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UTILIZING LOCAL CONTENTS AND ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is everything and anything that has creative or natural capacity to arouse people's interest to move from place to place. The study used content analysis to examine the utility of local contents for hospitality and tourism and ways to address the challenges of hospitality and tourism in Nigeria. Nigeria's local contents for tourism are natural resources and man-made features. These natural resources and man-made features are ocean beaches, Nigeria's vegetation, the Nigerian slave routes, wildlife, games reserves and wetlands, arts and crafts, festivals, monuments, sites and museums. Nigeria local contents for hospitality are food and cuisine. Foods: Moi-moi, Akara, Massa and Danwake. Soups: efo riro soup, egussi soup, edikanggikong soup, Ogbono soup, okoho soup, nsala soup, ofe-owerri soup, fisherman soup, owho soup, rivers native soup, groundnut soup, gbegiri soup, okazi soup, okro soup, oha soup, miyan kuka, banga soup, and pepper soup. Drinks: Zobo and Palm Wine, Kunungyada, Kunun Aya and Kunun Accha. Fruits: mangoes, orange and banana. The challenges of hospitality and tourism in Nigeria are poor infrastructural amenities, poverty hinders domestic tourism, barrier to tourism is the absence of organisational and infrastructural capacity at a national level, corruption is another serious deterrent as it undermines government efficiency, deters potentials investors in the tourism industry and scares off investors, safety and security is one notorious barrier to the sector, packaging and showcasing of Nigeria tourism products is at its lowest, attitude and image is vital tourism performance, human resources, branding issue such as instilling authenticity of local culture, technology, customer issues, etc. These challenges have locked Nigeria out of the benefits that the hospitality and tourism industries can offer. It has been recommended that concerted efforts should be made to address the mentioned challenges that are positive action must be taken by three main constituencies: host communities, host governments, and foreign stakeholders.

Key Words: Local Contents, Challenges, Hospitality, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

The international labour organisation (ILO) defined tourism component to include specific segments of transport, travel agency and tour operation. Hotels, catering and restaurants are all considered by most organisations to belong to the tourism-characteristics industries and are therefore subsumed tourism. International tourism includes business and professional travel, visiting friends and relatives, religious travel, and health treatments of travellers crossing a boarder and spending one or more nights in the country. The hotel and restaurants subsectors include accommodation (hotels, boarding houses, motels, tourist camp, holiday centres, resorts and youth/backpacker hostels) and other similar establishments (ILO, 2010).

Tourism is one of the fastest –growing industries globally. Over the past two decades, the average growth rate of the tourism sectors in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries has exceeded GDP growth, and many non-OECD countries have experienced even higher growth in their tourism sectors. Tourism plays an important role in economic



development by sustaining employment and bringing in foreign currency. Growth is driven not only by increasing wealth and economic development but also by the tourism industry's ability to offer new products and experiences. Tourism firms operate in a competitive market that is characterized by high turbulence and rapid changes. To compete effectively, tourism firms must be highly innovative either in cutting costs or in offering new high-quality products that meet customer demand. No country or region can rest on its natural endowment or cultural heritage. Strategies to support innovation are needed to remain competitive in the global tourism market (OECD, 2010).

In recent times, hospitality industry has found itself in the limelight owing to the spurt in the growth of World's tourism industry and increased economic activities with focus on receiving and entertaining a guest with goodwill. The guest is treated with utmost warmth and respect and is provided the best services. It is also offers warmth to someone who looks for help at a strong or friendly place. Hospitality industry can be empirically divided into two parts: entertainment areas like clubs and bars, and accommodation. Accommodation takes the form of public houses, resorts, inn, campgrounds, hotels, hostels, serviced apartments, and motels. The clubs and bars category include restaurants, fast food and nightclubs.

The hospitality industry also includes tourism support commercial activities like airline cabin staff and travel agents. Hospitality sector has reached new heights. Travellers are taking new interest in the World which leads to the upgrading of the hospitality sector. Even an increase in business travel has driven the hospitality sector to serve their guest better. Hospitality industry is closely linked with travel and tourism industries (Goyal and Goyal, 2010).

The objective of the paper is to examine and consider the utilization of local contents and addressing the challenges of hospitality and tourism in Nigeria.

STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

Nigeria is located on the coast of Africa located between 4° and 14° and Longitudes 3° and 14° have an estimated landmass of 923, 768 Km^2 including its coastal and inland water ways. Nigeria is blessed with material, human and natural resources with an estimated population of about 223,804,633 million people (according to 2023 projected population census figure). Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state endeared with rich culture and different cuisines. The Nigeria natural resources, culture and cuisines can significantly benefit her hospitality and tourism industry. See map of Nigeria.

Many literatures and articles on local contents and challenges in hospitality and tourism in Nigeria were analyzed using content analysis method. The content analysis aims to reach the most commonly used local content and changes in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria. This paper used qualitative content analysis to discuss the local contents and challenges of hospitality and tourism in Nigeria.

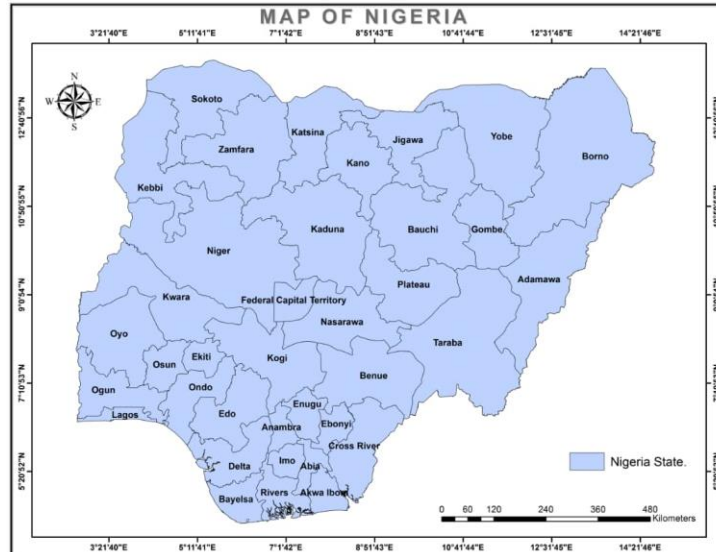


Figure1: Map of Nigeria

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Utilizing Local Contents for Hospitality and Tourism

Local Contents for Tourism

Tourism is an interdisciplinary field that uses input from several industries. It is often viewed as an expression of human behaviour. Tourism is conceptualized as the set of ideas, theories or ideologies for being a tourist (Uduma-Olugu and Onukwube, 2012). Tourism activity is not only the provision of services on the organisation of travel but also a source of income to the state and many sectors of its economy. Tourism has a huge impact on such key economic sectors as transportation, services of hotels and restaurants, trade, construction, consumer goods and many other aspects, a driven catalyst for socio-economic development. Thus, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of some countries is almost entirely generated by tourist traffic. Tourism has a high “multiplicative” effect and is the “valve of the coefficient indirect impact on tourism related industries”. The indirect influence takes place through tourists spending and received income of tourism transport, trade and other organisations (Sandybayev, 2016). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2016) tourism has an indirect impact on the development of more than 32 branches of economy.

Overall, tourism services are very capital-intensive and depend on external partners and other factors. Similarly, the capability and the motivation of human resources are essential suggesting the necessity of both capital and labour related types of innovation. Finally, tourism needs local infrastructure, the local population should have positive thinking about tourism, and local industry should act as a supplier for tourism business or shopping facilities (Bieger, 2002).

Basically, the impact of tourism is felt in a nation socially, environmentally and economically. At the social level, the benefits cut across peasants and even professional irrespective of gender, race or age brocket. Environmentally, tourism has the potentials to conserve the natural environment, preserve antiquities, historical monuments and traditional behaviours such as culture, food, language, heritage, art and crafts. Economically, tourism creates wealth capable of stimulating either domestic and foreign earning of any nation from direct activities or associated business (Manzuuna,-Ndaaba, Harada and Islam, 2014).



However, tourism is divided into tangible and intangible assets. The physical features include: natural, socio-cultural events, ethno-historical and man-made attractions; while the intangible are the destinations image and reputation, and the technological knowhow involved in tourism development. Tourism is perceived as a strategic medium for cultural and traditional heritage promotion to international arena thereby bringing the custodian country to international limelight (Meng, Tepanon and Uysal, 2008).

Nigeria ranks among the most privileged nations of the World in terms of endowment of natural attractions. Such attractions include: the mountains, hills and highlands; caves and valleys (with waterfalls and water tributaries); spectacular vegetation (dense high forests, savannah and Sahel); varieties of species of wildlife, flora and fauna. Hence, Nigeria tourist attractions are indeed very great and diverse with lots of potentials for economic transformations, poverty reduction, income redistributions and foreign direct investments. The extent to which these benefits are explored by any nation is subject to certain local conditions such as community involvement and sustainability measures. All the types of tourism are in abundance in virtually each of the Thirty six (36) States in Nigeria. Some of the attractions are natural while others are man-made ranging from hills, waterfalls, springs, caves, lakes and mountains as well as cultural festivals, historical sites and monuments unevenly spread in Nigeria. These beautiful natural gifts and exciting festivals provide interesting places of leisure, recreation, adventure, entertainment, relaxation and curiosity.

Nigeria's local contents for tourism are natural resources and man-made features. These are:
Natural resources.

Ocean Beaches

Nigeria has approximately 800 km of coastline. Nigeria has a long stretch of beaches to lounge in.

Nigeria's Vegetation

Ranging from mangrove forest in the South to Savannah, and mountainous valleys to Sahel in the North; the thick forest in the South provide natural habitat to different species of wildlife. For examples, Aardvark, Elephants, Cross River gorilla, baboon, etc.

Geographical and Geological

The formation attracts mountaineering, rock formations adventures, scientific expedition, caves and waterfalls. Waterfalls are special geographical features which have provided successful holiday resort in many parts of the world. For examples, Gurara waterfalls in Niger State, Nigeria, Erin Ilesha waterfalls in Osun State Nigeria., Fari Ruwa waterfalls in Nasarawa State Nigeria.

The Nigerian Slave Routes

The main chartered routes used for the shipment of slave from West Africa to new worlds between 16th and 18th century. This trans-Atlantic slave trade is perhaps the most significant element of Nigerian and African history. The routes will be of interest to adventurers. For examples, Badagry in the South –West Nigeria, Calabar in the South-South Nigeria.

Wildlife, Games Reserves and Wetlands

Nigeria has a number of national parks, game reserves and wetlands. Nigeria as a whole supports more than 274 different species of animals, for examples, Aardvark, Elephants, Cross River gorilla, baboon, etc. 831 species of birds, for examples, Hamerkop, Black-throated coucal, rock fire finch, bustard, etc, and 4,600 species of plants, for example, pepper, sweet basil, arrowhead plant, etc.



Man-made features

Arts and Crafts

Crafts are synonymous with Nigeria's material and superficial believes. Crafts and craft making are integral to the living and working pattern of the people and has become part of spiritual thinking of Nigerian. Essentially, Nigeria crafts are grouped into dye and cotton (in Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria), pottery and ceramics (in Abuja, Nigeria), , crafts, bronze, brass and iron works (in Benin, Edo State Nigeria), leatherworks (in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria) and wood carving (Benue State Nigeria).

Festival and Traditional Events

Festival, celebrations and dances are integral part of Nigerian culture depicting the country's customs and traditions in a meaningful and colourful way. Examples of such festivals are Osun Osogbo festival, Kwagh-hir, Argungu fishing festival, Durbar, etc.

National Monuments, Sites and Museums

Nigeria's cultural diversity is captured in its monuments and historic sites, which draw from its history of ancient walled cities, palaces of its traditional rulers, it's colonial past and its multi-denominational religious tradition. The 36 States and their cities have their own very distinctive monuments and historic sites all associated with the rich folklore and history of the areas. For examples, Osun Osogbo Sacred Groove, Osun State Nigeria and Kano City Walls, Kano State Nigeria.

Local Contents for Hospitality

Nigeria local contents for hospitality are food culture and cuisine. The cuisine in Nigeria is as diverse as our two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups (Nigerian Tourism Development Cooperation, 2020). We are endowed with arable land that allows us to grow every type of food in all the regions. Nigeria has many crops, grains, fruits, vegetables, tubers, drinks and foods which can be found across the entire nation even though some are unique to certain region as well. Some of the Nigerian foods and cuisine worth showcasing are our tasty cuisines which should actually be enjoying international recognition if only people had knowledge of it. Some of our cuisines that worth showcasing in hospitality are:

FOODS

Northern Nigeria

Moi-moi

Moi-moi is a pudding made from beans. It is very ideal for vegetarians but non-vegetarian can also consume eggs, kidney, liver, fish, corned beef and shrimps. In Yoruba culture, when all these are added, it is said to have seven hearts **emi-meje**. It is common to eat moi-moi with rice and vegetable salad.

Akara

Akara on the other hand is a bean-cake made by frying in either palm oil or vegetable oil. It is very crunchy and works well as a filling for bread as Akara-burger. Akara is so health and tasty because it is purely beans (protein) and pepper sauce mix. They can be served in a fast food outlet or as part of a full indoor dining experience when eaten with other things.

Massa and Danwake

Massa, a delicious native snacks which can be consume any time of the day. It is mainly made up of rice. It can be consumed with vegetable sauce. Massa is common in any part of Nigeria especially in northern part of the country.

Soups



Our soups are mainly prepared from vegetables and seeds. Some of our soups include but are not limited to:

South-South Nigeria

Efo riro soup, egussi soup, edikanggikong soup, rivers native soup, banga soup, peppers soup, etc.

South-East Nigeria

Ogbono soup, ofe-owerri soup, fisherman soup, owho soup, okazi soup, okro soup and oha soup, etc.

Northern Nigeria

Okoho soup, groundnut soup, miyan kuka, etc.

South-West Nigeria

Gbegiri soup, etc.

The soups can be eaten on its own or with some solid bolus foods popularly called “swallow “in Nigerian denotion such as iyan (pounded yam in Benue Statⁱⁱⁱ Nigeria), fufu, Amala(yam/plantain) and eba (fried cassava) or even rice and dodo (fried plantain).

Barbecue meat

One example is Suya (in Northern Nigeria), which is made with beef, which is made with beef, gizzard, kidney, chicken or fish and offered as an appetizer to make the drinking experience more pleasurable. Suya is barbecued with grounded pepper, spices, and salt. It is spiced from mild to hot depending on the taste of the consumer. Suya is a delicacy that people of all ages enjoy in Nigeria; it is usually served with fresh slices of onions and tomatoes. Suya is so delicious to the point that keeps you longing for more.

DRINKS

Zobo and Palm Wine

The two natural Nigeria drinks are Zobo in Northern Nigeria (made from hibiscus flower) and Emu (palm wine). It is so refreshing when served chilled. The beauty of our drinks is that they are suitable for most age groups, healthy and relatively affordable.

Kunun gyada, Kunun Aya and Kunun Acha

Kunungyada is suitable drink for everybody, any age and anytime of the day. It is made of wine of white rice with fried grounded groundnut. Kunun Aya is made from White rice and Tiger nut. It is better served chilled. Kunun Acha is made from Acha mixed fried groundnut. The Kunun are so refreshing when served chilled.

Fruits

Mangoes, Orange and Banana

Nigeria can showcase a diverse range of fruits such as mangoes, orange and banana of different varieties.

UNWTO (2011) position is that tourism creates opportunities for local communities to benefit from their culture and natural assets through employment in tourism activities and the supply of services and goods such as food, excursions or handicrafts, to tourism businesses or directly to visitors, without having to migrate to towns in search of a better life. Smith(2007) argues that economic benefits of tourism is a function of competitive market drive and community involvement that can guarantee high expectation of the tourists on destination image and facilities that will promote positive words of mouth and revisit intentions by the tourists.

Tourism is a composite phenomenon and the inventory of its component factors, therefore, must go hand in hand with acknowledgement of the general development objectives and characteristics of the area or region under consideration especially now that tourism is market driven, customer’s satisfaction must be the concern of tourism providers (Sitikanthan and Tapen, 2001). No place is



too remote to be visited. If the attractions are properly package and presented. These remote and scattered locations harbour different types of tourism system ranging from aquatic tourism to wildlife and discovery waiting exploring to the benefit of humanity (Felix and Usman, 2008).

Addressing the Challenges of Hospitality and Tourism in Nigeria

It is crystal clear that tourism has huge potentials and chances of reducing poverty, diversify the economy by creating jobs, income redistribution and increase foreign earnings, and environmental preservation. It is evidently clear that the story of Nigeria's tourism industry is one of unfulfilled potentials. It can be argued that the enabling environment for tourism simply does not exist. In addition, a robust tourism sector would diversify the economy, reducing Nigeria's dependence on its important export-oil.

Clearly, however, tourism can gain foothold in Nigeria only when the challenges of hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria are adequately and squarely addresses. Adeleke (2008), Goyal and Goyal (2010) and Manzuuna-Ndaaba, Harada and Islam (2012) identified infrastructural amenities, poverty, organisational and institutional capacity, corruption, safety and security, packaging and showcasing, attitude and image, human resources, branding issues, technology, and customer issues are challenges that constituted the barrier to tourism sector and these challenges are applicable to Nigeria.

Moreover, to thrive, Nigeria's tourism sector requires adequately and squarely addressing the challenges below:

- Poor infrastructural amenities are a particular barrier. Adeleke (2008) point out that Nigeria is a large country with a small and badly maintained road network. Tourists would struggle to travel between parts of the country's tourist destinations. Manzuuna-Ndaaba, Harada and Islam (2012) added that road network and various means of transportation, the international and domestic airports, telecommunication and internet access, tour guide and efficient road signs and symbols, hotel accommodation and other axillaries services and perceived destination image all have positive relationship with the overall tourism performance. They also stated that Nigeria is either these essential requirements are lacking or in bad condition. In order to address the poor infrastructure amenities, Nigeria need to prioritize the search for capital investment to help build the roads, airports, hotels and leisure facilities needed to attract visitors in large numbers.
- Poverty hinders domestic tourism, but even those who have the means have not developed a culture of travel. Effective efforts should be geared toward reducing poverty level among Nigerian to be able to travel for leisure and tourism activities.
- Another important barrier to tourism is the absence of organisational and infrastructural capacity at a national level. For most of its history, Nigeria has a national tourism strategy, and government departments overlap at the national and state levels regarding responsibility for the sector, making it difficult to devise a coordinated plan. The government does not even possess reliable figures on the numbers of international arrivals and departures from the country. Experience where tourism industry is developed, the industry needs to be subject to robust laws and regulations if it is to benefit local communities and prevent them from being exploited. Laws must protect the environment from overdevelopment and safeguard the land, property, and livelihood of communities affected by tourism. This requires the presence of strong and effective tourism institutions at national, state and local levels.



- Corruption is another serious deterrent, as it undermines government efficiency, deters potentials investors in hospitality and tourism industry and scares off investors. As the driving force behind the tourism development concerted efforts should be initiated and implemented to minimize corruption in the Nigerian system.
- Safety and security is one notorious barrier to tourism sector. Tourism can be of enormous benefits to Nigeria, setting up a fully functioning tourist industry is beyond the capacity of Nigeria. Without a modicum of peace and stability, combined with strategic planning at National, State and local levels, Nigeria will struggle to persuade tourists to risk a visit. Jacob (2021) cited in Manzuuna-Ndaaba, Harada and Islam (2012) argued that security of lives and properties is fast deteriorating obvious cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, and other related crimes have negative relationship with tourism performance most especially on tourist satisfaction and repeat visit. Goyal and Goyal (2010) opined that the threat of terrorist attack remains a major concern for the hospitality industry. Hotel operators must make every effort to protect their guests while encouraging tourism. To address this challenge, Nigeria with ambitions to build a successful tourist industry needs to tackle internal instability and provide a safe environment for potential visitors.
- Packaging and showcasing of Nigeria hospitality and tourism products is at its lowest. No adequate information about attractions and other places of leisure at international events. There is urgent need to change our thinking, and package and showcase our beautiful hospitality and tourism products to our citizens and foreigners.
- Attitude and image is vital tourism performance. Zeithami, Parasuraman and Bery (1985) as cited in Manzuuna-Ndaaba, Harada and Islam (2012) opined that attitudinal change is required by the personnel connected with this very important internationally driven industry. The ground staff at the points of entry, transportation, accommodations and tourist sites is expected to be courteous, polite and supporting both in physical appearance and manners. Manzuuna-Ndaaba, Harada and Islam (2012) concluded that all these virtues will transform to tourist satisfaction and by extension tourism performance.
- Human resources are an area that is growing in importance. As the hospitality and tourism industry continue to grow, it needs to focus on its employees and their roles as service providers. To address this issue, the industry must attempt to work with the unions as allies, devote more time and money to recruitment and training of employees to provide needed services in the industry.
- Branding issue such as instilling authenticity of local culture in brand standards remains a challenge. To address this challenge, hospitality and tourism operators are required to utilize local contents appropriately.
- Technology. The hospitality industry must do a better job of managing technology and addressing the challenges posed by new and changing technology. Specifically, the industry must align technology investment with business objectives, address aging and inadequate infrastructure (at both the corporate and the property levels); and learn to better utilize technology in marketing to guests, training employees, yield management customer requirements.
- Customer issues present a challenge to the industry in several ways:
 - i. Increasing loss of control over the customer: use of the internet, homogenization of the hotel product and increased corporate oversight has reduced the amount of control that operators have over the customer.



- ii. Changes in the customer: hotel customers are changing due to demographics(the aging of the baby boomer generations) and due to lower transportation costs that promote travel.
- iii. Changes in customers 'expectation: these are changing as customers become more sophisticated and better educated.

To address the above customer issues, we need to recognise the customers, respect the customers and serve the customers efficiently and effectively as a customer is always a “king”.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality and tourism are twins industries with the power to shape Nigeria in positive ways. It is up to Nigeria to seize the economic opportunities that domestic and foreign visitors present to develop her hospitality and tourism industry. In Nigeria, structural weakness, insecurity, and other challenges have locked the country out of the benefits that the twins industries can offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As delineated earlier, tourism, if properly planned and managed, can help to alleviate poverty and stabilize communities. For that to happen, positive action must be taken by three main constituencies: host communities, host governments, and foreign stakeholders.



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