05$) confirmed that the model was statistically significant. Regression coefficients further revealed that:

i. High Inflation ($\beta = .652$, $p < .05$)
ii. Taxation and Regulatory Challenges ($\beta = .633$, $p < .05$)
iii. Security Challenges ($\beta = .626$, $p < .05$).

See tables 4 to 6 on these results:

Table 4

Multiple regression results on the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.826[a]	.682	.648	.354

a. Predictors: (Constant), HI, TRC, SC
b. Dependent Variable: SPT
Source: SPSS output, 2026

Table 5

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	183.960	3	22.263	171.461	.000[b]
	Residual	73.993	93	5.16		
	Total	257.953	96			

a. Dependent Variable: SPT

b. Predictors: (Constant), HI, TRC, SC

Source: SPSS output, 2026

Table 6

Coefficients on the effect of economic pressure on the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.854	.247		-3.264	.001
	HI	.667	.047	.652	18.646	.000
	TRC	.578	.065	.633	13.256	.004
	SC	.637	.073	.626	9.726	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SPT

Source: SPSS output, 2026.

Hence, all the independent variables studied significantly influenced the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry. Consequently, all three null hypotheses were rejected, and the alternative hypotheses accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that high inflation significantly affects the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry **(**$\beta = .652$, $p < .05$**)**. This supports Wong et al. (2023), who argued that inflation raises operating costs while reducing consumer spending. In Port Harcourt, inflation has increased labour costs, reduced customer demand, and weakened profitability, forcing some businesses to downsize or scale back operations.

The study also found that taxation and regulatory challenges significantly affect industry survival **(**$\beta = .633$, $p < .05$**)**. Consistent with Agbor (2023), respondents indicated that multiple taxation, rising VAT rates, weak regulatory structures, and inadequate industry data increase operational costs and reduce profitability. The findings suggest the need for a harmonized taxation system to enhance business sustainability.

Finally, security challenges significantly affect the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry **(**$\beta = .626$, $p < .05$**)**. This aligns with Ayeni (2025), who noted that insecurity reduces tourist arrivals, occupancy rates, and revenue. Respondents agreed that kidnapping, instability, fear of violence, and rising security expenditures discourage tourism activities and investment, thereby threatening the growth and sustainability of the industry.

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Conclusion

The economic diversification and job creation are driven by hospitality and tourism, where investment in tourism fosters the development of hotels, transportation networks, and amenities. The study reviewed how high inflation, taxation and regulatory challenges, and security challenges act as economic pressure against the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Port Harcourt. Hence, the hospitality and tourism industry is crucial, and it serves as a key driver for economic diversification, job creation, and infrastructural development. The state has leveraged its cultural heritage, coastal beauty, and urban centers, and the sector generates significant revenue, reduces poverty, and enhances the state's global image. As a major alternative to the oil sector, hospitality provides a stable income source through hotel taxes, recreational fees, and tourism services. The sector is a high-volume employer, offering jobs to youth, women, and various skill levels in hotels, restaurants, tourism agencies, and event management. Tourism necessitates improved infrastructure, such as better roads, security, and amenities, which benefit both visitors and local communities. It showcases the state's cultural identity through festivals, arts, and traditions, promoting appreciation for local heritage.

Recommendations

Based on findings the following are recommended:

1. The government should commit to raising the interest rate to curb inflation and offer financial grants to help hospitality businesses manage rising operational expenses.
2. The government continuously addresses the hospitality and tourism challenges by streamlining tax structures to reduce multiple taxation, offering targeted tax incentives, and simplifying regulations for SMEs.
3. The government should commit to addressing insecurity in tourism by strengthening lay enforcement, engaging communities, and enforcing strict regulatory standards for security infrastructure

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