



Hospitality Tourism Impact on Socio-Economic Development in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the impact of hospitality tourism and socio-economic development in Rivers State, Nigeria. The development of hospitality tourism has become very crucial in economic diversification and changing paradigms of development in this 21st century. Nations that have keyed into the changing development would attest its multiplier effect on their economy, ranging from revenue generation, job opportunities, foreign exchange earnings, poverty alleviation and economic diversification. In this study, a field survey approach was adopted, that is, non-experimental design. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) hotels and guest houses for the study from three senatorial zones of Rivers State. Data were obtained through the use of semi-structured questionnaire administered to five hundred (500) respondents among who are the managers, subordinate staffs and guest who were randomly selected from the sample size? The research question and the specific objective were analysed with descriptive statistical techniques of simple percentages and frequency distribution tables. The results revealed that hospitality tourism (hotels) have direct and indirect impacts on the lives of the people in Rivers State through job creation and revenue generation. It concluded that hospitality tourism have impacts on socio-economic development in Rivers State, which in turn promotes and enhances economic development in the area. Therefore, the study recommended that regular social events eg cultural days and exhibitions should be organised in the state to attract visitors and tourists that would make use of the hotels and guest houses. This will enhance socio-economic benefits and better living standard in the study area.

Keywords: Hospitality Tourism, Socio-Economic development, Rivers State.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a rapidly growing phenomenon and has become one of the largest industries in the world. Tourism activities is one of the world's largest rapidly growing industries in the 21st century and global economy is driven by three major industries such as technology, telecommunication and tourism (Adeleke, 2006). The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2007) contends that the multiplier effects of tourism development spans through all spectrum of society, that is, social, political, cultural and economic, to the extent that nations of the world both developed and developing economies have

adopted new paradigms of development through hospitality tourism oriented activities.

In the same vein, Nigeria is looking up to tourism as a possible alternative income earner to oil and gas. According to Ajao (2012) if Nigeria can get its tourism sector right, it will serve as an employer of labour besides agriculture. However, according to Agcas (2013), tourism has been identified globally as a very potent instrument for executing meaningful community development projects such as poverty alleviation initiatives and rural emancipation due to its numerous economic

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benefits such as the huge money realised from tourism activities, these include entertainment and recreational sites, travel agencies, hotels, car rentals and others. Tourism development in any nation has environmental, social, economic, cultural and political impacts affecting every other sectors of the nation. Nigeria as a nation with various tourist attraction sites are categorised under the various types of tourism people engaged in, depending on their interest.

The development of tourism in Nigeria has given it the opportunity to impact on the economy of Nigeria, thereby competing with oil sector. The development of tourism as a critical sector of the economy has gradually assumed a centre stage in the economic agenda of most nations of the world. According to Swain and Mishra (2012), hospitality services constitute a significant share in the total revenue and employment generation from tourism activities. The hospitality tourism industry is concerned with the provision of physiological and psychological conform within the define levels of services (Obomeh, 2012). Therefore, hospitality tourism is an active partner in the tourism industry providing varied facilities and amenities for quests during their sojourn and also has the capacity to drive socio-economic developments especially to tourism destination of host community.

In Rivers State, the establishment and development of various hotels by government, private individuals and companies with standard facilities as well as tourism potentials has increase appreciably. In advanced nations, hotels are not limited to bed space alone but also have tourism facilities which attract tourists to the hotel and in turn promote and enhances tourism development that drives socio-economic development in the area. Rivers State, which consists of 23 local government areas and located in the Southern part of Nigeria, has tourist attraction sites in abundance. The state is so named because of her natural scenario of cultural and historical heritage, e.g. rivers, mangrove swamps, river delta, environmental features and its tropical rainforests. However, Obioma (2013), observed that people like to visit places and events that could afford them the opportunity for leisure and pleasure which are natural, cultural or man-made events, A good example is Port Harcourt pleasure park built by the Rivers State government along Aba- Port Harcourt express way in 2017 (RVSG,2017,Wosu,2020). The scenario however will encourage tourist attraction and increase revenue generation through taxation from hotels in the area.

It is on this backdrop that this work is hitched to examine the hospitality tourism impacts

on socio-economic development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria is blessed with natural resources and for this reason tourism is a tool for economic growth and stability and also for job creation. Therefore, tourism is very important to Nigeria because it will help to improve her gross domestic product, by increasing production and creating a good environment for foreign investors.

In 2014, a national patronage survey conducted reveals that less than 20% of Nigerians who spend their holiday abroad had visited the Obudu Cattle Ranch or the Yankari Games village, while more than 50% of the regular visitors to those resorts are foreigner. Nigerians are fuelling the tourism in France, USA, China, Japan, Dubai, UK, Ghana, Malaysia, etc (Ndajiya, 2014). The hospitality and tourism sectors in Nigeria are bedevilled with lack of vision and poor administration, which has affected the growth of the sector. The inability to unlock the potentials of hospitality and tourism in Nigeria is characterised by low quality employee, poor infrastructures and inadequate funding to support education and training for both public and private sector (Khuoje, 2013).

The Nigeria hospitality industry is indeed faced with lot of problems, ranging from high hotel charges and slow pace on developing tourist sites that do not various parts of the country, which could also increase bookings in the area (Akpabio, 2007). The same scenario is applicable in Rivers State where tourist sites dot the land scape of the state but remained untapped. There is no doubt that hospitality industry is the livewire of tourist at all levels, but its impact is yet to be felt. The hospitality sector is important to the development of many parts of the world. Hotels are essential arm of the tourism industry, and in fact, without hotels, tourism may not flourish in a state.

This scenario is also applicable in Rivers State, where apart from the Port Harcourt ZOO and Botanic Garden, Isaac Boro Pack, Tourism Beach, Brooklyn Tourist centre, Ela-lake, Okrika Waterfall, Onne ocean and lighter Terminals, Akpor new yam festival, there is no much developed attract sites in the area. However, the present administration/government has added a new feather to the tourist site in Rivers state by building and commissioning the Port Harcourt pleasure Park along Aba-Port Harcourt express way in 2017 (RVSG, 2017, Wosu, 2020). This scenario will however encourage increase bookings in hotels in the area.

In order to address the highlighted problems above, there is need to ask the following conceptual questions.

Research Question

To what extent does hospitality tourism impacted on socio-economic development in Rivers State?

AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to critically investigate the hospitality tourism impacts on socio-economic development in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objective is to,

Examine the impacts of hospitality tourism on socio-economic lives of the people in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The Study Area

Rivers state is among the 36 states in Nigeria created in May 1967. It is located on the southern edge of the Niger Delta and lies within latitudes 04°20' and 5° 50'N and longitudes 06°20' and 7° 35' E. The state covers an area of about 11,077km² (Panden, 2013). The population of the state according to census data released in 2006 by the national population commission (NPC) is 5,185,400, with a projection of 7,043,800 in 2015. This stated figure makes it the sixth most populous state in the country, while the population density is 468 persons per square kilometre. The State, is bordered by six states; Imo, Abia and Anambra to the North, Bayelsa and Delta to the West, Bayelsa and Delta to the West, Akwa-Ibom to the East and Atlantic Ocean to the South. The state is the heart of the hydrocarbon industry which is responsible for a

huge chunk of the nation's foreign exchange earnings, which accounts for over 48% of the liquefied natural gas production in Nigeria (RVSG, 2014). The strategic position and importance of the state in the economic equation of Nigeria earned it the name, Treasure Base of the Nation. The state capital Port Harcourt is the Largest city in the South-South and South-East geopolitical zones of the country and is popularly known and called the garden city of Nigeria. This is because of its hitherto beautiful layout and decent environment. River State with twenty-three local government areas is home to many indigenous ethnic groups including: IKwerre, Ibani, Ogba, Ogoni, Etche, Ekpeye, Kalabari, Okrika, Engenni, Ndoni, Abua, Andoni, Obolo etc.

The state has a tropical deltaic environment characterised by flat plains, mainly of hydromorphic soil with a network of rivers and tributaries criss-crossing the entire area, a terrain which it has in common with that of Canadian territory. The rivers in the state include: Bonny, Orashi, New Calabar, Sombreiro and Bartholomew Rivers. The state span through three vegetational zones; that is the inland part of the state consists of tropical rainforest and towards the coast, mangrove swamp forest and fresh water swamp forest.

The state with a tropical climate, numerous rivers and vast areas of fertile arable land, the people of Rivers state have lived up to their tradition of agriculture, especially fishing and farming, commerce and industry. Rivers State is also blessed with many natural resources which includes, timber, plamtrees, raffgia palm, sand beaches, clay ceramics (ash, yesllow and red) etc. (RVSG, 2014).

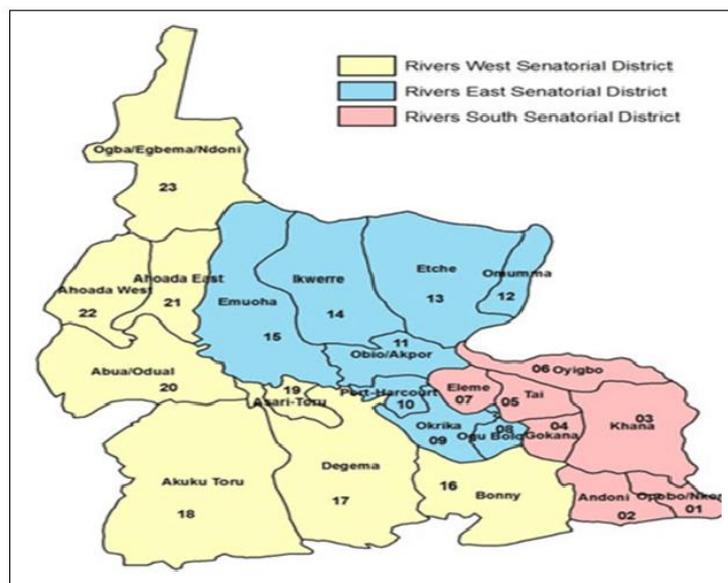


Figure 1 Rivers State showing senatorial district
Source: Ministry of Fiscal Planning and Urban Development.

Conceptual framework

This section is concerned with the review of related literatures on the subject matter.

Economic impacts of tourism

Tourism emerged as a global phenomenon in the 1960's and the potential for tourism to generate economic development was widely promoted by the national government (Adeleke, 2006). They appreciated the economic impact of tourism to the nations, regions as well as the communities; this gave rise to the creation of national authorities to help in promoting tourism and maximize international arrivals. However, awareness of the negatives environmental, social and some other impact also increased. According to Goeldner *et al* (2002), the economic impact to tourism spending is a function of the numbers of domestic and international visitors and their expenditures. Today tourism is no longer leisure but an activity that has captured the attention of economist as a major source of foreign exchange for developing and developed countries, compelling aspiring nation to develop both tourist sites, standardize operations and improve infrastructure such as electricity, airports, rail, road, seaports that support tourism. Unlike oil that is non-renewable and which at best employs less than 2% of the population, tourism on the other hand, is an inclusive, sustainable, labour intensive industry, engaging both skill and unskilled labour. It has potential to create more jobs per unit of investment than the oil industry.

Environmentally, tourism, when properly developed and managed, can serve as a mechanism for protecting the ecosystem; the natural environments, preserving historical archaeological. Religious monuments and stimulating the practice of local cultures, folktale, traditions, arts and crafts and cuisine (Francois, Don, 1980, Lawrence *et at*, 1988, Toh and Linda, 1990). Economically, tourism brings many benefits to federal, state and local authorities as well as the private sector through the generation of revenue, foreign exchange and financial returns on investment, taxation on tourists and tourists products, and linkages to other local industries such as agriculture and fisheries (Frangialli,2006). The employment reach of tourism is not limited to urban areas but also rural communities that host tourist sites and monuments. A good example of this is the impact of Obudu cattle ranch in cross river state is having on the economy of the local communities surrounding the ranch.

The economic impact of tourism cannot be overlooked; the tourism sector contributes greatly to the economy globally. With tourism, the host

community has a lot to gain by means of exhibiting their natural resources, it also adds value to the economy in terms of development and infrastructure, job creation, and improves the lives of its citizens. Tourism and economics are interwoven because tourism makes the host country sell its value to the rest of the world in the process of attracting tourist and direct foreign investment. The impact of tourism in any economy is visible; for example, when the Olympics games have been organized, it has allowed the host country showcase its tourist potentials, creating an avenue for foreign investor to add value to the economy (Shashi, 2006).

The Emergence of Tourism in Rivers State

Rivers state is one of the oil rich states of Niger Delta in Nigeria, historically; tourism development in Rivers State is traceable to 18th century (Karibo, 1991). At this time, the trade in oil palm which was controlled by King Jaja of Opobo town domestically and internationally attracted people from different clans, ethnics, and countries to Opobo town. At that same time, a king of Igola visited Kalabari and the visit resulted to introduction of a royal address. Apart from the domestic trade and cultural relationship which one may rightly refers to as 'cultural and economic tourism'. The local trade in palm oil attracted the Portuguese, the French and British, and these foreign Merchants visited Nigeria and the coastal area now designated as Rivers State for exchange of goods and culture. Other activities of great cultural and tourists value include, new yam festivals, chieftaincy installation ceremonies, initiation into Womanhood, blood oath ceremonies etc.

According to Karibo (1991), these ceremonies united the people internally and externally and remind the people of the baptism of cultural tourism in Nigeria. It was upon these two traditional industries, trade and culture that Nigeria modern tourism evolved. Tourism gained a conceptual and institutional perspective in 1976 when Nigerian tourism board was created.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is basically a plan which guides the conduct of the study which is mainly a descriptive survey approach.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

The instrument used was a self -designed questionnaire administered to five hundred respondents. Data were collected through the questionnaire survey administered to staff of hospitality tourism in the senatorial zones of Rivers State. The questionnaire consisted of two sections;

Section A constituted demographic information while Section B contained structural items relating to the research questions which needs to be tested.

Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

The work adopted a stratified sampling method to select one hundred hotels in the three senatorial districts of Rivers State as the size of the study.

Data Analysis

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and the research questions were analysed with the use of frequency and simple percentage through the data obtained. However, in the analysis of the research question, the acceptance and rejection level was based on the mean percentage distribution of the four point scale rating of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree of the research questions.

Table 1: Summary of socio-economic and demographic Characteristics of the respondents

S/N	CATEGORY	COMPONENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	Gender	Male	288	60
		Female	192	40
		Total	480	100.0
2.	Age in years	20 – 29	72	15
		30 – 39	120	25
		40 – 49	168	35
		50 – 59	48	10
		60 – 69	48	10
		70 years and above	24	5
		Total	480	100.0
3.	Marital Status	Single	144	30
		Married	192	40
		Widowed	96	20
		Divorced	48	10
		Total	480	100.0
4.	Educational Achievement	Primary level	24	5
		Secondary level	192	40
		Tertiary level	264	55
		Total	480	100.0
5.	Occupational Status	Civil/Servant	168	35
		Corporate Employee	144	30
		Self-employed	96	20
		Retired	24	5
		Unemployed	48	10
		Total	480	100

Source: Researchers’ Field Work (2020)

Table 1 above shows the socio-demographic information of the respondents across the state. It can be seen that 288 (60%) of the respondents were male while the remaining 192 (40%) of the respondents were female. It can also be seen that the majority 264 (52%) of the respondents sampled had tertiary level of education and was followed by 192(40%) for those with secondary level of education. The least 24 (5%) were those with primary education level. Based on the marital status of the respondents, the majority of them 192 (40%) were married, 48 (10%) of the respondents were single, widow 96 (20%) of the respondents and divorce 48(10%) respectively. Similarly based on

the age respondents, the majority of them 168 (35%) were between 40-49 years, while 120 (25%) were aged 30-39 years and 72(15%) were between 20-29 years. A tie occurred between those 50-59 years and 60-69 years and accounted for 48 (10%) of the respondents, whereas 24 (5%) were 70 years and above.

With regards to respondents’ occupational status, majority of them 168 (35%) were either civil servants or public servants; 144(30%) were corporate employees; 96 (20%) were self-employed; 48 (10%) were unemployed; and lastly, 24 (5%) were retired from their various areas of business.

Table 2 Zonal distribution of questionnaires

Zones	Sampled population	%	Nos. of questionnaire distributed	%	No of questionnaire retrieved	%	No. of questionnaires not retrieved	%
RIVERS EAST	65	65.0	300	60.0	252	52.5	11	55.0
RIVERS WEST	20	20.0	120	24.0	118	24.6	6	30.0
RIVERS SOUTH EAST	15	15.0	80	16.0	110	22.9	3	15.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	500	100.0	480	100.0	20	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2020)

The table indicates that a total of five hundred (500) questionnaires were distributed, out of which four hundred and eighty (480) were retrieved while a total of twenty (20) questionnaires were not retrieved. This shows a response rate of 90% from the respondents.

Analysis of research question

To what extent does the hospitality tourism sector impacted on the economy of Rivers State. The research question is aimed at assessing the impact of hospitality tourism on the economy of Rivers State. Thus responses were evaluated on the statement items of the questionnaire and the result is presented on table 3 below.

Table 3 Impacts of Hospitality Tourism Sector on the Economy of Rivers State

s/n	Variable	N	SA	A	D	SD
1	Hospitality tourism contributes to the economy of Rivers State by creating employment opportunities	480	330 (69.75%)	126 (26.25%)	18 (3.75%)	6 (1.25%)
2	Hospitality tourism generates revenue and income to both local and state government through payment of taxes and rates	480	336 (70%)	120 (25%)	24 (5%)	0 (0%)
3	Hospitality tourism industry generates income for employers, employees and the host communities	480	312 (65%)	144 (30%)	12 (2.5%)	12 (2.5%)
4	Hospitality tourism centres positively affect the local economy of the people in the area by provision of availability of services.	480	306 (63.75%)	150 (31.25%)	20 (4.7%)	4 (0.8%)
5	Hospitality tourism centres affect the lives of the people or their host communities through provision of corporate social responsibility	480	288 (60%)	144 (30%)	40 (8.33%)	8 (1.67%)
	Mean Percentage		65.5%	28.53%	4.75%	2.05%

Source: Researcher’s fieldwork Computation (2020)

The result from the study revealed that there is significant influence of hospitality tourism on the economy of Rivers State because all five variables of economic impact were accepted. The result of the analysis also indicated that the mean percentage of strongly agree is 65.5%; agree 28.55%; disagree 4.75% and strongly disagree 2.05%.

The joint positive responses (answers) of strongly agree and agree mean percentage is 94.05% while the joint negative responses (answer) of disagree and strongly disagree gave a mean percentage of 6.8%. The result from the questionnaire revealed that the main impact of hospitality tourism on the economy of Rivers State is the generation of revenue and income from both the local and state governments (70%) and the least

factor of its economic impact in the state is that it affects the lives of the people of the host communities through provision of corporate social responsibility (60%). All the five factors in this research question had a percentage between 60% and 70%. Based on this result, the conclusion drawn from this research question is that the hospitality tourism sector positively impacted on the economy of Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of this study indicated that the hospitality tourism sector has significant impact on the economy of Rivers State. The finding of this study also is in agreement with Ojo (2004) who investigated the relationship between tourism and socio-economic development of Idanre Local Government Area in Ondo State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following policy recommendations are suggested for consideration.

There is need for co-operate private bodies, individuals and government to contribute their own quotas to boost hospitality tourism development in the State since it has the enabling environment or potentialities for entertainment industry.

Public awareness on the availability of hospitality tourism centres and this will attract more tourists as they visit the study area.

There is immediate need to make policy that will facilitate economic development through hospitality tourism that could guarantee development.

Hospitality staff should be well trained so as to boost the image of the hotel industry in the area.

Hospitality industry should provide sound service delivery that would help motivate foreign and domestic tourists to stay longer period in the area, this will yield more revenue to co-operate bodies, individuals and government coffers.

Effective security should be maintained at all times so as to fight against crime rate and also to motivate foreign and local investors and tourists to stay and invest in the study area.

Regular social events should be organised in the state to attract visitors and tourists that would make use of the hotels and guest houses, this will enhance socio-economic benefits and standard of living in the study area.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of hospitality tourism and socio-economic development in Rivers State. However, hospitality tourism has contributed a lot to the socio-economic development of Rivers State. Therefore, with available increase in infrastructures, reduction in crime rate more opportunities will be opened for more investments in hospitality tourism in the area. This is evidenced from findings of this study that persons in the area have gainfully employed which contributed to their elevation of their standard of living, thereby, encouraging socio-economic development of the area.

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