
Guest editorial: What are the prospects for the post-pandemic Caribbean cruise industry?

Guest editorial

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It is evident from the many news reports that the pandemic has had an incalculable impact on global tourism and perhaps above all, cruise tourism in its primary and most profitable market, the Caribbean region. Given the on-going challenges, I am delighted to welcome back Theme Editor Ibrahim Ajagunna, his Co-Theme Editors Matthew Ilori and Eron McLean, and their writing team to review the current and future prospects for Caribbean cruise tourism.

Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT) aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development, and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, do please contact me.

Richard Teare

Managing Editor, WHATT

What are the prospects for the post-pandemic Caribbean cruise industry?

The impact of the pandemic on cruise travel for both passengers and local people in the Caribbean cannot be over-stated because the region is largely dependent on tourism and maritime activity. Economically, the influx of ships and people generates employment and millions of US dollars for the Caribbean region and spending by cruise visitors while ashore provides additional income for local businesses and governments. As a result, cruise travel and tourism became the largest sector of the tourism industry in the Caribbean. Prior to COVID-19, hurricanes had always been the main fear factor for cruises, but they are seasonal and the cruise line companies can adequately predict and track their movement and severity. In March of 2020, the cruise industry was brought to a complete halt due to COVID-19 and since then, the cruise industry and population of the Caribbean region has been severely affected by the social and financial consequences of the pandemic. Even the well-established tourism destination islands like Jamaica and Antigua are still grappling with the challenges of recovery given that they and other Caribbean islands had made big investments in new cruise terminals. Globally, there have been mixed reactions to and provision for vaccination and so it seems likely that the disease will have a long-term impact. Given this backdrop, this theme issue assesses the prospects of the cruise and wider maritime industry in the coming decade.

Ibrahim Ajagunna, Matthew Ilori and Eron McLean

Theme Editors

About the Theme Editors:

Ibrahim Ajagunna

Ibrahim A. Ajagunna PhD is Professor and Deputy to the President at the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) Jamaica. In July 2017, Ibrahim was conferred with an honorary professorship by the Europe Academic Union, Oxford, UK. He was presented with the Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation for Service to Education on June 26, 2019. Ibrahim is a



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Matthew Ilori

Matthew O. Ilori, PhD, is a Professor of Microbial Biotechnology at the University of Lagos and has served as Director, Centre for General Studies; Dean, Faculty of Science and Director, Institute of Maritime Studies. He is also a member of the Governing Council, Lead City University, Ibadan. Matthew has supervised fourteen PhD students, presented guest lectures in Nigeria, Canada and USA, and has published 108 articles. He is a recipient of fellowships from UNESCO (1997), Alexander von Humboldt (2000), Royal Society (2003), Fulbright (2007) and DAAD (2013), and he is a Fellow of the Academy of Science (FAS, Nigeria).

Eron Mclean

Eron G. McLean, EdD, is the Vice President of Planning and Development at the Caribbean Maritime University. He received an EdD from Walden University, and he holds an MBA from the University of New Orleans, a BA from the University of the West Indies and a Trained Teachers' Diploma from Church Teachers' College, Mandeville. Among prior roles, Eron worked for the Jamaica Customs Service where he supervised the training of more than 500 new staff. Eron recently completed a doctorate in education with a specialization in adult education. This new specialization enables him to contribute to the academic development of the university.

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