

Arts, Culture and Tourism as Veritable Instruments of a Stable Nigerian Polity: The Need for an Inclusive Public Policy

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Abstract

Like in most other nations of the world, the round leather game (football) is one sport that triggers the display of solidarity among Nigerians irrespective of tribe, religion and other social affiliations. Another experience of a similar magnitude of show of solidarity in this country is the Festivals of Arts and Culture which also displays the potentials in tourism. This study examined the potentials of Arts, Culture and Tourism as instruments of unification of Nigerians for purposes of a stable Nigerian political environment as well as the need for an inclusive public policy. Data was obtained from secondary materials while the mode of analysis was content analysis. The secondary materials include – books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, the internet, etc. The sociological and anthropological modernized theory, Durkheim (1997) was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study. Findings showed that, the Festivals of Arts and Culture across this country are often associated with so much fanfare, enthusiasm, relaxation, show of solidarity, oneness, that people tend to forget their social identities, groups, ethnicities, religions and other social inclinations. Hence, this paper suggested that government evolves an inclusive policy that would regularize and formalize the organization of Festivals of Arts and Culture in this country. The paper came to the conclusion that such festivals with great potentials for unification of nationals should be harnessed for purposes of the peaceful co-existence of all Nigerians. The paper noted that this could only be realized through a well-articulated and inclusive public policy on Arts, Culture and Tourism.

Keywords: *Arts, Culture, Tourism, Inclusive Public Policy, Stable Polity*

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Background to the Study

The relationship between arts, culture and tourism is best established from the perspective of the well referenced definition of culture in anthropological and sociological circles which was advanced by Tylor (1871) in Oke (1984) as the complex whole which include knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It serves several vital purposes and functions in life and could be found manifesting in arts, language, literature, dance, folklore, mores, music, governance and also the nature of the environment acquired and transmitted across generations. In the global economy, tourism is rated the fourth largest industry (UNWTO, 2008) and though after underestimated, the industry can help promote peace and stability in developing countries as it is capable of providing jobs, generating revenue, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment, and promoting cross-cultural awareness. According to Mastny (2001), “tourism is a key foreign exchange earner for 83 percent of developing countries and the leading export earner for one third of the world's poorest countries”. For the world's forty poorest countries, “tourism is the second-most important source of foreign exchange after oil” (Mastny, 2001).

Located on the Western Coast of Africa, Nigeria features 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory – Abuja. As at 2019, the population of the country was estimated at over 200.96 million, ranking 7th in the world. However, the National Bureau of Statistics (2012) put the population around 166.2 million. In 2016, the country was estimated to have over 178.5 million citizens while the United Nations projections places the figure as high as 186 million. It might be interesting to recall that the nation on independence in 1960 recorded an estimate of 45.2 million people. The total surface area covered by this country is approximately 923,768 square kilometres. The population density is about 212.04 individuals per square kilometre against the background of the 200 million population spread among over 250 major and minor ethnic groups with diverse cultures as well as individual uniqueness and peculiarities. These diverse cultures and their unique attributes make the nation a great tourist potential attraction for its citizenry, fellow Africans and the world at large. Little wonder that festivals like Eyo (Lagos), Calabar Carnival (CRS), Argungu Fish Festival (Katsina) are known to pull crowds as massive as those at football matches anywhere in the world. This reveals the great potential of Arts, culture and tourism in peace-building and political stability in this country. Given such potentials, it makes great sense to make effort to enunciate policies that would take advantage of the potentials in the sectors bothering on Arts, culture and tourism to foster socio-economic development of this country. This paper is worried that these great potentials in this identified sector have remained untapped for decades. Hence, it examines the need for an inclusive public policy to harness the potentials in arts, culture and tourism for national development.

Conceptual Clarification

Arts: This term has not lent itself to any universally accepted definition. However, the term is used to describe something of beauty or a skill which produces an aesthetic outcome. Art may be taken to refer to a global activity which encompasses a host of discipline as evidenced by the range of words and phrases which have been invented to describe its various forms.

Examples of such phraseology include – “Fine Arts”, “Liberal Arts”, “Visual Arts”, “Decorative Arts”, “Design”, “Crafts”, “Performing Arts”, and so on. Art may be perceived as a diverse range of human activities in creating visual, auditory or performing artefacts

Culture: Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning influences upon further action. It is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. Against the backdrop of the above explanation, while Tylor (1871) views culture as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”, Oke (1984) defines the term as “the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complex design of living”. Thus, culture includes all man-made parts of the environment and a whole set of implicit, widely shared beliefs, traditions, norms, values and expectations that characterize a particular group of people.

Public Policy: Policies are involved with the articulation of the value systems and beliefs of the group that articulated them. Many people see policy-making process as the exclusive function and preserve of the almighty and powerful in the society. Public policies influence the ways in which society and governments respond to and think about issues which affect the well-being of communities. Stone (1997), views policy as “a decision system for the public organized through some form of political representation”. According to Ikelegbe (1990),

The provision of social services, the cost of fuel, the availability or non availability of imported goods, the scope of our economic activities, the availability of agricultural loans and employment opportunities, the security of our jobs, and how much tax we pay, are all determined by or are the results of policies.

On the basis of the above explanation, Presthus (1875), defines policy as, “a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and usually determine present and future decisions”. As conceptualized by Dror (1973), policy is “a major guideline for action”.

On the issue of public policy, Chandler and Piano (1983), conceptualize the term as, “the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or governmental concerns Dlakwa (2009), observes that public policy has the following attributes:

1. A statement of intention in the form of goals and objectives to be accomplished;
2. A choice of action or selection of alternative strategies for achieving the objective among various orientations by governmental organs;
3. An exercise of authority by a governmental institution or political actors, in a bid to achieve objectives.
4. A very complex exercise that is conducted amidst high degree of uncertainty, thus involving intelligent guesswork or hunches

5. A purposive action taken by governmental institutions or political actors, ostensibly aimed to achieve what is in the public interest.
6. Action that requires flexibility in order to cope with changing desires of the people.

Considering public policy from 'goal attainment' and power configuration perspective, Robert and Clark (1982) refer to public policy making process as, “series of steps taken by a government to solve problems, make decisions, allocate resources or values, implement policies and in general to do the things expected of them by their consequences.

Tourism: The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2009), has observed that in recent times, “tourism has become a vital part and fourth largest industry in the global economy delivering not only economic benefits to individuals, organizations and governments but also has the capacity to deliver peace and prosperity, especially in the developing countries”. While Falade (2000) perceives tourism as, “any activity that voluntarily and temporarily takes people away from their usual place of residence in order to satisfy the need for pleasure, excitement, experience and relaxation”, the WTO and United Nations Statistical Commission described tourism as, “the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environments for more than one consecutive day for leisure, business, and other purposes”.

Empirical Literature

Table 1: Past & Current works on Arts, Culture, Tourism and Political Stability of Nigeria

Surname of Researcher, Title & Year of Study	Scope	Methodology – Findings, Conclusion, Recommendation
Eney, Odeh and Bullus (2016), Diversification of Nigeria's Economy; Impact of Tourism on Sustainable Development in Nigeria.	Nigeria: Economic diversification, tourism and sustainable development	The study examined the effect of tourism sector on Nigerian economy. The dimensions of impact studied include – employment, infrastructure, environment, resource development, GDP, capital investment and domestic participation. Simple percentage and descriptive statistics were used. Results show that tourism has direct impact on employment, income, infrastructure, and standard of living.
Iwuagwu and Ezenagu (2016) The role of cultural resources in tourism development in Awka	Awka: Cultural resources and tourism development	The study was a showcase of some cultural resources in Awka, challenges to their development and ways to harness tourism development and sustainability.
Onyima (2016) Nigeria cultural heritage: preservation, challenges and prospects.	Nigeria: cultural heritage, preservation, challenges and prospects.	Deriving from a functionalist perspective, the paper descriptively presents a historical, anthropological and archaeological account of Nigerian cultural heritage. It observes that efforts at preserving these heritages are obstructed with daunting challenges, particularly human activities like trafficking and exportation of Nigerian arts, thefts and looting of museums, vandalism, etc. The paper calls for preservation following prospects derived from an adequately preserved cultural heritage.
Dahida and Maidoki (2013) public policy making and implementation in Nigeria	Nigeria: Public policy making and implementation.	The paper examined the public policy making process and its implementation in Nigeria. It observed that public policy making in Nigeria is the exclusive function of government whereas civil society and other organizations have roles to play. Employing secondary data and the elite theory adopted as its framework, the study revealed there is a missing link between government and the public. It noted that Nigeria's problem is not policy formulation but implementation
Bankole (2013) Harnessing cultural Heritage for tourism development in Nigeria: issues and prospects	Nigeria: Cultural Heritage development Issues and Prospects.	The paper examined Nigeria's vast cultural heritage and the prospect of harnessing them towards tourism sector development. Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed. It was found that tourism development is engulfed by many systemic problems.

The structural – functionalist theory. Durkheim (1997): This theory tries to explain how the relationships among the various segments of the society are created and how these parts are functional (having beneficial consequences to the individual and the society) and dysfunctional (meaning having negative consequences). It is focused on consensus, social order, structure and function in society.

The structural – functionalist theory sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability: it states that our social lives are guided by social structure, which are relatively stable patterns of social behaviour (Macionis, 1997), social structure is understood in terms of social function, which are consequences for the operations of the society. All social structure contributes to the operation of society. The major terms and concepts developed by anthropologists and sociologists in this theory include (or the theory focuses on): order, structure, function (manifest or direct functions and latent or hidden, indirect functions), and equilibrium. These theorists (school of thought) are primarily concerned with – what holds the society together and what sustains it?

Methodology

In this qualitative study, secondary data obtained from books, journals, newspapers, the internet, etc. we reanalyzed by the technique of content analysis. This was the approach to provide answers to two questions in the following sequence. Research Question One (1) Do arts, culture and tourism have the potentials of enhancing peaceful coexistence among divergent cultures and peoples in a given society as Nigeria.?

As one recalls Tylor (1817) definition of culture as, “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”, it becomes easy to appreciate the fact that arts is a component of culture. Culture guides social interactions and social relations which constitute the basis for tourism, thus underscoring the strong relationship among arts, culture and tourism. A study by Chidozie and Obubo (2014) titled “the Role of Cultural Heritage and Tourism in nation-building” which used both primary and secondary data revealed that, “the Eyo Festival as a cultural heritage of Lagos State, has contributed immensely to the project of nation-building, especially through tourism”. The paper recommends that government should re-orient and educate its citizens over the significance of cultural heritage for purposes of enhancing national consciousness and awareness. Nigeria's educational system should therefore, complement and strengthen her cultural heritage as a society which possesses shared minds, a unified spirit, and a common prospect.

In a related development, Eneji, Odeh and Bullus (2016), studied “Diversification of Nigeria's Economy; Impact of Tourism on Sustainable Development in Nigeria. The findings revealed that tourism has direct impact on employment, income, infrastructure and standard of living. It also revealed that there is direct linkage between tourism, environment and local economy in terms of social and economic development. While the account above establishes the fact that arts culture and tourism have the potentials to enhance peace and stability of any nation, it must be stated that these potentials are far from being harnessed in this country. The IMF (2005:73) outlines major constraints of the tourist industry in Nigeria as including – “inadequate facilities at established tourist centres; low level of global awareness of tourist attractions in Nigeria; undeveloped tourist infrastructure; lack of security, low level of investment; and poor attitude and disposition towards recreation and vacation by Nigerians”.

Research question two (2): Is there a need for an inclusive public policy on arts, culture and tourism in Nigeria?

Generally speaking, it is necessary that policies be formulated for fostering growth of culture and creative industries in support of inclusive development. Partnerships and international cooperation are essential complements. Partnerships are also important in knowledge-based services as embodied in cultural and creative industries in the backdrop of the rise of a global knowledge economy. The point to make is that, given the fact that the vast potentials of tourism which is yet to be tapped due to the capital intensive nature of the industry which may not be easily sourced locally, public-private partnerships become a viable option. Such partnerships need be shaped at all levels, from the community and municipality to the national level. Public policies should be enunciated for this arrangement to work. It is therefore, necessary to outline reasons for partnerships and international cooperation on culture and creative industries. Four good reasons stand out clearly. They include:

1. In developing countries, cultural and creative industries are dominated by small businesses (SMEs) and individuals. There is need for measures (policies) to pull these resources together.
2. Trends in PPP's show that they can also facilitate the building of local supply and value-addition capacity of developing countries' small and medium-sized enterprises so as to engage and beef-up effectively in the global value chains.
3. It is important to encourage support for creative industry firms through capacity-building, analysis and statistical monitoring by partnerships and networking between providers of cultural and creative industries services on the one hand, the government on the other hand aided by international organizations (IOs).
4. When it comes to reflection of the rich diversity of culture and creative industries as classified by UNCTAD to encompass the sectors like heritage arts, media and functional creation, PPPs become a necessity.

All the four reasons given above, point to the fact that “Tourism turns culture into displayable objects and visitable places”, which Babatola (2013), in his study titled “Cultural Tourism: A sustainable development strategy for Nigeria's rural areas”, exposes the assertion that, “without cultural heritage, they would not be any tourism as one's future depends on the others” (Sanusi, 2002). The survey which was conducted in some rural communities of Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State, revealed that as richly blessed as these communities are in terms of cultural tourism resources endowment, physical and socio-economic development is almost stagnant due to neglect or non-exploration of the various distinctive and unique resources embedded in their domain. The paper recommends that “since tourism exposes, develops and markets culture of the people”, “a holistic approach to cultural heritage conservation in Nigerian rural areas should include comprehensive cultural plan, packaging and exposition, partnership of stakeholders; all providing an inclusive and integrated approach to cultural heritage development through tourism. The policy has to be inclusive because Fuoseke (2001:16) rightly posited that, “the history, culture and the people, the preservation and conservation of wild life are among the basic elements of tourism”.

Findings

This study recorded a number of findings which include:

1. Arts is a component of culture which guides social interactions and relations. Such social interactions and relations constitute the basis of tourism.

2. Eyo festival in Lagos is a cultural heritage of Lagos State which has contributed immensely to the project of nation-building through tourism.
3. Tourism has a direct impact on sustainable development in Nigeria as it provides employment, income, and enhances infrastructure and standard of living. This facilitates peace and stability of the nations.
4. Just as this study reveals that arts, culture, and tourism have great potentials to enhance peace, stability and socio-economic development in Nigeria, it has also been revealed that such potentials are to be harnessed.
5. Some of the constraints of tourism development in Nigeria have been outlined by the IMF (2005) as inadequate facilities at established tourist centres; low level of global awareness of tourist attractions in Nigeria, underdeveloped tourist infrastructures, lack of security, etc.
6. There is a serious need for an inclusive public policy on arts, culture and tourism in Nigeria. Such policy must include new measures to encourage and take the tourist industry to the next level.

Conclusion

This paper examined the need for an inclusive public policy to mainstream and harness the diverse tourism potentials and rich cultural heritage in Nigeria which is capable of enhancing the peace prosperity and political stability of this country. This is due to the fact that:

of late tourism has become a vital part and fourth largest industry in the global economy delivering not only economic benefits to individuals, organizations and governments but also has the capacity to deliver peace and prosperity, especially in the developing countries (Honey and Gilpin, 2009:1; UNWTO, 2008).

In its definition as a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”, Tylor (1871) asserts that, arts is clearly portrayed as an integral component of culture. Culture on its own part, is the bedrock of tourism. Thus, while arts is a subset of culture, culture is a subset of tourism, a relation which urgently necessitates, the crafting of inclusive public policies if the Nigerian economy must give the service industry its rightful place in the scheme of things.

Against the backdrop of the facts above, this paper wishes to underscore the point that, although tourism is often under rated in developing countries, the industry has what it takes to enhance peace, stability and development by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying such income base, protecting the environment and promoting cross-cultural awareness. The industry ranks fourth in the global economy today. Nevertheless, among developing countries, some key challenges of the industry must be tackled head-on if the benefits must be realized. Such challenges are mostly in areas of investments in infrastructure and human capacity, the regulatory frameworks, mechanisms to maximize in-country foreign currency earnings, and efforts to reduce crime and corruption. This again is the moral justification for an inclusive public policy on arts, culture and tourism in Nigeria.

Suggestions

Finally, this study suggests the following on the basis of its findings:

1. The Federal Government must learn to fund arts and cultural exhibitions and festivals as a way of boosting tourism in the country.
2. The Eyo festival of Lagos State has made immense contribution to peace building in this country. the Federal government should now learn to take-over its sponsorship.
3. The Federal Government of Nigeria should adopt tourism as an indispensable pathway to sustainable development due to its potentials in generating employment and in some for the teeming youths of this country.
4. Government should now package an inclusive public policy for the service sector of the nation's economy.

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