

Evaluating the Effects of Landscape Elements Quality on User Preferences in Selected Tourist Centers in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract Assessing the quality of landscape elements and their integration into the natural environment is crucial for understanding their aesthetic and functional influences on visitor experiences in tourist centers. This study evaluate the quality of landscape elements and their influence on user preferences at selected tourist centers in Southwest Nigeria, with the ultimate goal of proposing design considerations for a well-standard landscape hotel. Primary and secondary data were used in this study. Relevant information were obtained from the staff of the tourist center and visitors. The sample size was obtained from frequently used tourist center hotels. Six tourist hotels were purposively selected, one from each state in Southwest Nigeria. The selected hotels combined hotel facilities and landscape features. The total number of visitors to the tourist center hotel was 2,520 from which 13.7% representing 345 respondents were selected using the accidental sampling technique for questionnaire administration. Descriptive statistics that comprised frequency count, mean, likers scale, and index were used to examine users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements; and how the quality of landscape elements influences users' preferences. The results indicated that 16 variables out of 21 identified had indices that are above the average of 4.21 UPQLEI (Users' Perceptions of the Quality of Landscape Element Indices). These encompass building colour, quality of lighting, accessibility features, quality of pathways and walkways, driveways, vegetation, compost bins, statues and sculptures, and building form. They had UPQLEI values of 3.88, 3.87, 3.85, 3.81, 3.80, 3.77, 3.74, 3.74, 3.72, and 3.71, respectively. The study concluded that the effects of landscape element quality on user preferences are very high. The study recommended that well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing vegetation are crucial for attracting tourists and enhancing their overall experience. Overall, the study emphasizes the critical role of landscape elements in shaping user preferences for tourist destinations.

Keywords: Landscape Elements, Landscape Quality, User Preferences, Tourist Centers, Nigeria

I. Introduction

The connection between natural attractions such as vegetation, rocks, waterfalls, architectural design, and tourism creates a compelling landscape for study and innovation. As [1] points out, landscapes represent the earth's surface and its diverse features, while [2] emphasize that landscapes appeal to the human sense of beauty. Similarly, [3] describes

landscapes as including natural elements like mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys, which give each region its distinctive character. In Nigeria, these natural features are widespread, and maintaining their quality is crucial for preserving their beauty and ensuring the functionality of outdoor spaces. Effective landscape management supports conservation, recreation, horticultural excellence, and tourism [4]. Landscape elements are vital components of tourist destinations, including both natural features like vegetation and water bodies, and

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man-made structures such as pathways, seating, and lighting. The quality of these elements directly influences the aesthetic appeal, functionality, and overall user experience [5, 6]. Well-maintained landscapes, featuring lush greenery, accessible water features, and thoughtfully designed seating, contribute to visitor satisfaction and preference for tourist destinations [7]. High-quality landscape elements not only enhance the attractiveness of a location but also provide comfort, relaxation, and a strong sense of place for visitors [8].

Tourism, recognized globally as a major growth sector, plays a key role in the economic development of many countries, including Nigeria, where it fosters cultural exchange and generates revenue [9]; Defined as activities pursued outside one's usual environment, tourism encompasses various social, cultural, and economic phenomena [10]. A critical factor influencing tourism is the landscape, which directly impacts visitor experiences. Well-designed landscapes with features like vegetation, water bodies, pathways, and seating enhance the aesthetic appeal and functionality of tourist sites, thereby increasing user satisfaction [11].

Nigeria diverse landscapes, which feature waterfalls, mountains, natural vegetation, and rivers, position the country as a potential tourism hub. Kwara State, located in north-central Nigeria, is home to numerous natural attractions, including Owu Waterfall, a stunning destination that showcases the region's natural beauty. However, creating a sustainable and memorable tourism experience at Owu Waterfall requires careful consideration of the quality of landscape elements. Ensuring that these elements are well-maintained and thoughtfully

integrated into the environment is crucial for attracting and retaining visitors [12].

This study explored user perceptions of landscape element quality and their impact on visitor preferences at selected tourist centers in Southwest Nigeria. Understanding these perceptions is vital for creating a seamless connection between architectural design, natural surroundings, and the overall experience. As tourism becomes more integral to societal and economic development [13], understanding how users perceive the quality of landscape elements is essential [14]. These perceptions influence visitors' interactions with the environment and the cultural heritage of the site, shaping their overall experience. In particular, the users' perceptions regarding landscape element quality remain underexplored at Owu Waterfall in Kwara State. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how these perceptions affect the architecture, functionality, and sustainability of a proposed hotel near the waterfall. By fostering a harmonious relationship between nature, design, and human experience, this research will offer valuable insights for sustainable tourism development.

Tourism destinations globally rely not only on their main attractions but also on their surrounding landscapes to create a comprehensive visitor experience [15]. Well-crafted landscapes can influence a destination's perception, impact visitor satisfaction, and support the area's ecological well-being. Landscape elements are vital components that enhance the visual appeal, functionality, and overall experience of tourism spaces [16]. In tourism, landscapes are more than just scenic views or natural features; they are integral to a destination's identity and play a significant role in shaping the visitor experience. These

landscapes can encompass natural features like vegetation, rocks, water bodies, and mountains, as well as man-made elements such as pathways, seating areas, lighting, and architectural structures. Together, these elements establish a unique sense of place that attracts tourists, boosts their satisfaction, and encourages repeat visits [17].

Natural landscape elements comprise vegetation, which including trees, shrubs, flowers, and grass. These are crucial natural element in tourism landscapes. Abundant greenery not only enhances a destination's beauty but also improves air quality, reduces noise pollution, and provides shade and cooling effects, particularly in urban tourist centers. The type, arrangement, and upkeep of vegetation significantly influence how tourists perceive a location. For example, palm trees and exotic plants in tropical destinations evoke a sense of paradise, while forests and alpine vegetation in mountainous areas inspire awe and adventure [18, 19].

Water bodies such as rivers, lakes, waterfalls, fountains, and beaches are among the most popular tourist attractions. The soothing sound and sight of water create a calming effect, making these elements central to creating serene environments. Water bodies often become focal points in landscape design, attracting visitors for activities like swimming, boating, and fishing. Additionally, water elements contribute to the ecological balance, support wildlife, and enhance the visual appeal of a destination [20, 21]. The shape and contours of the land, including hills, mountains, valleys, and plains, are crucial in tourism landscapes, which is the topography and landforms [22, 23]. These natural formations contribute to a location's uniqueness [24, 25].

II. Materials and Methods

A. Study Location

The study was carried out at various selected tourist centers in south west Nigeria which include: Oyo, Osun Ondo, Lagos, Ekiti, and Ogun, state. Figure 1 below shows the location map of South Western Nigeria.

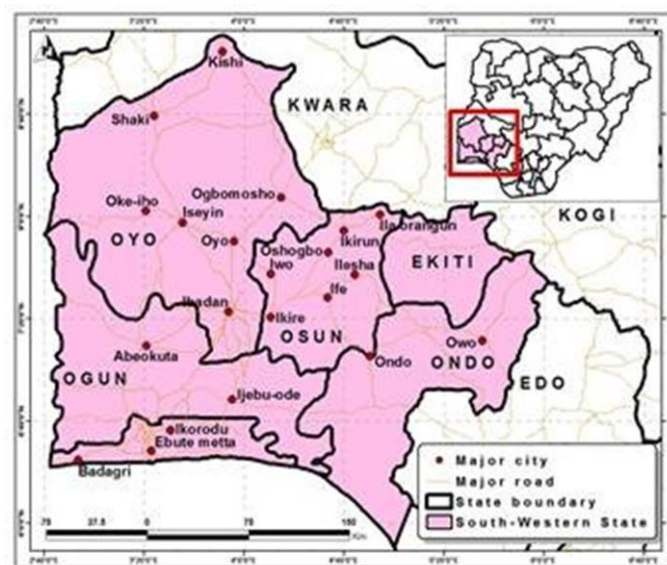


Figure 1: Location Map of South Western Nigeria
Source: Southwest Topographical Map-HD GIS Mapping -Geoinfotech

B. Data Collection and Analysis

i. Sample frame

The sampling frame adopted comprises of all tourist center that possess the natural attraction, such as waterfall, beach, rocks, gardens and rivers in south-west geopolitical and with presence of a hotel. Table 1 shows various tourist centers in south west geopolitical zones in Nigeria. There are thirty nine (39) identified tourist center that form the population of the sample. This is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Table Shows Various Tourist Centers in South West Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria

/N	STATES	NAME OF TOURIST CENTER	TOTAL NUMBER
1	EKITI	Ikogosi Warm Springs Arinta Waterfall Esa Cave Erin Ayonigba Sacred Groove Olosunta Hill Ewi's Palace	6
2	OSUN	Erin Ijesha Waterfall Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove Olumirin Waterfall Erinle Natural Spring Olumirin Waterfall Odo Owa Cave and Waterfall	6
3	OGUN	Olumo Rock Oke-Ado Mountain Ogun State Cultural Center Omo Forest Reserve Ogun River	5
4	OYO	Agodi Gardens Ado-Awaye Suspended Lake Cocoa House Okeho-Igboho Waterfalls Ogbomoso Wildlife Park Alaafin of Oyo's Palace Old Oyo National Park Igbo-Ora	8
5	ONDO	Idanre Hills Igbokoda Waterfront Owo Museum of Antiquities Ebomi Lake Igbo Olodumare Igbara-Oke Hills African Heritage Research Library and Cultural Center	7
6	LAGOS	Eredo Hills Whispering Palms Resort Lekki Conservation Center National Museum Lagos Yemoji Natural Swimming Pool Omu Resort Epe Mangroves	7

C. Sample Size

The sample size was obtained using purpose built tourist center hotels that are frequently used for events, picnic, meetings and other social gathering purposes. This is so because it will be easier to get respondents to gather information. Six tourist hotels are purposively selected from each of the states because they have hotel facilities and landscape features to be assessed.

Total number of visitors to the tourist center hotel is 2,520. 13.7% represent the sample size to give about 345, which represent questionnaires to be administered to the visitors for interview and questionnaire administration purpose. Table 2 shows the purposively selected tourist centers in southwest Nigeria used for the study and their average number of user's per week.

Table 2: Purposively Selected Tourist Centers in Southwest Nigeria

S/N	State	Purposed Selected Hotel For The Study	Average Number of user's Per Week	13.7% Sample Size For user's
1	EKITI	Ikogosi Warm Springs Resort	462	63
2	OSUN	Zenababs half-moon resort hotel	173	24
3	OGUN	Green Legacy resort, Abeokuta	560	77
4	OYO	Ilaji hotel and resort center	442	60
5	LAGOS	Lekki beach resort	645	88
6	ONDO	Goshen trust hotel	238	33
TOTAL	6	6	2520	345

To determine the sample size for this study, the Slovin's formula was used. The total population size is 2,520. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(a)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where: n = sample size

N = Sample frame

A = Level of precision (constant ranging from 0.01 to 0.05)

A confidence level of 99% is expected to be achieved by using a = 0.05

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{2520}{1+2520(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 345$$

The minimum sample size used for this study as obtained by Slovin's formula is 345. This represents 13.7% of the total population for the study. A total set of 345 questionnaires was distributed to tourists in the study area, randomly selected to ensure a representative sample. Table 3.0 shows the research log frame for each of the objectives. These include: the set of data required, source of data and method of data analysis.

Table 3.0: Research Log Frame (Objectives)

S/N	Objectives	Set of data required	Type of source	Method of Data Analysis
1	Evaluate the users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in the study areas.	Data on perception of users, on environmental sustainability, aesthetic appeal, cleanliness of landscape features and overall satisfaction of the features among others, which are categorized into strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree.	Primary data: survey which include questionnaire	Descriptive statistics tool such as likert scale, charts.
2	Analyse how the quality of landscape elements influences users' preferences in the study areas.	Visitor satisfaction with landscape quality, Perceived importance of landscape elements, Visitor preference for specific landscape features, Impact of landscape quality on visit decision,	Primary data: survey which include questionnaires.	Descriptive statistics tool such as likert scale, charts.

III. Results and Discussion

A. Users' Perceptions of the Quality of Landscape Elements in the Study Areas

Users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements index was carried out to assess landscape elements quality in the study area. It is believed that the level or grade of acceptability or adequacy of these landscape elements would indicate the degree of goodness and state of those variables (landscape elements). The qualities in the landscape elements were based on numerical scale. The score per variables were ranged from 1 to 5 on the quality index. It was apparent from the scores that were obtained from the study, which of the study area have achieved on the quality index, based on the level of adequacy or level of acceptability. Table 4 shows the results of users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in Ekiti State.

These landscape elements had UPQLEI value that is above the average of 3.59. These were considered as one of the major elements that may have far-reaching effects on the user preferences in this area. Others require considerable improvement for quality development. Urgent attention is required on the remodelling of these landscape elements. Table 4 shows the results of users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in Osun State. The study revealed that among all the factors, quality of lighting, quality of vegetation (trees, shrubs, lawns), statues and sculptures, among others these landscape elements had UPQLEI value that were above the average of 3.73. These were considered as one of the major elements that may have far-reaching effects on the user preferences in this area. Urgent attention is required on the remodelling of these landscape elements that are below the average for optimum users' choice.

The results of users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in Ogun State revealed that among all the factors, Paving stones, Dust bin, Gardens, Building colour, among others had UPQLEI values that were above the average of 3.43. These were considered as one of the major elements that may have far-reaching effects on the user preferences in this area. Others note included, which are below the average require considerable improvement for quality development. Urgent attention is required on the remodelling of these landscape elements that are below the average for optimum users' choice. Presented in Table 4 were the perceived level of acceptability and adequacy of landscape elements in Oyo State. The average mean on perceived level of adequacy of the quality of landscape elements in this area was 3.59 UPQLEI. This implied that the landscape elements quality in the study area were in good situation and qualities of available conveniences and expediencies are upright as the index of 3.59 UPQLEI was close to very good. From Table 4, it can be observed that 11 elements out of 21 identified had UPQLEI above 3.59. These were measured as acceptable and adequate by the users as the major physical landscape elements influencing users' perceptions in a positive ways. The results of perceived level of acceptability and adequacy of landscape elements in Lagos State as illustrated in Table 4, shows the average mean on perceived level of adequacy of the quality of landscape elements in this area was 3.13 UPQLEI. This implied that the landscape elements quality in the study area were in good situation and qualities of available conveniences and expediencies are upright as the index of 3.13 UPQLEI was close to good. From Table 4, it can be observed that 11 elements out of 21 identified had UPQLEI above 3.13. These were measured as acceptable and adequate by the

users as the major physical landscape elements influencing users' perceptions in a positive ways. This shows that users' perception of overall landscape elements characteristics in this area is on positive side. Although this index is low compared to other area, these variables are important in helping to determined users preferences. Table 4 also shows the results of users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in Ondo State. The study revealed that among all the factors, eleven elements had UPQLEI that is above 3.98. These landscape elements had UPQLEI value that is above the average of 3.98. These were considered as the major elements that may have far-reaching effects on the user preferences in this area. Others require considerable improvement for quality development. Urgent attention is required on the remodelling of these landscape elements.

Table 5 presented the aggregate of users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in all the study areas. The result indicated that 16 variables out of 21 identified had Users' Perceptions of the Quality of Landscape Elements indices (UPQLEI) that is above the average of 4.21. These comprise: building colour, quality of lighting, accessibility features, quality of pathways and walkways, driveways, quality of vegetation (trees, shrubs, lawns), compost bin, statues and sculptures, building form, wildlife habitats, outdoor furniture, retailing wall, building texture, quality of seating areas, recreational spaces and gardens. They have UPQLEI value of 3.88, 3.87, 3.85, 3.81, 3.80, 3.77, 3.74, 3.74, 3.72, 3.71, 3.71, 3.67, 3.67, 3.62, 3.62 and 3.61 respectively. On the other hand, factors with UPQLEI below the average included: Quality of signage and information boards, Building fence and gate, Leisure gardening, Quality of water features (ponds,

Table 4: Users' Perceptions of the Quality of Landscape Elements in Each State

S/N	Landscape Element	Ekiti State		Osun State		Ogun State		Oyo State		Lagos State		Ondo State	
		TWV	TWV /n	TWV	TWV /n	TWV	TW V/n	TWV	TWV /n	TWV	TWV /n	139	4.63
1	Building form	242	4.17	68	3.59	271	3.87	220	4.15	307	3.53	138	4.60
2	Building fence and gate	242	4.17	59	3.11	270	3.86	219	4.13	306	3.52	128	4.27
3	Building texture	233	4.02	77	4.05	262	3.74	211	3.98	297	3.41	126	4.20
4	Quality of water features (ponds, fountains, streams)	233	4.02	69	3.63	256	3.66	211	3.98	298	3.43	126	4.20
5	Building colour	232	4.00	71	3.74	255	3.64	210	3.96	296	3.40	125	4.17
6	Quality of seating areas	232	4.00	71	3.74	251	3.59	210	3.96	297	3.41	125	4.17
7	Paving stones	232	4.00	73	3.84	250	3.57	209	3.94	298	3.43	124	4.13
8	Dust bin	231	3.98	45	2.37	249	3.56	208	3.92	295	3.39	123	4.10
9	Quality of signage and information boards	231	3.98	63	3.32	247	3.53	207	3.91	288	3.31	121	4.03
10	Quality of vegetation (trees, shrubs, lawns)	216	3.72	82	4.32	246	3.51	194	3.66	280	3.22	120	4.00
11	Gardens	216	3.72	76	4.00	242	3.46	193	3.64	281	3.23	118	3.93
12	Wildlife habitats	206	3.55	59	3.11	242	3.46	184	3.47	271	3.12	117	3.90
13	Quality of pathways and walkways	206	3.55	79	4.16	239	3.41	183	3.45	270	3.10	116	3.87
14	Outdoor furniture	203	3.50	76	4.00	236	3.37	181	3.42	267	3.07	115	3.83
15	Leisure gardening	203	3.50	75	3.95	234	3.34	180	3.40	268	3.08	114	3.80
16	Statues and sculptures	193	3.33	79	4.16	231	3.30	171	3.23	257	2.95	109	3.63
17	Accessibility features	193	3.33	75	3.95	229	3.27	170	3.21	258	2.97	108	3.60
18	Retailing wall	157	2.71	75	3.95	222	3.17	135	2.55	221	2.54	107	3.57
19	Quality of lighting	157	2.71	82	4.32	211	3.01	135	2.55	222	2.55	106	3.53
20	Driveways	155	2.67	62	3.26	203	2.90	134	2.53	222	2.55	102	3.40
21	Recreational Spaces	155	2.67	74	3.89	197	2.81	133	2.51	220	2.53		83.56
	Average		75.3/21		78.41/21		72.0/21		75.3/21		65.74/21		3.98
			3.59		3.73		3.43		3.59		3.13	139	4.63

fountains, streams) and Paving stones with UPQLEI values of 3.59, 3.52, 3.44, 3.43 and 2.98 respectively. The study revealed that amid all the factors, UPQLEI value of Paving stones value was far below the average UPQLEI of 3.61, which was consider as one of the factors that require considerable improvement in all the study area. It may be inferred that information gathered will provide reliable data for landscape

elements quality development. To summarize the users' perception of the quality of landscape elements in all the study areas as shown in Table 4, It revealed that Ondo state had the highest value of perception of the landscape elements quality index at 3.98 UPQLEI closely followed by Osun state having 3.73, while Ekiti, Oyo and Ogun state were having 3.59, 3.59 and 3.43 respectively. Lagos state had the least value at

Table 5: Aggregate of Users' Perceptions of the Quality of Landscape Elements in all the Study Areas

		Index (UPQLEI)					Total (Frequency) (n)	TWV	TWV/n
Landscape Element	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Neutral (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)				
1 Building colour	0	0	100	155	62	317		1230	3.88
2 Quality of lighting	0	0	120	119	78	317		1226	3.87
3 Accessibility features	0	0	105	156	56	317		1219	3.85
4 Quality of pathways and walkways	5	14	72	170	56	317		1209	3.81
5 Driveways	2	1	110	150	54	317		1204	3.80
6 Quality of vegetation (trees, shrubs, lawns)	4	7	116	120	70	317		1196	3.77
7 Compost bin	0	4	122	142	49	317		1187	3.74
8 Statues and sculptures	0	0	133	132	52	317		1187	3.74
9 Building form	1	0	123	156	37	317		1179	3.72
10 Wildlife habitats	5	2	127	126	57	317		1179	3.71
11 Outdoor furniture	0	0	133	142	42	317		1177	3.71
12 Retailing wall	2	12	144	90	69	317		1163	3.67
13 Building texture	0	0	145	132	40	317		1163	3.67
14 Quality of seating areas	3	0	145	135	34	317		1148	3.62
15 Recreational Spaces	3	0	145	135	34	317		1148	3.62
16 Gardens	5	14	113	154	31	317		1143	3.61
17 Quality of signage and information boards	2	25	110	145	35	317		1137	3.59
18 Building fence and gate	0	45	105	123	44	317		1117	3.52
19 Leisure gardening	34	5	112	121	45	317		1089	3.44
20 Quality of water features (ponds, fountains, streams)	10	25	150	82	50	317		1088	3.43
21 Paving stones	55	80	56	67	59	317		946	2.98
Average								76.75/21	3.61

3.13. This shows that based on the users' perception on quality of landscape elements, Ondo state had better organised and quality landscape elements, which were reflected with the strong profile exhibited. Based on the aggregate average of 3.92 UPQLEI, the study

area exhibited good level of perception of landscape elements.

B. Influence of Landscape Quality on Visitor Preferences

Table 6 revealed the respondents' responses to the influence of landscape quality

Table 6: Influence of Landscape Quality on Visitor Preferences Index (ILQUPI)

S/N	Landscape Element	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total (Frequency) (n)	TWV	TWV /n
1	The integration of natural elements (e.g., trees, water features) enhances my enjoyment	-	-	-	-	317	317	1585	5.00
2	Environmental sustainability practices within the landscape affect my perception of the tourist centre.	-	-	-	-	317	317	1585	5.00
3	Spaces for sport and recreation within the landscape are important for my visit.	-	-	-	99	218	317	1486	4.69
4	Leisure gardening areas within the tourist centre are appealing to me	5	3	13	45	251	317	1485	4.68
5	Clear and informative signage improves my experience at the tourist centre	2	1	3	105	206	317	1463	4.62
6	Interactive landscape features (e.g., touchable plants, interactive water features) enhance my experience	-	-	-	124	193	317	1461	4.61
7	Proper lighting in the landscape areas affects my enjoyment of the space	3	-	12	99	203	317	1450	4.57
8	Comfortable and well-placed seating areas are important to my satisfaction	-	-	22	108	187	317	1433	4.52
9	The cleanliness and overall maintenance of the landscape elements are critical to my decision to return	-	-	-	154	163	317	1431	4.51
10	Job creation through landscape maintenance positively influences my perception of the tourist centre	-	-	-	154	163	317	1431	4.51
11	Well-maintained vegetation enhances my overall experience.	1	5	-	145	166	317	1421	4.48
12	Attractive water features (ponds, fountains, streams) make a significant difference in my visit	6	2	12	110	187	317	1421	4.48
13	I would recommend the tourist centre(s) I visited to others based on the quality of landscape elements.	-	2	12	135	168	317	1420	4.48
14	Educational features within the landscape (e.g., information about plants) enhance my visit.	-	12	55	76	174	317	1363	4.30
15	The quality of landscape elements influences my decision to visit a tourist centre.	3	17	8	145	144	317	1361	4.29
16	The aesthetic appeal of the landscape plays a crucial role in my overall experience	3	12	45	98	159	317	1349	4.26
17	The overall design of the landscape affects my level of satisfaction with the tourist centre	12	22	65	45	173	317	1296	4.09
	Average								77.10 /17 4.54

on visitor preferences. The results reveal that several landscape elements significantly influenced visitors' decisions to recommend a tourist destination. Among these elements, vegetation, water features, seating areas, proper lighting, and cleanliness emerged as particularly influential. Notably, 78 respondents considered the quality of vegetation as important or very important, highlighting the desire for well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing green spaces. This shows the significance of lush and vibrant greenery in creating attractive and welcoming tourist destinations. Additionally, water features, seating areas, proper lighting, and cleanliness were deemed highly important. These findings reveal the crucial role of these elements in enhancing the overall visitor experience and increasing the likelihood of positive recommendations. Furthermore, the availability of shade and clear signage were identified as influential factors in shaping visitor preferences. These elements contribute to the comfort and convenience of visitors, making tourist destinations more enjoyable and memorable. In summary, these results show the importance of prioritizing landscape quality in tourist destinations.

i. Influence of the quality of landscape elements on users' preferences

Table 7 presented the respondents' responses to the influence of the quality of landscape elements on users' preferences. The results show that the quality of vegetation, water features, pathways, seating, and sanitation and maintenance significantly influenced users' preferences for visiting a tourist destination. Among these elements, the quality the landscape element influences my visual behavior, The quality the landscape element influences my

social life, The quality the aesthetics influences preference for visiting a tourist centre, the quality of seating areas influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre, the quality of signage and information boards influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre., the quality of water features (ponds, fountains, streams) influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre, were considered strongly or moderately influential with Influence of the Quality of Landscape Elements on Users' Preferences Index (IQLEUPI) value of 5.00, 4.85, 4.73, 4.71, 4.68, 4.66 respectively.

This reveals that well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing vegetation plays a crucial role in attracting tourists and enhancing their overall experience. Water features and pathways followed closely, deeming them as significant influences. This shows the importance of incorporating water bodies and well-designed pathways to create visually appealing and functional spaces within tourist destinations. Seating and sanitation and maintenance also garnered considerable attention. This reveals the need for providing comfortable and clean seating options and maintaining high standards of sanitation and maintenance to ensure a pleasant visitor experience. Overall, the findings from this study emphasize the critical role of landscape elements in shaping users' preferences for tourist destinations.

Table 7: Influence of the Quality of Landscape Elements on Users' Preferences Index

S/N	Landscape Element	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total (Frequency) (n)	TWV	TWV/n
1	The quality the landscape element influences my visual behaviour.	-		-	-	317	317	1585	5.00
2	The quality the landscape element influences my social life.	-	-	23	-	294	317	1539	4.85
3	The quality the aesthetics influences preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	3	32	12	270	317	1500	4.73
4	The quality of seating areas influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	5	-	76	236	317	1494	4.71
5	The quality of signage and information boards influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	2	12	6	45	252	317	1484	4.68
6	The quality of water features (ponds, fountains, streams) influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	-	15	78	224	317	1477	4.66
7	The quality of pathways and walkways influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	-	-	132	185	317	1453	4.58
8	The quality of lighting influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	-	-	132	185	317	1453	4.58
9	The cleanliness and maintenance of landscape elements influence my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	-	-	145	172	317	1440	4.54
10	The quality the landscape element influences my happiness.	1	8	45	65	198	317	1402	4.42
11	The quality of vegetation (trees, shrubs, lawns) influences my preference for visiting a tourist centre.	-	-	65	67	185	317	1388	4.38
	Average								51.15/11 4.65

C. Finding from Selected Case Studies (Existing Similar Projects)

i. Case study one

Name: Ilaji Hotel
 Location: Off Ibadan-Iwo Road, Akanran, Ibadan
 Developer: Chief Dotun Sanusi.
 Owner: Chief Dotun Sanusi
 No of rooms: 100
 Commissioned in the year: 2016

a. Brief description

Ilaji Hotel is in the tranquil outskirts of Ibadan, Nigeria, offers a serene and luxurious retreat surrounded by beautifully designed landscape elements that enhance the experience of relaxation and sporting excellence. The entrance exudes natural beauty, with carefully integrated landscape features such as lush greenery and well-maintained gardens that create a peaceful atmosphere away from the busy city life. The accommodations, ranging from elegantly designed hotel rooms to charming chalets, are thoughtfully crafted to serve as tranquil sanctuaries. Each space offers guests an opportunity to relax and rejuvenate in a harmonious setting, surrounded by nature's elements.

Dining at Ilaji Hotel is a treat for the senses, with restaurants offering both local and international cuisines. The landscape design enhances the dining experience, with outdoor seating areas surrounded by nature, allowing guests to savor their meals while immersed in the tranquility of the gardens. The bars, too, provide a vibrant setting, with the presence of natural elements creating an inviting and refreshing atmosphere. Incorporating diverse landscape elements throughout the resort, Ilaji Hotel offers a blend of relaxation, recreation,

and rejuvenation, making it a destination for both leisure seekers and sports lovers alike.

b. Landscape Element provided

1. Lush Landscaping: The resort is surrounded by lush greenery, including well-manicured gardens, trees, and plants. The abundance of natural elements creates a soothing and refreshing atmosphere.
2. Natural Light: The architecture of the resort maximizes the use of natural light, allowing it to flood into the interior spaces. Large windows, skylights, and open designs help to create a bright and inviting environment.
3. Outdoor Spaces: It provides ample outdoor spaces for guests to enjoy which include spacious terraces, verandas, or balconies that offer picturesque views of the surrounding landscape.
4. Water Features: The resort incorporates water features such as fountains, ponds, or waterfalls. These elements not only add a sense of tranquility but also provide soothing sounds and visual appeal.
5. Use of Natural Materials: Natural materials like wood, stone, and bamboo are often used in the construction and decor of the resort. These materials bring a sense of warmth, authenticity, and connection to the natural environment.

These landscape elements are thoughtfully integrated into the resort's design to create a harmonious and immersive experience, fostering a sense of well-being and relaxation. They aim to strengthen the connection between guests and their natural surroundings, encouraging a greater appreciation for the beauty of nature and its positive influence on health and happiness. Take the example of Ilaji Resort, where the fountain as shown in Plate 1 is more than just a

decorative feature. It embodies the essence of landscape design by incorporating water, a key natural element, into the built environment. Water features like this fountain mimic natural water bodies, such as streams or springs, known for their calming effects. The sound of flowing water serves as visually captivating and auditory focal point, reducing stress and promoting relaxation among guests. By integrating such water features across the resort, Ilaji enhances the overall well-being of its visitors, creating a deeper sense of tranquility and connection with nature.

Similarly, the swimming pool area at Ilaji Resort, depicted in Plate 5, exemplifies how landscape elements can seamlessly blend with the built environment. The pool area is surrounded by lush greenery, including native trees and shrubs, offering guests a peaceful oasis to unwind. The surrounding vegetation provides shade and privacy while also improving air quality and promoting biodiversity. This thoughtful

integration of greenery creates a balanced environment that enhances relaxation and rejuvenation, making the pool area a serene retreat for visitors. Additionally, Ilaji Resort's outdoor spaces, shown in Plate 2, offer a range of activities and experiences that encourage guests to engage with nature. By providing opportunities for exploration and physical activity, the resort promotes mental well-being and fosters a deeper appreciation for the natural world. Through its carefully designed landscape elements, Ilaji Resort not only offers luxury accommodations but also fosters a holistic sense of connection and renewal for its guests. Plate 1 shows the fountain within the Ilaji hotel, while Plate 2 shows the bird eye view of the hotel. Plate 3 shows the front view, while Plate 4 shows the side view of hotel. In addition to this Plate 5 displays the swimming pool area at the hotel while Plate 6: demonstrated the use of trees for the surrounding in hotel and Plate 7 shows the hotel floor plan.



Plate 1: Depicting the Fountain within the Ilaji Hotel

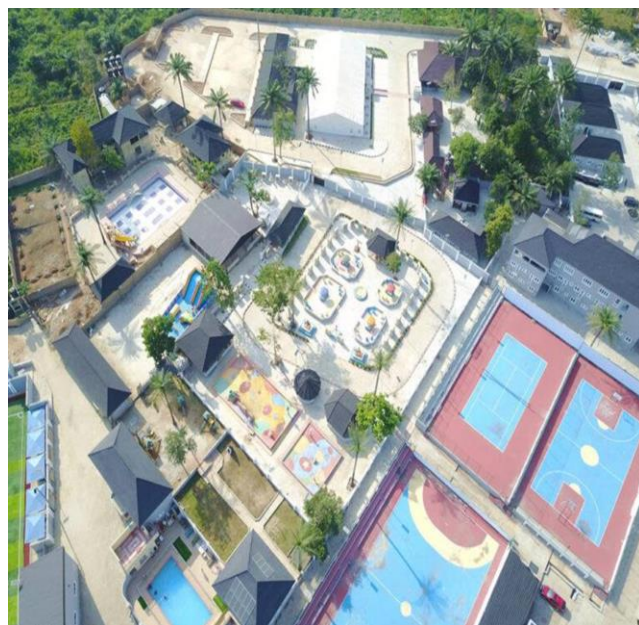


Plate 2: Bird View within the Ilaji Hotel.



Plate 3: Front View of Hotel



Plate 4: Side View of Hotel



Plate 5: Swimming Pool Area at Ilaji Hotel



Plate 6: Surrounding Trees of Ilaji Hotel

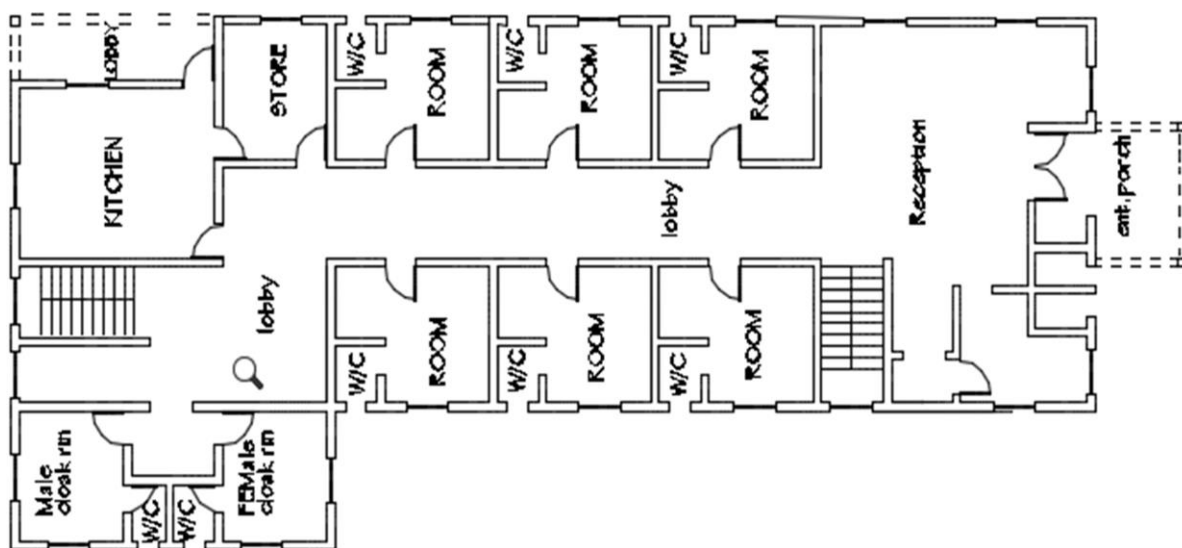


Plate 7: Showing the Hotel Floor Plan

c. Merits

1. Beautiful Natural Setting: The hotel is in a serene location on the outskirts of Ibadan, surrounded by lush greenery and a tranquil environment. The natural landscape provides a peaceful retreat for guests to relax and escape the hectic pace of city life.
2. World-Class Sports Facilities: A key feature of the resort is its top-tier sports amenities. It includes a football pitch, tennis and basketball courts, swimming pools, and a fully equipped gym. These landscape elements, combined with the surrounding greenery, make the resort an attractive destination for athletes, sports teams, and guests seeking physical activity.
3. Luxurious Accommodation: The hotel offers a luxurious experience with well-appointed rooms and charming chalets. The elegant surroundings, paired with comfortable living spaces and lush greenery, provide an inviting atmosphere for guests to relax and recharge.
4. Spa and Wellness Center: The hotel features a spa and wellness center that integrates natural elements such as calming landscape features, including gardens and water features, to enhance the relaxation experience. The treatments and therapies promote a sense of renewal and well-being, encouraging guests to unwind.

d. Demerits

1. Distance from City Center: While the resort's natural setting provides a peaceful atmosphere, its location far from the city center can be inconvenient. Guests may face longer travel times and higher transportation costs, especially if relying on public transport. The remoteness can

also limit access to urban amenities and attractions.

2. Limited Accessibility: The resort's remote location might pose accessibility challenges, especially for guests with mobility impairments or special needs. Insufficient access roads or infrastructure could make it harder for some guests to reach the resort comfortably. This limitation could deter certain visitors, affecting the diversity of the resort's clientele.

ii. Case study two

Name: La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort

Location: Ikegun Village, Ibeju-Lekki Lagos Nigeria

Developer: Otunba Wanle Akinboboye.

Owner: La Campagne Group

No of rooms: 152

Commissioned in the year: 2005

a. Brief description

La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort, located in Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria, is a beautiful beachfront retreat that offers guests a unique African-themed experience. The resort combines natural beauty with rich cultural heritage, featuring luxurious accommodations such as beachfront chalets and cabins that blend seamlessly with the surroundings. Guests can enjoy authentic African culture through traditional music, dance, art, and cuisine, as well as participate in various recreational activities, including beach volleyball, canoeing, and horseback riding. The resort also provides excellent dining options with a focus on Nigerian and African dishes, along with event facilities for special occasions. Overall, La Campagne Tropicana offers a perfect escape to

relax, experience African traditions, and appreciate the beauty of nature.

Various landscape elements to enhance the connection between guests and the natural environment in La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort:

1. **Abundant Greenery:** La Campagne Tropicana Beach hotel features lush gardens, tropical vegetation, and meticulously landscaped green spaces. Guests are greeted by vibrant flora, including palm trees, flowering bushes, and indigenous plants, creating a verdant atmosphere. The meandering pathways through the greenery encourage exploration and offer a serene, natural retreat.
2. **Natural Light:** The resort maximizes natural light with expansive windows, skylights, and open-air structures. Sunlight filters through the trees, casting intricate light and shadow patterns on floors and walls, connecting indoor and outdoor spaces and enhancing the sense of connection to the environment.
3. **Ocean Views:** Guests are treated to breath taking views of the ocean from various vantage points around the resort. Whether from balconies, dining areas, or beach strolls, the sweeping vistas of the sea provide a soothing and immersive experience.
4. **Outdoor Living Spaces:** Verandas, balconies, and seating areas are designed to allow guests to enjoy the fresh air and natural surroundings, creating a seamless connection with nature.
5. **Water Features:** The resort incorporates ponds, fountains, and small waterfalls, adding tranquility to the environment. The

soothing sounds of flowing water contribute to a peaceful atmosphere, enhancing the overall guest experience.

6. **Use of Natural Materials:** The resort's construction and decor utilize natural materials such as wood, stone, and bamboo, further blending the built environment with the natural landscape.
7. **Indigenous Plantings:** Native plants and flora are prominently featured, celebrating regional biodiversity and reinforcing a sense of place.

b. Facilities provided

1. **Accommodations:** Guests can choose from a variety of accommodations, including beachfront chalets and cabins, all well-appointed with modern amenities for convenience and comfort.
2. **Restaurant and Bar:** The resort offers a variety of local and international cuisines, allowing guests to enjoy flavorful meals amidst the resort's natural surroundings.
3. **Swimming Pool:** The pool area, surrounded by lush landscaping, provides a serene oasis for relaxation and recreation, with comfortable loungers, shaded cabanas, and plenty of space for unwinding.
4. **Beach Access:** The resort provides exclusive access to a pristine stretch of beach along the Atlantic Ocean, giving guests convenient access to the sand and water.
5. **Cultural Activities:** Guests can immerse themselves in African heritage through traditional performances, drumming sessions, storytelling, and dance lessons, enriching their cultural experience.
6. **Recreational Facilities:** The resort offers a range of outdoor activities, including

beach volleyball, horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, and nature walks, ensuring guests have plenty of ways to connect with the natural environment.

7. Event Spaces: The resort's event spaces, both indoor and outdoor, cater to weddings, corporate events, and social gatherings, with modern amenities and elegant settings.
8. Spa and Wellness Services: A range of spa treatments and therapies is available, providing guests with opportunities for relaxation and rejuvenation.
9. 24-Hour Security: The resort ensures guest safety with round-the-clock security measures.

c. Integration of Landscape Elements

The seamless integration of landscape elements, such as greenery, water features, and outdoor spaces, creates a calming environment. For example, the chalet design at La Campagne Tropicana blends naturally with the surrounding environment, incorporating abundant greenery and water elements like ponds. These natural features not only enhance visual appeal but also promote guest well-being, reducing stress and improving mood. In the pool area, the lush vegetation provides shade and privacy, creating a tranquil oasis for relaxation and social interaction. With features like a volleyball court and cabana, the resort encourages physical activity and leisure, promoting overall health and guest satisfaction by facilitating a deeper connection with nature. Plate 8 shows the side view of La Campagne chalet with lush of green areas, trees and water elements, and Plate 9 shows the aerial view of pool, and the Lush vegetation, while Plate 10: shows the volley ball court, and the cabana of La Campagne.



Plate 8: Side View of La Campagne Charlet with Lush of Green Areas, Trees and Water Elements



Plate 9: Aerial View of Pool, Lush Vegetation, of La Campagne



Plate 10: Shows the Volley Ball Court, Cabana

d. Merits

1. Beachfront Location: The resort's prime location along the beachfront offers guests stunning views and easy access to the shoreline, enhancing their overall experience.
2. Scenic Natural Beauty: Surrounded by picturesque landscapes and lush greenery, the resort offers a tranquil setting that allows guests to connect with nature and unwind.
3. Luxurious accommodation: Guests can enjoy upscale accommodations and amenities that ensure comfort and relaxation during their stay at the resort.
4. Recreational activities: The resort offers a wide range of recreational activities, catering to guests of all ages and interests, ensuring an engaging and enjoyable stay.
5. Cultural events and entertainment: With regular cultural events and entertainment options, guests can experience the vibrant Nigerian culture firsthand, adding excitement to their stay.

e. Demerits:

1. Distance from central Lagos: Despite its serene environment, the resort's distance from central Lagos may pose challenges for guests seeking convenience and accessibility to urban amenities.
2. Transportation challenges: Limited transportation options to and from the resort can inconvenience guests, especially those without private transportation, and addressing this issue could enhance the overall guest experience.

iii. Case study three

Name: Obasanjo Green Legacy Resort

Location: Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Presidential Boulevard, Oke-Mosan,

Beside NNPC Mega Station, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Developer: President Olusegun Obasanjo

Owner: President Olusegun Obasanjo

No of rooms: 152

a. Brief description

Obasanjo Green Legacy hotel in Abeokuta, Nigeria, offers a luxurious experience with well-appointed accommodations, modern amenities, and tranquil outdoor spaces. Situated within the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library complex, it combines comfort with cultural and historical attractions. The resort emphasizes landscape elements that foster a connection to nature:

1. Natural Lighting: Large windows and skylights brighten spaces.
2. Greenery: Lush plants and landscaped gardens enhance the environment.
3. Views of Nature: Rooms are designed to provide scenic views.
4. Water Features: Ponds and fountains create a calming atmosphere.
5. Natural Materials: Wood and stone add warmth and organic beauty.
6. Outdoor Spaces: Gardens, patios, and trails promote relaxation.
7. Nature-Inspired Art: Decor inspired by natural elements creates harmony.

The hotel also features a range of amenities, such as dining spaces, recreational facilities, spa services, and event venues. Its emphasis on natural surroundings, such as lush balconies and well-maintained gardens, creates a peaceful retreat, promoting relaxation, stress reduction, and overall well-being for guests.

Plate 11 shows the side view of Green legacy resort with its balcony overlooking the serene environment, it illustrates the use of flowering trees to welcome guests thereby enhancing the biophilic atmosphere. Plate 12 shows the approach side view of the Green legacy resort while



Plate 11: Side View of Green Legacy Resort with Balcony Overlooking the Environment, with Flowering Trees to Welcome Guest Enhancing Biophilic Atmosphere

Plate 13 shows the image of wild Lions in an enclosed zoo area, while Plate 14 illustrated the pool area. Plate 15 shows Green legacy resort hotel open courtyard and Plate 16 shows the Green legacy resort hotel floor plan.

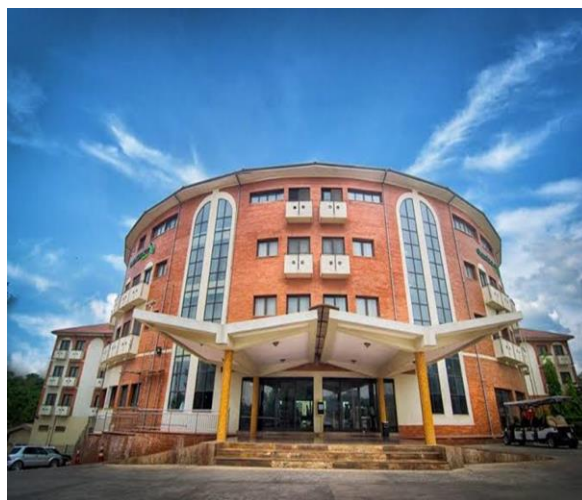


Plate 12: Approach Side View of Green Legacy Resort



Plate 13: Image of Lions in Zoo Enclosure



Plate 14: View Showing the Pool Area



Plate 15: Green Legacy Resort Hotel Open Courtyard

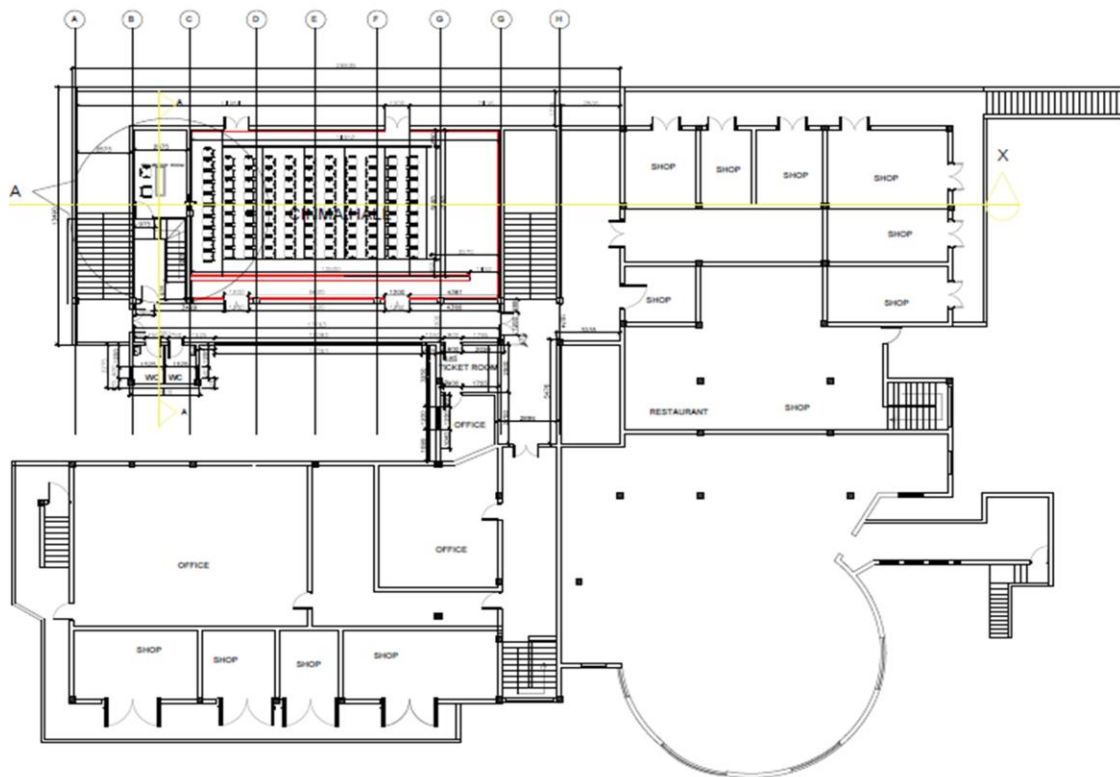


Plate 16: Green Legacy Resort Hotel Image Showing Floor Plan

b. Merits of Obasanjo green legacy resort

1. Serene Environment: The resort is set amidst scenic rolling hills, vibrant gardens, and tranquil streams, offering a peaceful retreat into nature.
2. Luxurious Accommodation: Rooms and suites are designed for comfort and style, featuring plush bedding, modern furnishings, and panoramic views of the landscape
3. Recreational Facilities: Guests have access to various leisure activities, including an infinity pool, tennis courts, and private hiking trails.
4. Convenient Location: Located in a serene countryside but close to city centers, the resort provides easy access to both cultural attractions and outdoor adventures.

c. Demerits:

1. Noise Levels: During events or peak periods, noise disturbances may occur depending on room location.
2. Accessibility: The resort's location within the complex may require additional transportation to access other attractions outside the resort.

IV. Conclusion

The study assessed users' perceptions of the quality of landscape elements in all the study areas. The result indicated that 16 variables out of 21 identified had Users' Perceptions of the Quality of Landscape Elements indices (UPQLEI) that is above the average. These comprise: building colour, quality of lighting, accessibility features, quality of pathways and walkways, driveways, quality of vegetation (trees, shrubs, lawns), compost bin, statues and sculptures, among others. The results show that several landscape elements significantly influenced user perceptions of the quality of

landscape elements. These elements include: vegetation, water features, pathways, seating areas, and sanitation and maintenance among others.

The results reveal that several landscape elements significantly influenced visitors' decisions to recommend a tourist destination. Among these elements, vegetation, water features, seating areas, proper lighting, and cleanliness emerged as particularly influential. Notably, respondents considered the quality of vegetation as important or very important, highlighting the desire for well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing green spaces. This shows the significance of lush and vibrant greenery in creating attractive and welcoming tourist destinations. Additionally, water features, seating areas, proper lighting, and cleanliness were deemed highly important. These findings reveal the crucial role of these elements in enhancing the overall visitor experience and increasing the likelihood of positive recommendations. Furthermore, the availability of shade and clear signage were identified as influential factors in shaping visitor preferences. These elements contribute to the comfort and convenience of visitors, making tourist destinations more enjoyable and memorable. In summary, these results show the importance of prioritizing landscape quality in tourist destinations.

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