Cultural Tourism and Sustainability in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of cultural tourism to sustainable development in Nigeria. As far back as the middle of 15th century, the world had started experiencing an up surge in travels. Throughout the cause of human history, people have travelled for the purposes of adventures, trade, religious conventions, war, economic gain and other compelling motivations. The study revealed that it is only when deliberate efforts is injected into improving cultural tourism endowment that the patronage of tourists into cultural sites can increase and invariably transform them into money – spinning tourism resorts, to ensure sustainable development. Conclusively, tourist receipts can impute on the development of the cultural sites in terms of income generation, employment generation, provision of more infrastructures to mention a few, as means for achieving improved tourism development hence, adequate sustainable development.

1. Introduction

World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2000) describes tourism as the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of residence, for more than 24 hours with no intention of remunerations from point en-route the destination. Tourism according to Mckean (1997) is defined as "a profound widely shared human desire to know others with the reciprocal possibility that we may come to know ourselves, a quest or an odyssey to see and perhaps to understand the whole inhabited earth." Jafari (1997) defined tourism as "a study of man away from his usual habitat of the industry which responds to his needs and the impact that both he and the industry have on the host socio-cultural and physical environment". Microsoft Encarta 2009 (DVD) describes tourism as a travel to benefit from a particular service or activity that is unavailable at home. According to the British Tourist Authority's definition, "Tourism is a stay of one or more nights away from home for holidays, visitation to friends or relatives, business conferences or any other purpose except such things as boarding education or semi permanent employment".(Marketing Fact Book, 2003). Following the same trend, Falade (2003), defined tourism as any activity that voluntarily or temporarily takes a person from his usual place of residence, in order to satisfy a need of pleasure, excitement, experience and relaxation.

Conceptually, tourism is borne out of the desire for leisure activity, which entails a discretionary use of time money and recreation. Tourism includes some travel but not all travel is tourism. In tourism, money earned in one's normal domicile is spent in the places visited and on the way to these places. Tourism is thus, a multi-faceted activity and geographically complex, as different services are sought and supplied at different stages from the origin to the destination. Moreover, in any country or region, "There is likely to be a number of origins and destinations, with most places having both generating (origin) and receiving (destination) functions" (Pearce 1989).

Tourism is considered to be one of the world's fastest growing industries which provide millions of jobs in difference parts of the world including Nigeria. (Olokesusi 2002, FAAN, 2000 and Sinclair et al 1991) note that Nigeria's entire landscape is dotted with natural tourist attractions that is comparable to the best in the world. There are many unique attractions such as national parks, recreational fishing, beach resorts, archeological tours, exotic game view and overland safaris. These are greatly complimented by rich socio-cultural and traditional heritage which dates back to 900 A.D. Urry (1990) considers tourism as always being concerned with the visual and the spectacular, its objects is the object of the tourist's gaze, the touristic site becomes a systematic and organised encounter on which one gazes. The tourist is seen as consuming the image or representations of a society.

Tourism deals with a time of pleasurable experience of life outside one's place of abode. Art and culture would in this wise enrich the life of the tourist as he is exposed to various unique experiences outside his place of domicile. The facilities created to cater for their needs and of the impacts they have on the economy, the physical environment and the host population. Tourism can be international, intra-continental or domestic (Aniakor 2000:).

2. Conceptual Clarification

Cultural tourism is as much based on experiencing as it is on seeing, hence Williams' definitions of culture as a whole way of life as well as the arts and learning are particularly relevant here. Past definitions of cultural tourism have perhaps placed too much emphasis on cultural tourism as a form of arts or heritage tourism in its narrowest sense; for example, visiting museums, monuments, galleries and theatres. In 1991, the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) launched a cultural Tourism Research Project for which they defined cultural tourism as:

Technical Definition: All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as museums, heritage sites, artistic performances and festivals outside their normal place of residence. (Richards,1996).

Of course, much of ATLAS's original research took place in a European context; here the emphasis does tend to be placed on a cultural tourism product that favors arts and heritage tourism above indigenous or ethnic tourism. However, their conceptual definition takes us closer to the idea of culture as a way of life.

The movement of persons to cultural manifestations away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. Eagleton (2000) declares that definitions of culture are both too broad and too narrow and are perhaps borne out in the field of postmodern cultural tourism studies. Many countries like South Africa and southern Europe have increased their revenue generation through cultural tourism.

A lot of underground currents take place in economic circles when a particular experience is re-lived, re-invented or re-enacted on daily basis, annually or biannually through the activities of tourists (local and foreign). These activities include massive production of art works such as textiles (woven cloth, prints, batik, tie and dye), wood carvings, bronze casting, paintings, assorted souvenirs, drawings, leather works, cane/raffia works, glass and bead works, export of tattoos and body ornamentations, music and musical instruments, dance drama, acrobatic displays and gymnastics. Hotel accommodations which play vital role in tourism industry were provided for tourists with lots of in-built artistic and cultural expressions.

Lakes and rivers, natural hills and rock escarpments such as Idanre hills in Ondo state and Ikogosi Warm-Spring in Ekiti, are being re-designed and synergized so as to attract tourists' patronage. These not only provide gainful employment, they also provide avenues for craft market. Adejuwon (1993:) opines that the development of tourism in any particular area depends entirely on the quality and quantity of natural, cultural, historical and economic resources. Tourism development in all its ramifications is an intricate process and this is why its location must take into account all necessary viable elements. It is in the light of this that other issues that strengthen tourism development are here discussed. However, the paper is divided into four sections. Section one deals with Conceptual Clarification. Section two examines Cultural

Tourism and Sustainability in Nigeria. Section three discusses sustainability / sustainable Tourism in Nigeria. The final section is the conclusion and recommendation.

3. Cultural Tourism and Sustainability in Nigeria

It is evidently difficult to establish a universally valid definition of cultural tourism. It is relatively easy to fall into the trap of using terms such as heritage tourism, arts tourism, ethnic tourism or indigenous tourism, almost interchangeably. It will be argued in this work that cultural tourism is indeed broad in its remit, but that there is perhaps a need for differentiation within the cultural tourism sector. Hence, such forms of tourism would all become subsets of cultural tourism or niche components within a diverse sector.

(Richards 2001) suggests that cultural tourism covers not just the consumption of the cultural products of the past, but also of contemporary culture or the 'way of life' of a people or region. Cultural tourism can therefore be seen as covering both 'heritage tourism' (related to artifacts of the past) and 'art tourism' (related to contemporary cultural production).

Clearly, the notion of past and present implies that cultural tourism is based on both the history and heritage of a place and its people, as well as on their contemporary lives. (Zeppel and Hall 1992) divided cultural tourism into the subsets of heritage and arts tourism. Art tourism might be considered to be a more contemporary phenomenon, being located predominantly in the present, and it is arguably more experiential than heritage tourisms

However, in many ways, the arts and heritage are inextricably linked, and it is almost impossible to distinguish between them, particularly in the context of indigenous communities where the distinction between past, present and future is not as clear-cut or linear as in Western societies. Many traditions within the arts form a distinctive component of the heritage of a people or a place. This is especially true of crafts production or festivals. Even in historic cities (for

example, in Italy) it is difficult to distinguish between the heritage and arts component of the culture tourism product. Historic buildings host art exhibitions, theatre and opera talk place in ancient amphitheatres, festivals and events are based in heritage streets. Boundaries are nebulous, and distinctions are not always possible or indeed useful.

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Conceptual definition: The movement of persons to cultural manifestations away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.

Although this is a rather broad definition, it does imply that cultural tourists are interested in the more experiential aspects of culture. In an international context, particularly in the context of indigenous or ethnic tourism, the way of life of a people is a central focus. However, once again, it is difficult to distinguish between these rather nebulous concepts. Both forms of tourism assume that the traveler is motivated primarily by first hand, authentic or intimate contact with people whose ethnic or cultural background is different from their own. One way of making a distinction might to be argue that indigenous tourism implies visiting native people in their own habitat which is different from that of the tourist, whereas ethnic tourism could refer to engaging in the cultural activities of a minority group within the tourist' own society. For example, for the purposes of this book, a distinction is made between indigenous cultural tourism and ethnic cultural tourism. The former refers to the lifestyles and traditions of tribal groups living within fragile and remote environments, often in post-colonial developing countries, whereas the latter refers to the arts and culture of ethnic minority groups, immigrants and diasporas living largely within post-imperial Western societies.

Eagleton's (2000) concerns that definitions of culture are both too broad and too narrow are perhaps borne out in the field of postmodern cultural tourism studies. It is here that distinctions between high and low culture are being broken down, and emphasis is being placed increasingly on popular or mass culture. This is equally true of the heritage and museum sectors where representatives are becoming a key issue and the histories of previously marginalized groups are being recognized. The rejection of so-called 'grand narratives' has meant that the discourses of the working-classes, women, and minority or ethnic groups are now being heard. Historicity is becoming a more valid concept than aesthetic rendering the social history and industrial heritage of the working classes as important as political history or the bourgeois heritage of royalty, for example. Inclusion, access and democracy are the new buzzwords, and the underlining concepts are important of all the concomitant political and social struggles which surround it.

The impact that such developments have had on redefining cultural tourism are quite significant. The following list suggests a comprehensive typology of cultural tourism, but it is recognized that the concept of culture as almost everything that we are and everything we do is problematic unless we differentiate between the activities that is contained within it.

- Heritage sites (e.g. archeological sites, whole towns, monuments, museums).
- Performing arts venues (e.g. theatres, concert halls, cultural centres).
- Visual arts (e.g. galleries, sculpture parks, photography museums, architecture).
- Festivals and special events (e.g. music festivals, sporting events, carnivals).
- Religious sites (e.g. cathedrals, temples, pilgrimage destinations, spiritual retreats).
- Rural environments (e.g. villages, farms, national parks ecomuseums).
- Indigenous communities and traditions (e.g. tribal people, ethnic groups, minority cultures).
- Arts and crafts (e.g. textiles, pottery, painting, sculpture).
- Language (e.g. learning or practice)
- Gastronomy (e.g. wine tasting, force sampling, cookery courses).
- Industry and commerce (e.g. factory visits, mines, breweries and distilleries, canal trips).
- Modern popular culture (e.g. pop music, shopping, fashion, media, design, technology).
- Special interest activities (e.g. planning, photography, weaving).

The profile of tourists who engage increase different forms of cultural tourism are likely to be quite different, in many ways. It is therefore interesting to consider how far the differentiation of the cultural tourism products a significant consideration in commercial terms.

During the 1990s, cultural tourism was identified as one of the major future growth areas in Europe (Zeppel and Hall, 1992). The WTO (1993) estimated that 37 per cent of all International trips would have a cultural element, and that this figure would increase annually by 15 per cent to the end of the century. Of course, in its broadest sense, cultural tourism cannot be considered to be a niche form of tourism is growing in equal proportion. Indeed, Richards (2001) suggests that it is inevitable that cultural tourism appears to be growing, because more and more tourism attractions are now being defined as 'culture', and, as tourism grows internationally, there are bound to be more visits to cultural attractions.

In terms of tourist profiles, Bywater (1993) distinguished between 'culturally motivated', culturally inspired' and 'culturally attracted' tourists. Culturally motivated' tourists represent a small but commercially desirable market segment, since they tend to be attracted to a destination chiefly for cultural reasons. They are generally high-income visitors who spend several nights at a destination (e.g. visitors to the Salzburg Music Festival). 'Culturally inspired' tourists are attracted to internationally renowned cultural and heritage sites (such as Venice, Versailles, or the Alhambra, in Granada). Although some of this group will be 'culturally motivated easily to return to the same destination twice, to stay in one place longer or to visit minor destinations instead. Unfortunately, for these reasons, this group tends to be chiefly responsible for many adverse impacts, especially in terms of the environment, where carrying capacity is exceeded at major heritage sites. 'Culturally attracted' tourists can also pose a similar threat, in the sense that they represent a major day-trip market, visiting cultural attractions or attending cultural events because they happen to be in the area. However, the distinction between these three segments is by no means clear-cut, and at other times of the year, 'culturally attracted' tourist may fall into one of the other two categories of cultural tourist.

The BTA (2002) confirms this development, stating that:

> *The distinction between people who consider themselves 'cultural tourists' and those who don't specify a particular interest in the arts or cultural tourisms are blurring. The majority of tourists enjoy some element of cultural tourism during their visit, which could range from going to an exhibition in an art-gallery or museum, following a literary or film trail to enjoying a musical or theatrical performance. Richards (2001) estimated that three quarters of tourist in Europe visit a cultural attraction, even if they do not consider themselves to be on a cultural holiday. Tour operators have consequently responded to this by developing packages which combine a number of activities, some of them cultural, but others based purely on entertainment, fun, all relaxations.*

4. Sustainability/Sustainable Tourism

There is a pyramid of definitions for sustainable Tourism. Several authors and researchers have given various definitions of sustainable tourism. Coccossis (1996) asserts that sustainable tourism can be taken in four different interpretations: economically sustainable tourism, ecologically sustainable tourism, environmentally sustainable tourism, and fourthly, tourism as a part of a strategy for sustainable development. Another definition was put up by Veneeva (2006), he defined sustainable tourism as one of the pre-requisites of achieving sustainable development. He mentioned that sustainable tourism should be taken in consideration to environmental and resources effect. In addition, London School of Economics and Political Science (2009) defines sustainable tourism as "tourism development that avoids damage to the environment and cultures of the locations where it takes place. The new UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the future launched by the Prime Minister in March 2005 defines sustainable development as the means to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. The strategy sets out four priority areas for action. These are:-

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Protecting our natural resources and enhancing the environment
- Creating sustainable communities and a fairer world.

The aim of sustainable tourism is to make development a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and tourists themselves. However, the most widely accepted definitions are those of World Tourism Organisation. They gave a conceptual definition as: "Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a

suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable Tourism leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems." In addition, they describe the development of sustainable tourism as a process which meets the needs of present tourists and host communities whilst protecting and enhancing needs in the future (World Tourism Organisation, 1996).

Researches on sustainable tourism have also been conducted by several authors. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI, 1999) prepared a report on a Local Authority Perspective of tourism. They discuss that tourism is a recognized global industry—one of the largest industries in the world. Like any global industry, tourist business activities can have considerable impact on local development trends. The local impacts of the tourism industry are diverse and are often unique to the tourism sector.

In addition, Shah et al (2002) discusses the promotion of sustainable tourism, through the development of policy tools, capacity building and awareness-raising programmes. They posited that local involvement; guidelines for good practices and actual implementation remain essential goals for achieving sustainability. Mowforth and Munt (2002) explore and challenge the notion of sustainability and its relationship to contemporary tourism in the developing world. They argue that the growth of tourism offers a means for third world countries to escape the confines of "underdevelopment".

McKercher (2003) researched into the principles for planning and management of sustainable tourism development in Bishkek, Kyrgystan, and Asia. Being from a business school, he considered sustainability as a strategy which moves it away from the abstract into the practical. He opines strategies are designed to move an organisation or destination from a current less favored position to a more favored future position. In doing so, strategic decisions are based on vision, the identification of shared goals, and leadership. He asserts that sustainability seeks to achieve a balance between economic benefits and social and environmental costs.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID, 2009) looks into tourism programmes and activities to achieve its overarching goals of reducing poverty and improving livelihoods in the world's less developed countries. The Agency sees sustainable tourism development as having enormous cross-sectoral potential for accomplishing strategic objectives related to economic growth and poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation, and natural resources management, and it is viewed as a powerful tool for addressing other important cross-cutting agendas such as gender equity, global health, and local governance.

The above review shows that there is a disconnection between the patronage of tourism sites and sustainability. Olokesusi (1990), Omisore (2002) and Omisore and Akande (2006) in their studies on patronage, did not consider the issue of sustainability. However, Coccossis (1996), Mowforth and Munt (2002), McKercher (2003) and Veneeva (2006) who worked on sustainability and sustainable tourism did not include the patronage of tourism sites in their studies. This study therefore seeks to fill this lacuna by attempting to establish the relationship between the patronage of tourism sites and sustainability of our tourism resources and economy. In addition, the studies of McRae-Williams and Clark (2006) were limited to the patronage of heritage sites, while other researches like that of Shifflet (2003) and Abbot (2004) were solely on business and cultural tourism sites respectively. Unlike these studies, the scope of this present study covers the patronage of major tourism typologies.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Africa and Nigeria in particular, are rich avenues of delight for tourists. African's value for recreation, a time of relaxation from the hectic life of predominant agrarian occupation cannot be quantified, as they engage in art and craft which they also showcase through cultural festivals that vary from one society to the other. In Nigeria, there are over four hundred languages with different cultural expressions and artistic manifestations. These artistic expressions and cultural manifestations have drawn men, women and children from Europe and other parts of the world to experience the relaxing atmosphere created through the expressions of cultural diversities. These have had great impact on the people with many of the events well documented. The documentation of these events has motivated the younger generations to have a visit to Africa and Nigeria in particular. Various historic sites have been researched into, documented in print and electronic media both for immediate economic advantage and for posterity. Thus, sustainable tourism should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance.
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourist, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices among them.

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