

Full Length Research Paper

The relevance of tourism on the economic development of Cross River State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the relevance of tourism on the economic growth of Cross River State, Nigeria. Special focus was on the difference in visitations over the years under investigation to the various tourists attractions within the state. Information for the study was basically from the questionnaire survey and participatory research method. The generated data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, simple percentages and graphic illustrations. The study demonstrated that there was a steady increase in the number of tourists visit to the various attraction sites in the area and that the greatest increase was observed in the number of tourists visiting for the purpose of cultural festivals. The result show that tourism influenced employment status, including enhancement of the people's income in the state. Based on the aforementioned findings, it is recommended that all stakeholders in the tourism industry should be involved in the planning and execution of tourism projects and that tourism activities be organized all through the year to ensure more tourists visitation and avoid seasonality in the tourism industry.

Key words: Tourism, influence, cultural enhancement, economic growth, cultural diversity.

INTRODUCTION

The substantial growth of the tourism activity clearly marks tourism as one of the most remarkable economic and social phenomena of the past century. The number of international arrivals shows an evolution from a mere 25 million international arrivals in 1950 to an estimated 806 million in 2005, corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 6.5%. During this period, development was particularly strong in Asia and the Pacific (13% on average a year) and in the Middle East (10%) while the Americas (5%) and Europe (6%), grew at a slower pace and slightly below the world's average growth.

New destinations are steadily increasing their market share while more mature regions such as Europe and the Americas tend to have less dynamic growth. International tourism receipts represented in 2003 approximately 6% of worldwide exports of goods and services (as expressed in US\$). When considering service exports exclusively, the share of tourism exports increases to

nearly 30%. In general, the growth of international tourism arrivals significantly outpaces growth of economic output as measured in gross domestic product (GDP). In years when world economic growth exceeds 4%, the growth of tourism volume tends to be higher. When GDP growth falls below 2%, tourism growth tends to be even lower, but when GDP rises to 3.5%, tourism had an average growth of 1.3 times faster than GDP; however, from the period of 1975 to 2000, tourism increased at an average rate of 4.6% a year (WTO, 2009).

The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has released the latest worldwide tourist arrivals figures showing a 7% decline to 600 million arrivals between January and August 2009. However, the rate of decline has eased in the past few months, with only a 3% drop in the two high-season months of July and August following a first half-year fall of 8%. Earnings from international arrivals have suffered somewhat more than volumes as consumers tend to trade down, stay closer to home and travel for shorter periods of time, and are estimated to have contracted in real terms by 9 to 10% in the first six months of 2009 compared to the 8% volume fall.

International tourism in Europe was down 8% from

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January to August, with destinations in Central and Eastern Europe the most affected. The Americas was 7% down as a whole, although South America only declined 1%. More positively, Asia Pacific (-5%) recorded growth in August, the Middle East (-8%) had positive numbers between June and September, while Africa had a 4% increase over the eight months (UNWTO, 2010).

Tourism and hospitality are industries that heavily depend on human contact, with the sheer volume of traffic and increasing spending power which has resulted to a rapid economic boom and also boosted the business travel market (Joffres et al., 2004). Tourism appears to many developing countries a promising source of economic development (Smith et al., 2003). Adventure tourism, given its emphasis on pure and pristine natural environments, lower barriers to entry for small business, and frequently reduced requirements for new construction in particular, is promising for countries with lower levels of capital investment and existing infrastructure. In some places, it is already worth more, in terms of export revenues and share of GDP, than traditional commodity-based or manufacturing exports, and seems to offer opportunities for employment, earning foreign exchange and encouraging investment and economic growth. Many developing countries, therefore, are prioritizing attracting foreign direct investment ("FDI") in their tourism sectors. However, this form of FDI is complex, and its dynamics and impacts are not well understood.

Traditionally, tourism was placed below manufacturing or agriculture in terms of economic development potential since it was not seen as a significant or appropriate source of growth (Walle, 1997; Decrop (1999). In contrast, today, there is a significant re-appraisal taking place, which values tourism as a potential means of earning export revenues, generating large numbers of jobs – including for young people and women – promoting economic diversification and a more service-oriented economy, helping to revive urban areas and cultural activities, and opening up remote rural areas. Adventure tourism, although not called out specifically in this study, clearly has an edge over other forms of tourism in its ability to attract young business entrepreneurs and in addressing specific consumer demands also values and rewards local cultures; A significant part of tourism's development potential stems from the fact that it links together a series of cross-cutting activities involving the provision of goods and services such as accommodation, transport, entertainment, construction, and agricultural and fisheries productions. Its industry structure encompasses a wide diversity of players, ranging from global TNCs to MSMEs. This enables participation in the industry at different scales and levels of the market; On the other hand, tourism has its downsides like; vulnerability to external shocks – economic, environmental and political; ability to create problems of its own such as social and economic costs to communities and to the environment; potential low wages

and a lack of good human resource development practices; and an association with an undermining of traditional values.

Tourism is centered on the fundamental principles of exchange between peoples and the expression and experience of culture (Appadurai, 2002). Tourism is cultural and its practices and structures are very much an extension of the normative cultural framing from which it emerges (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972; UNESCO, 1995). There is no doubt that tourism is a global phenomenon and estimates from the World Tourism Organization (2005) anticipate that by the year 2020, international arrivals are expected to reach over 1.57 billion. This will comprise of 1.2 billion intraregional arrivals and 0.4 billion long-haul travelers. Europe is scheduled to be the top receiving region with 717 million tourists, followed by Eastern Asia and the Pacific with 397 million, the Middle East and Southern Asia and majority of these visits is predicted to be for cultural purposes (Bruner, 2004). Over the years, it has been discovered that tourists are impressed and emotionally moved by a work of art, festival, musical performance, or by building or objects in museum. These tangible and intangible expressions of culture act as trigger for interpreting the world past and present (Canestrini, 2001). Tourists also encounter "Living" culture through a variety of other forms and media which embody both tradition and change being among people who use a different language, eat different goods, and behave in different ways is at the very heart of tourism. Experiencing directly, different ways of life, can have a valuable educational function that stretches beyond tourism. In recent times, there has been a growing recognition that tourism is a valuable development tools and a vehicle for strengthening identity. In Nigeria and Cross River State in particular, tourism development has been a priority in the programme of the government of the state funding and providing resorts such as, Obudu cattle ranch, Aqua-vista, Tinapa business resort, Agbokim waterfalls, Monolith sites and the National park reserves.

It has been discovered that in America, tourism served as an important source of tax revenue for local jurisdictions and this led to higher quality public services and lower local tax rates (Brown, 2009). Studies by scholars such as Rilley and Love (2000), Aniah et al. (2009) etc, have shown that tourism can be an important source of jobs creation and also offers business opportunities to local residents as well as but it can serve as firms to yield returns to start business locally. Tourism was also said to support local culture in rural areas by encouraging restoration of local and regional historic sites and a relatively clean industry that fostered local conservation efforts. With the establishment of tourist attractions centers such as Arguagu fishing festival, the Rafia (weaving) village of Ikot-Ekpen, the dye pits of Kano, the Yoruba Adire and Aso-oke traditional textile

industries, the Gwari potters of Ushaya village in the FTC, new yam festivals, Leboku cultural festival and Calabar Carnival which are supported by the tourism policy of Nigeria with the sole aim of promoting tourism based rural enterprises, accelerated rural – urban integration and cultural exchange. It is pertinent to assess the implication of the various tourism events/attractions that enhanced the economy and the standard of living of the people, taking into cognizance the number of people that visit and work in most tourist attractions over time.

The inter-relationship between tourism and culture has attracted considerable attention over the years and has become a focal point for policy and decision makers. The policy and planning terms much has been done to “protect” culture, heritage resources and related natural environments from the excesses of unplanned and uncoordinated tourism development. Aniah et al. (2009) noted that tourism industry and the viability of any business is in the income it can generate. They further asserted that more income may be generated judging from the level of patronage from majority of tourists who engaged in relaxation and drinking at a values of 27% of all tourists visiting the area compared to other variable with values 7% of the tourists for rock climbing, 13% patronized the swimming pool, 21% for games viewing, and with tourists participation in horse riding and sight-seeing with 9 and 22%, respectively. Also the patronage of any resort is a function of facilities provided.

In recent times, with the increasing globalization, the protection, conservation, interpretation and presentation of heritage and cultural diversity, it has been acknowledged that managing tourism at places of significant heritage within a framework of internationally recognized and appropriately applied standard, is usually the responsibility of the particular community or custodian group, that is to say that a primary objective for managing heritage is to communicate its significance and need for its conservation to its host community and to visitors. With these, tourism is expected to bring benefits to host communities and provide an important means and motivation for them to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices. The involvement and co-operation of local and/or indigenous community representatives, conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policy makers, those preparing national development plans and site managers is necessary to achieve a sustainable tourism industry and enhance the protection of heritage resources for future generation.

Quy-Hanh (2007) reported that tourism development in Doi village in central Vietnam, since the end of the Second World War, has been touted as a panacea for economic backwardness, with the emergence of alternative development and the rise of eco-sustainable and pro-poor tourism. Although other researchers continued to find tourism development disappointing if not downright destructive to community development, the study also investigated the relationship between tourism

and community development and found that while local people were generally happy with tourism development in their community, the motivation for their participation in tourism activities was more of community driven than on their economy.

Following the 2002 Johannesburg summit which identified the need to explore the relationships between cultural diversity, inter-cultural dialogue and sustainable development, Robinson and Ricard (2006) reported that the structures and the practices of tourism are seldom isolated from other aspects of life; rather tourism in structural term and as a set of social practices is inter-connected with all aspects of daily life and that tourism touches upon peoples connections with other peoples, places and the past and in policy terms tourism cuts across the fields of planning, education, health, environment, transport, development and culture. The concept of sustainable development was establishment in recognition of the need to balance economic and social progress with the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources (UNESCO, 1995). Drawing upon the report from the Johannesburg summit of 2002, importantly, the concept of sustainable development has widened to include the imperatives of social justice and the alleviation of poverty. Both culture and tourism are important components of development; indeed, in the context of a well-travelled world it is difficult not to consider one without the other. While there is clearly a role for culture and tourism to be part of development in an economic sense, their roles extend beyond this integrated parts of human development whereby social well-being and basic human freedoms and rights are exemplified and enriched by travel and cultural exchange. In Nigeria, tourism and culture has continue to play a huge role in the political stability and cultural survival of the people but the ultimate questions remains if this activities has a corresponding impact on the economy.

In recent times, Cross River state government has invested so much in boosting and encouraging tourism activities in the state, with the establishment of numerous tourists site across the state like; Mary Slessor's Residence in Creek town, Cercopan, Refome lake, Monoliths site in Bansara, Canopy Walkway, Agbokim Waterfalls, Cross River National Park, Tinapa Business Resort, National Museum, Marina Resort and Obudu Mountain Resort. With the increase in tourists visit from 2,210 between October and December 2000 to about 8,162 tourists between October and December 2009 (Cross River Tourism Bureau, 2010), this has made the state a major tourist's destination to tourists visiting from outside and around the country and with a rapid increase of visitors to the state, increased investments in hotels and other facilities that ensure comfort and improved hospitality has been the order of the day with a corresponding increase in the number of people involved in such activities. It is in this vain that this study seeks to

Table 1. Tourists visits by attraction sites.

Attraction	2007/2008	2009/2010	% Change
National parks	25,803	28,053	8.7
Museums	7,352	9,278	26.2
Antiquities sites	3,503	4,520	29.0
Cultural events	16,974	22,121	30.3
Total	53,634	63,974	19.3

Source: National Tourism Development Corporation (NDTC).

Table 2. Proportion of visitors by travel arrangement and purpose of visit in percentage.

Travel arrangement	Purpose of visit by percentage				
	Business	Conference	Leisure and holiday	VFR	Others
Package tour	6.2	19.5	65.2	5.0	13.1
Non-package tour	93.8	80.5	34.8	95.0	86.9
% of total visitors	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2011).

examine the influence of tourism on the cultural enhancement and economic development of the state.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain correct and precise data on the variables under investigation, the questionnaire survey and participatory research method (PRM) were employed to elicit data for the study. The choice of a questionnaire survey and a participatory research method was due to the strength of the method in the collection of first-hand and precise information on the subject matter. The questionnaire was administered to 2000 respondents around the selected study areas across 10 local government areas (LGA) in the state which are host to most tourists. 200 respondents were selected from each LGA which comprises of, Obudu, Obanliku, Ikom, Calabar Municipality, Calabar- South, Ogoja, Akamkpa, Boki, Odukpani and Ugep. The participatory research method involved sessions of discussion or interviews with focal groups (FGD) comprising of elders, youths and women leaders and the interviews were held with focal groups across the 10 selected LGAs. The secondary data were derived from literatures, reports and documents from government and private institutions in the state and this had to do with information from the National Tourism Development Corporation and the State Internal Revenue Service. The analysis of data was based on the frequency of the people's perception over issues under investigation and this was determined by a simple percentage representation. In the interpretation, the higher the percentage means the greater the impact or performance of such variable on the subject matter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism development and tourists' visitation

The study investigated the level of patronage or visit to

various tourist attraction sites in the state which are classified or grouped as national parks, museums, antiquities sites and cultural events. Table 1 shows details of these visits.

The finding in Table 1 shows that tourists who visit such attractions in the state have increased from 53,634.00 to 63,974 representing 19.3%. This confirms an increase in the level of patronage of the various attraction sites. The analysis in Table 1 indicated clearly that there was significant percent change in favor of tourists' visitations for cultural purposes. This attracted 30.3% changes over the period. In addition, the PRA study revealed that cultural festivals or events are the fundamental factors influencing tourists from within and out-side the country into Cross River state. Also, the major Christmas festival in the state has added a new dimension to cultural displays. This is in-terms of the costumes and dance steps which has improved the cultural status of the people. The influx of tourists into Cross River state, taking advantage of the rich cultural heritage has stimulated several businesses and has increased the internally generated revenue as well as improved condition of living.

Tourism development and purposes of tourists' visits

It is pertinent to understand the level of organization and packaging of such products. It is in this vain that Table 2 also presents the level of organization of such visits. In Table 2, the proportion of visitors and their purposes of visit were highlighted. These visits were guided by the products availability in the area.

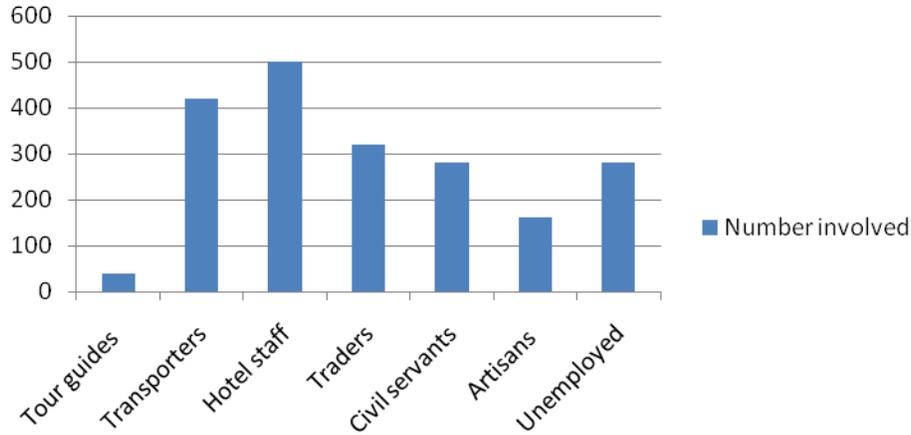


Figure 1. Employment status of respondents. Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2011.

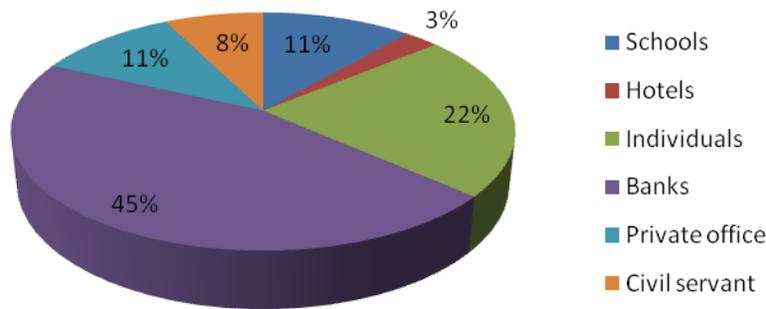


Figure 2. Revenue generation (Tax) from tourism related investments in Cross River State. Source: CRS Internal Revenue Service, 2011.

The study indicates that majority of the visitors that came for business purposes was 93.8% while those for conferences were 80.5% and visiting friends and relatives were 95.05%. All these were under the non-package tour arrangement. Conversely most of holidaymakers (65.2%) were under the package tour arrangements. These findings confirmed a similar pattern of results obtained by Aniah et al. (2009).

Tourism development and employment status

The findings on the economic influence of tourism on the state, was indicated on the status of employment of respondents within the area of study (Figure 2). The job specifications are classified as; tour guides, transporters, hotels staff, traders, civil servants, unemployed, artisans. With the trickle-down effect of tourism activities on economic growth, the various tourism activities have helped to enhance the income of the people.

Figure 1 shows that 500 persons (25%) of the respondents are involved in hotel jobs, 420 persons (21%) in transportation, 320 persons (16%) in trading,

280 persons (14%) are civil servants, 160 persons (8%) are artisans and 40 persons (2%) are tour guides while 280 persons (14%) are unemployed. It is observed that apart from civil servants, tourism related activities engaged more people in the area. This is to confirm that tourism has a great role in the economic growth of the people in Cross River State.

Tourism development and government generated revenue

The study also investigated the contributions of the tourism industry to the overall revenue of the state. Figure 2 shows the internally generated revenue of the state from tax in 2010.

The findings shows that banks in the state yielded the highest amount of N36,731,941.00 representing 45% of the total internally generated revenue, while hotels paid N2,101,201.00 representing 15% as tax in 2010 while tax revenue from individuals recorded the lowest with N8,165,060, representing 10% in the same year. The result also shows that apart from tax generated from

schools and civil servants, all other category of tax payers which include the banks, hotels, individuals and private offices, benefit from the trickle-down effect of tourism and this has shown that tourism has a great role in the economic growth of the state internally generated revenue.

This analysis indicated that apart from banks, tourism products such as hotels are the next ranked income earning for cross River State.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The result from the questionnaire survey indicated that tourism has positively influenced the cultural activities within the period under investigation. Tourists visitation to various attraction sites in the state has continued to be in the increase with visitation to cultural purposes having the strongest percent of change of 30.3%. It will therefore be acknowledged that such visits to these cultural events have contributed to the income enhancement of the people and the state in general. It was also observed that most of such visits were not packaged, showing that the tourism industry lacked some level of organization and opportunity for more funds to be derived by tourist visitation are being lost. It was also observed that the tourism industry contributes impressively to the internally generated revenue of the state through its taxation system, where organizations like the banks, hotels, individuals, private offices that benefit from the tourism industry are observed to have yielded the highest revenue (89%) to the state.

From the focus group discussions, a number of local people mentioned some challenges to cultural enhancement through tourism development. The list below summarizes the consistent findings identified in the FGD. These themes emerged in 10 FGD of sessions in response to the study objective.

- i. Inadequate funding was seen as one of the biggest obstacle of development of the tourism industry in the country. External funding for tourism is crucial in local communities with local government and private sources such as banks also often have limited resources to invest in tourism. The need for community infrastructure, provision of money/funds for tourist attractions and tourism promotion were observed to be very important
- ii. The respondents also emphasized on lack of tourism planning as important challenge of the tourism industry.
- iii. The respondent in all the focus group discussion also highlighted the important of technical assistance for development of the tourism industry and noted that technical assistance for tourism industry and noted that technical assistance for tourism development can also give local people the confidence and incentive to development and promote tourism themselves.
- iv. The respondents also emphasized lack of coordinate between community residents and government in terms

of tourism development.

v. On the overall, lack of planning, tourism knowledge and cultural traits were among major reasons tourism challenges affect the national development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, since local communities often support tourism events which they believed would contribute to their livelihood, it is expected that such projects should incorporate them especially in planning and implementation. The study showed that most of the respondents were willingly ready to support more tourism events in the state. It was discovered that the increase in tourists' visitation especially for cultural events benefited most people through the provision of employment opportunity it offered, including enhancement of internally generated revenue to the state. All these have contributed to the economy of Cross River state.

Based on the aforementioned, the study recommended that tourism development should integrate all the stakeholders' especially indigenous people whose cultural manifestations are great attractions to tourists. This is intended to increase more tourists' visits and economic benefits associated with tourism and tourism initiatives need to be managed carefully if they are to yield the desired benefits without undermining the local economy and the environment, social traditions and cultural resources.

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